

Mourning a President

EXHIBIT VOCABULARY

Below is a list of terms related to funerals or official mourning rites; many are used in the text of The Sixth Floor Museum's special exhibit, *Mourning a President* (on view November 17, 2017 through February 19, 2018). Many of these terms are only used in the context of a funeral for the leader of a country or are older words no longer in regular use. Please feel free to use this list as a reference for unfamiliar words or pronunciations as you and your students tour the exhibit or as a pre/post-viewing activity. Lesson ideas and full lesson plans related to this exhibit can be found at jfk.org/education.

Bier [beer] – a stand, frame or platform on which a coffin or casket rests before burial.

Caisson [kay-son] – a two-wheeled wagon, designed for carrying artillery ammunition, used to bear the casket of the deceased in some state and military funerals.

Canton [kan-ton] – a rectangular area in the top hoist corner of a flag; for example, the blue field with white stars on the U.S. flag.

Casket – four-sided, hinge-lidded box used for burial.

Catafalque [ka-teh-falk] – a decorated wooden framework supporting the coffin or casket of a distinguished person during a funeral or while lying in state.

Coda – a concluding event or remark.

Coffin – six-sided, lidded-box used for burial.

Condolences – expressions of sympathy for a person who is suffering sorrow, misfortune or grief.

Cortege [variant: **cortège**] [kohr-tezh] – a solemn procession, especially for a funeral.

Ephemera [ih-fem-er-uh] – things that are meant to be used or to last for only a short time.

Franked – stamped or officially marked mail, indicating that postage has been paid or does not need to be paid.

Privilege franked – personally pen-signed or printed facsimile signature of a person with a “franking privilege,” such as certain government officials and others designated by law or U.S. Postal Regulations. This allows the letter or other parcel to be sent without the application of a postage stamp.

Half-staff – a flag flown below the summit of a flag pole, traditionally a sign of respect or mourning.

Half-mast – similar to half-staff, but the flag pole is on a ship or a naval base.

Indelible [in-del-uh-buh l]– not able to be forgotten or removed.

Interred – placed in a grave or tomb, typically with funeral rites.

Lithograph [lith-uh-graf] – a type of printing process used to reproduce an original work of art, often of a limited number; a method of printing from a flat surface (such as a smooth stone or a metal plate) using a mixture of oil and water to produce the design that is to be printed.

Lying in state – the tradition in which the body of a dead official is placed in a principal government building, either outside or inside a casket, to allow the public to pay their respects.

Lying in repose – the tradition in which the body of a dead official is placed in a location that allows visitors to pay their respects but on a less public scale, more private in both location and visitors.

Meticulous – showing great attention to detail; very careful and precise.

Missal [mis-uhl] – a book containing all the texts used in the Catholic Mass throughout the year.

Perpetual – never ending or changing; occurring repeatedly; so frequent as to seem endless or uninterrupted.

Poignant [poin-yuh nt] – evoking a keen sense of sadness or regret.

Protocol – the official procedure or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions.

Riderless horse – a single horse with no rider, with boots reversed in the stirrups, often as part of a funeral procession. The boots reversed in the stirrups symbolize the fallen leader reviewing his troops for the last time.

Solace [säl-es] – comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness.

Tangible [tan-juh-buh l] – perceptible by touch; clear, definite, real.

Ubiquitous [yoo-bik-wi-tuh s] – present, appearing or found everywhere.

Vignette [vin-yet] –

1 a brief evocative description, account or episode.

2 a small illustration or portrait photograph that fades into its background without a definite border.