

From the School House To the White House



Do you know which U.S. president got straight A's in first grade? Which one could have become a professional football player? Or which one wrote an essay at age 12 in which he said he wanted to go into politics "so I might be of some good to the people"?

Visitors can learn the answers to those questions -- and many others -- about the presidents in a new exhibit called "School House to White House: The Education of the Presidents." The exhibit includes 151 report cards from our presidents' schooldays. It also includes school records, class photos, notes, essays, and awards, from every president since Herbert Hoover in 1929. It even includes some of the presidents' musical instruments!

NEWS WORD BOX

archives exhibit
records politics
essay professional

In the exhibit, visitors will see that even future presidents sometimes had trouble in school. President John F. Kennedy got a "poor" grade in Latin when he was 13.

President Jimmy Carter's letters show he was homesick when he first went to college.

A lot of the material at the National Archives' exhibit comes from the presidential libraries, which are really museums. Most former presidents have libraries where important papers and other items from their lives are stored.

The president who got straight A's in first grade was George W. Bush. Gerald Ford was invited to play football for the Green Bay Packers, but went to college to become a lawyer instead. Richard Nixon wrote when he was 12 that he wanted to work in politics.

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL EXHIBIT

- The exhibit is open at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., until the end of 2007. You can see some of the exhibit items at <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2007/spring/schoolhouse.html>

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

If you were to create a museum exhibit of your young life, what items would you put in it? Explain why you picked those items.