

## Museum Spotlights Famous First Dogs

**Washington, D.C. exhibit offers a playful look at presidential pets in history.**

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President Gerald Ford in the  
Oval Office with Liberty.  
Courtesy David Hume Kennerly/

Gerald R. Ford Library From Barney to Buddy, Laddie Boy to Fala, presidential dogs have always been hugely popular with the public. Now the new exhibit "First Dogs: American Presidents and Their Pets," at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., offers a playful look at some of history's most noteworthy pets.

"First Dogs" opens with a popular inside-the-beltway quote, "If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog," often incorrectly attributed to President Harry S. Truman. The exhibit notes that when Truman received a Cocker Spaniel puppy, Feller, as a Christmas present in 1947, he promptly gave the dog away to his doctor.

Other presidential dogs have fared much better at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., including President George W. Bush's pair of Scottish Terriers, Barney and Miss Beazley, who starred in several popular Internet videos that offered a glimpse at life inside the White House.

President George W. Bush's Scottish Terriers Barney and Miss Beazley Another lucky dog was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Scottish Terrier Fala, who had his own press secretary. President George H.W. Bush's English Springer Spaniel Millie even "wrote" her own book, which became a bestseller.

Warren G. Harding's Airedale Laddie Boy, however, emerges as top dog among presidential pets. Laddie Boy had his own hand-carved wooden chair at Cabinet meetings. When Harding, a former newspaperman, died in office, newsboys across the country collected pennies to make a copper statue of his beloved pet, which still stands at the Smithsonian.

"First Dogs: American Presidents and Their Pets" runs through March 2009.

- Read more about presidential pets -