

Memories of the Mansion

By First Lady Sandra Deal

Memories of the Mansion is the previously untold story of the almost half-century old history of the beautiful Georgia Governor's Mansion and the First Families who have lived there. It is my hope that those who read this book will appreciate its stories and pictures almost as much as we enjoyed gathering and recording them. This book is a collection of historical facts and stories I learned as I searched for knowledge about my new home.

Nathan and I had visited the Georgia Governor's Mansion on several occasions, but occupying it as the 82nd governor was different. I discovered that we were only the eighth family to live in this Greek Revival-style home with its museum-quality collection of antiques. Who chose this furniture? Who built this house?

The grounds were even more fascinating. Why were there big columns around the tennis courts? Who built the swimming pool and the two fountains? Where did we get the statues that look like "Maidens of the Seasons" and who created the terraces leading to them? I had lots of questions and I needed answers.

I decided to invite the former governors and their wives to dinner. My goal was to gather information about the mansion, but they had more fun talking about politics and old friends. I did not learn much.

The next week I arranged to visit former First Lady Betty Foy Sanders, who planned this "new" mansion although she never lived in it. During our chat, I learned that she toured her own paintings around the state to raise money to build the white Georgia marble fountain in front of the mansion. It was called the "Fountain of Progress." Mrs. Sanders gave me some articles to read and suggested some other sources. I read everything I could find but to my surprise I found very little.

Whatever I learned I shared with our dedicated volunteers. They encouraged me to write it down. When I seriously approached the task, I realized I needed professional help to document the history accurately and record the stories told by the former occupants. That is when Dr. Catherine Lewis and Dr. Jennifer Dickey, authors and historians from Kennesaw State University, joined me on my project. Together, we interviewed members of all eight "first families," many employees and associates. We compiled the information and filled this coffee table book with beautiful pictures by Christopher Oquendo.

Most people have driven past the mansion and wondered what it would be like to live within its walls. *Memories of the Mansion* can transport you there and allow you to live vicariously through its pages.

Memories of the Mansion can be purchased at the Georgia Governor's Mansion for \$40.00 by card, cash, or check made out to "Friends of the Mansion." All proceeds from sales of the book will go to Friends of the Mansion, a nonprofit organization that raises money to maintain the mansion's furnishings and artwork.

(Additionally, the 2015 Governor's Mansion Christmas ornament (along with ornaments from previous years) are available at the mansion for \$20.00. Free public tours will resume after the holidays in February and will continue to run Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Call (404) 261-1776 for reservations.)