



C-SPAN RELEASES SECOND HISTORIANS SURVEY OF PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

Abraham Lincoln Retains Top Position; Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton Advance Since 2000 Survey; George W. Bush Ranks 36th Overall By Historians

(Washington, DC, February 15, 2009) -- Timed for Presidents Day 2009, C-SPAN today releases the results of its second Historians Survey of Presidential Leadership, in which a cross-section of 65 presidential historians ranked the 42 former occupants of the White House on ten attributes of leadership.

As in C-SPAN's first such survey, released in 2000, Abraham Lincoln received top billing among the historians, just as the nation marks the bicentennial of his birth. George Washington placed second, while spots three through five were held by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, and Harry Truman, in that order.

Based on the results of historians surveyed, George W. Bush received an overall ranking of 36. Among other recent Presidents, Bill Clinton who was ranked 21 in the 2000 survey, advanced six spots in 2009 to an overall ranking of 15; Ronald Reagan moved from 11 to 10; George H.W. Bush went from 20 to 18, and Jimmy Carter's ranking declined from 22 to 25.

As in 2000, C-SPAN was guided in this effort by a team of academic advisors: **Dr. Douglas Brinkley**, Professor of History at Rice University; **Dr. Edna Greene Medford**, Associate Professor of History, Howard University; and **Richard Norton Smith**, Scholar in Residence at George Mason University. The team approved the ten criteria, which were the same used in C-SPAN's 2000 Survey, reviewed the list of invited participants, and supervised the reporting of the results. **Harvey C. Mansfield**, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor of Government at Harvard, also consulted on the names of invited historians with an overall goal of geographic, demographic, and ideological diversity.

"Bill Clinton and Ulysses S. Grant aren't often mentioned in the same sentence - until now. Participants in the latest C-SPAN survey of presidential historians have boosted each man significantly higher than in the original survey conducted in 2000. All of which goes to show two things: the fluidity with which presidential reputations are judged, and

the difficulty of assessing any president who has only just recently left office," said Richard Norton Smith.

"As much as is possible, we created a poll that was non-partisan, judicious and fair minded, and it's fitting that for the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln that he remains at the top of these presidential rankings," noted Dr. Douglas Brinkley.

"How we rank our presidents is, to a large extent, influenced by our own times. Today's concerns shape our views of the past, be it in the area of foreign policy, managing the economy, or human rights. The survey results also reinforce the idea that history is less about agreed-upon facts than about perceptions of who we are as a nation and how our leaders have either enhanced or tarnished that image we have of ourselves. Lincoln continues to rank at the top in all categories because he is perceived to embody the nation's avowed core values: integrity, moderation, persistence in the pursuit of honorable goals, respect for human rights, compassion; those who collect near the bottom are perceived as having failed to uphold those values," concluded Dr. Edna Medford.

Full rankings for each of the 42 presidents are available at www.c-span.org/presidentialsurvey <<http://www.c-span.org/presidentialsurvey>>

Methodology

C-SPAN's academic advisors devised a survey in which participants used a one ("not effective") to ten ("very effective") scale to rate each president on ten qualities of presidential leadership: "Public Persuasion," "Crisis Leadership," "Economic Management," "Moral Authority," "International Relations," "Administrative Skills," "Relations with Congress," "Vision/Setting An Agenda," "Pursued Equal Justice for All," and "Performance Within the Context of His Times."

Surveys were distributed to 147 historians and other professional observers of the presidency, drawn from a database of C-SPAN's programming, augmented by suggestions from the academic advisors. Sixty-five agreed to participate. Participants were guaranteed that individual survey results remain confidential. Survey responses were tabulated by averaging all responses in a given category for each president. Each of the ten categories was given equal weighting in the total scores. Overseeing the 2000 and 2009 tabulations were C-SPAN CFO Robert Kennedy and Dr. Robert Browning, a political scientist who serves as director of the C-SPAN archives.

About C-SPAN

Marking 30 years as America's political network of record, C-SPAN was created by America's cable companies as a public service in 1979. C-SPAN programs three public affairs television networks; C-SPAN Radio, a Washington, D.C. radio station distributed nationally by XM Satellite Radio; and a video-rich website. C-SPAN is currently available in over 92 million cable and satellite households. For more information, visit www.c-span.org.