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UNH Historian's Book about JFK's Assassination to Become Major Documentary

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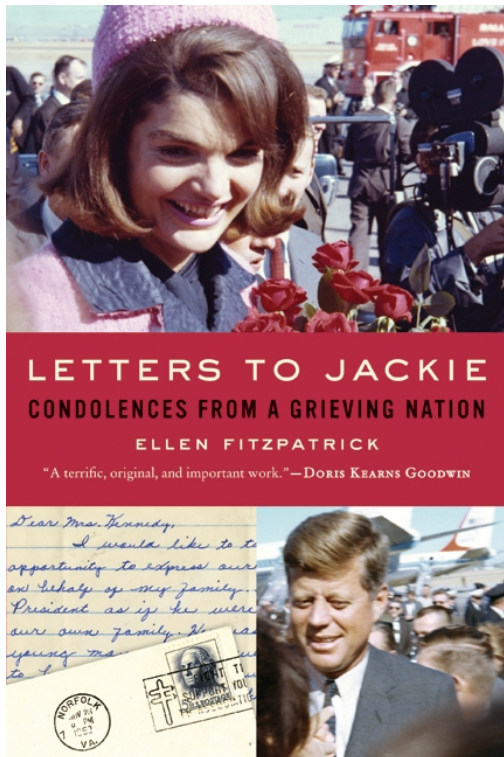
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April 5, 2013

UNH Historian's Book about JFK's Assassination to Become Major Documentary



The book "Letters to Jackie: Condolences From a Grieving Nation" by Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire.

DURHAM, N.H. – The book "Letters to Jackie: Condolences From a Grieving Nation" by Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, will be made into a major documentary film produced by TLC and involving many A-list actors, including Kirsten Dunst, Anne Hathaway, Laura Linney, and Betty White.

TLC has announced that it has commissioned the two-hour film "Letters to Jackie: Remembering President Kennedy," which will be executive produced by Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Bill Couturié's The Couturie Company in partnership with Amblin Television. The film revisits the months following the assassination of President Kennedy, when the First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy became the heart of the nation, leading its citizens – and her own children – through a dark and difficult time.

The film will debut as an exclusive television event on TLC this fall in honor of the 50th anniversary of the president's assassination.

The documentary is based on Fitzpatrick's book, which examines the extraordinary collection of letters sent to First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy following the president's assassination and creates an incredible portrait of the nation's grief from such a cross-section of American life.

Within seven weeks of the president's death, Jacqueline Kennedy received more than 800,000 condolence letters. Two years later, the volume of correspondence would exceed 1.5 million letters. And for the next 46 years, the letters would remain essentially untouched until Fitzpatrick began conducting her research.

Her book culls about 300 of these extraordinary letters into three parts: Americans' vivid recollections of November 22, 1963; their views on politics, society and the office of the presidency; and personal experiences of grief and loss.

"Letters to Jackie: Remembering President Kennedy is a beautiful and moving tribute to a nation at a time of mourning, and to a remarkable woman who exemplified strength in the face of such pain. While the country lost its president, Jackie Kennedy lost her husband and the father of her children, and these letters explore how some of the most relatable moments can happen during such a remarkable time," says Amy Winter, general manager of TLC.

Twenty A-List celebrities have lent their recognizable voices to give life to these powerful letters from everyday Americans, including a polio-stricken 13-year-old who offers words of strength for the first lady, a Peace Corps volunteer who mourns the loss while stationed in Ethiopia and an African American woman who expressed her pride and gratitude for President Kennedy's work in the civil rights movement.

The participating talent includes Bérénice Bejo, Demián Bichir, Jessica Chastain, Chris Cooper, Viola Davis, Zooey Deschanel, Kirsten Dunst, Anne Hathaway, Allison Janney, John Krasinski, Melissa Leo, Laura Linney, Frances McDormand, Chloë Grace Moretz, Mark Ruffalo, Octavia Spencer, Hailee Steinfeld, Channing Tatum, Betty White, and Michelle Williams.

"I'll never forget where I was when JFK was killed. No one will. It cast a dark shadow over America. The world, really. Afterwards, the American people poured out their hearts to Jackie. The strength and wisdom of the nation, coming out of profound tragedy, rings clear in these letters. As soon as I read them, I knew I had to make a movie around them and the time they so eloquently evoke. Luckily, Amblin TV and TLC agreed," said filmmaker Bill Couturié.

Ellen Fitzpatrick, a professor and scholar specializing in modern American political and intellectual history, is the author and editor of six books and has appeared regularly on PBS's *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. She has been interviewed as an expert on modern American political history by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, CBS's *Face the Nation*, and National Public Radio. The Carpenter Professor of History at the University of New Hampshire, where she has been recognized for Excellence in Public Service, Fitzpatrick lives in Newton, Massachusetts.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

Photos to downloaded:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/apr/fitzpatrick.jpg>

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/apr/Letters-to-Jackie.jpg>

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