



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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“Holiday in the National Parks” Celebrated at the White House Flight 93 National Memorial Ornament Displayed on the Official White House Christmas Tree

(Somerset, Pennsylvania) – The Flight 93 National Memorial ornament is prominently displayed on this year’s official White House Christmas Tree. The tree is the centerpiece of elaborate decorations celebrating the theme of “Holiday in the National Parks.”

“It is an amazing honor for the National Park Service to be selected as the theme for the White House holiday decorations by the President and Mrs. Bush,” said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. “Mrs. Bush is the best champion for our national parks, and the beautiful decorations in each state room showcase the natural and historical treasures found in parks throughout the country.”

The tree, located in the Blue Room, is adorned with handmade ornaments representing the country’s 391 National Park Service sites. “Each ornament on the magnificent 18-foot Fraser fir was designed by an artist selected by the park,” said Bomar. “The ornaments tell the stories of our parks, just as our parks tell the stories of our nation.”

Ginny Barnett of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, was selected to create the Flight 93 National Memorial ornament. Ginny is a dedicated Flight 93 volunteer, and a gifted calligrapher and artist. Ginny has become a very special friend to the Flight 93 Memorial project, and has spent many hours at the temporary memorial and in the National Park Service offices.

The ornament's main feature is Ginny’s interpretation of the Flight 93 National Memorial Mission Statement:

***REMEMBER September 11, 2001
HONOR those we lost
CHOOSE to make a difference
HOPE for tomorrow***

The ornament is decorated with evergreen branches of the hemlock trees that border the field where the crash occurred. The ribbon weaving in and out of the branches carries the message: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

“My experiences as a Red Cross volunteer in Shanksville and NYC, and now for Flight 93 National Memorial, have taken me on a roller coaster ride of emotions, states Barnett. “The words reflect the mission statement and my journey of healing...with its ultimate conclusion: HOPE for tomorrow. These words also reflect the *national* healing that needs to take place and what Flight 93 National Memorial is all about. May we never forget, but also look forward with hope!”

Ginny and her husband James Barnett, attended a special reception at the White House yesterday afternoon just for the artists, and were guests of Mrs. Bush.

The holiday displays incorporate the wide variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features preserved by the National Park Service. Models of icons such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Statue of Liberty share space with paintings of scenic vistas from Grand Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain National Parks. Holiday garlands intertwined with park objects including seashells, pinecones, and gold aspen leaves add to each room’s festive feel.

A highlight of the decorations is a scaled-down, but architecturally accurate, gingerbread reproduction of the south view of the White House, a unit of the National Park Service. The edible masterpiece includes Bush family pets Barney, Miss Beazley, and Willie frolicking on the lawn with moose, elk, raccoons, and other animals found in national parks.

“National Parks commemorate the people, places, and events that define the American experience,” said Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne. “I am so appreciative of President Bush’s efforts to recognize the important role of national parks in American society. Our country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and the President has been instrumental in establishing the National Park Centennial Initiative to prepare the parks for the next century.”

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