

## PROFILE-MUSCATINE

Attn: Local editors

Hillary Clinton's former speechwriter and Politics and Prose owner does it all

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WASHINGTON – Lissa Muscatine is more than just a bookstore owner. Although she and her husband are the owners of Politics and Prose, this is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Muscatine's career accomplishments.

When Muscatine started out, she had no intention - or desire - to become a bookstore owner. Her ambition then was journalism, and after graduating college, Muscatine immediately began working as a journalist.

Even though Muscatine spent nearly a decade writing at The Washington Star and The Washington Post, one day she impulsively decided to apply for a job at the White House.

The job was originally designed to be a speechwriting position for both Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton as they transitioned into the White House. But it quickly became obvious that the first lady was planning on being very vocal and needed a speechwriter herself.

Fortunately, Muscatine was fit for the job. So, for the first time in U.S. history, the first lady had her own speech writer.

"It was really exciting, to be able to work for this woman who was such a trailblazer. She was trying to redefine this incredibly traditional and visible role," Muscatine said. During this time, Muscatine became one of the first members of what she refers to as Hillaryland.

According to Muscatine, Hillaryland is the nickname that was originally given to the small group of people who worked with Clinton on the presidential campaign in 1992; it then evolved into being a reference to the group of women who worked with her when she was the first lady.

"It's really the story of how she took on this very traditional, symbolically female powerless role as first lady, and tried to turn it into a women's power center within the domain of the White House," Muscatine said.

Not only was Muscatine part of the original Hillaryland, she has also decided that she wants to tell the story of what really happened within the walls of Hillaryland. For the past two years, Muscatine has been working on writing a book about the experience.

The book, entitled "Hillaryland," is expected to be finished in the next two years. With her book, Muscatine is hoping to tell the story and give a better insight to how Clinton brought female empowerment into the walls of the White House.

Although Muscatine spends most of her time these days writing her book, she still finds time to help run Washington's beloved Politics and Prose, which she owns with her husband Bradley Graham.

Politics and Prose is an independent bookstore that not only sells books, but also offers classes, workshops and has around 600 guest authors and speakers a year.

Originally, the idea to buy Politics and Prose was Graham's, not Muscatine's. Graham - also a former reporter for The Washington Post, as well as an author - merely asked Muscatine to join him for a meeting about buying the business.

"I asked Lissa if she would come along with me just to give me some support. What happened was they thought that I was fine, but they ended up really liking her," Graham said.

Graham said that the owners were insistent throughout the whole process that Muscatine would be involved, and eventually it was decided that she would be a co-owner.

Although this was not something that she had planned on, it was not too far off from the work that she was used to.

"My career is about the integration of words and ideas," Muscatine said. For Muscatine, owning a bookstore fit right in. Not only did she help with running the business, but she also worked to maintain the values that she learned at Hillaryland.

"It's really important to Lissa to make sure that the women on her staff and the women in senior management positions feel like they can come to her and be guided," said Liz Hottel, the director of events and marketing at Politics and Prose.

"She's incredibly talented and she has the ability to look at all facets of a situation and not be narrow minded. This is critical because we're in the business of dialogue and discussion of ideas," said Ron Tucker, the finance director of Politics and Prose.