



THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM
AT DEALEY PLAZA

THE SIXTH FLOOR MUSEUM AT DEALEY PLAZA INTRODUCES AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) GUIDE FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING VISITORS

The Museum is one of the few in the country to offer a full American Sign Language translation of its existing audio guide.

DALLAS, TX – June 23, 2014: Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing visitors to The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza can now access the eyewitness commentary and historic radio broadcasts featured on the Museum’s audio guide via a new American Sign Language (ASL) translation. The leading Dallas museum, which chronicles President John F. Kennedy’s assassination and his lasting legacy, has partnered with Winkshop, Inc. to develop *The ASL Guide to The Sixth Floor Museum*. The Museum is one of only a few museums in the country, and the only museum in Dallas/Fort Worth, to offer its full exhibit audio guide in ASL.

Like its audio counterpart, the new ASL guide provides a narrated tour through *John F. Kennedy and the Memory of a Nation*, the Museum’s permanent exhibit on the sixth floor of the former Texas School Book Depository. Visitors view the guide via an iBook application on an iPad mini provided at the Museum’s admission desk. Award-winning Deaf actress Linda Bove – perhaps best known for her role as Linda the Librarian on *Sesame Street* – presents the majority of the guide’s interpretation, providing translation for original narrator Pierce Allman. Allman was the first reporter to broadcast from the Depository following the assassination on November 22, 1963. Bove is joined by a dozen additional translators who are also Deaf, save for one who is hearing but whose parents are Deaf. They provide the recollections of radio broadcasters, reporters, police officers and other witnesses to the assassination. Additional stories and graphics, as well as the exhibit’s six videos, are also presented in ASL as optional content.

“We are extremely grateful to Winkshop for piloting this initiative and the Museum is proud to lead the way in providing this service to our Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing guests,” said Nicola Longford, executive director of The Sixth Floor Museum. “Until now, we’ve only had the transcript to share and it is exciting to be able to offer a more dynamic experience that effectively serves our diverse communities.”

According to Winkshop founder Wink Smith Jr., the *ASL Guide to The Sixth Floor Museum* is one of the few in the country to offer a comprehensive ASL tour of a museum exhibit on such a large scale. “Some museums have started offering ASL translations of certain programs or portions of their exhibits, but they often utilize computer-generated avatars,” said Smith. “Missing are the facial expressions, emotions and body language critical to American Sign Language.”

Smith said The Sixth Floor Museum was chosen for his company's initial ASL museum-based project due to the Museum's historical appeal, its ongoing efforts to capture oral histories, and the staff's willingness to consider an ASL version of its audio guide. "I have an affinity for this period of history," he said. "I want to preserve ASL for future generations, and the Museum's mission and dedication to access align well with that goal."

Because the format is relatively new, the Museum is piloting the ASL guide with 10 iPad minis that will accommodate up to 20 Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing visitors at any one time, if the iPads are shared. Winkshop, Inc. has generously provided all translation services, video recordings, talent and production fees for the ASL guides, as well as two of the iPad minis. Longford said the Museum hopes to obtain additional funding to help grow the program.

The Sixth Floor Museum's current audio guide to the exhibit was completely updated in late 2012 with touchscreen technology and multimedia content. In addition to ASL, it is currently offered in English, Spanish, German, Brazilian Portuguese, French, Japanese and an English family version. A Mandarin version will be introduced later this summer, and additional languages will be added next year. Museum admission includes the self-guided tour in ASL format, transcript or audio. Visitors wishing to use the ASL guide need only request one of the ASL players upon arrival in the Visitors Center. Running time for the ASL version is just over two hours.

The Sixth Floor Museum is located at 411 Elm Street in Dallas' Historic West End. For more information, go to www.jfk.org or call 214.747.6660.

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About The Sixth Floor Museum:

The Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza chronicles the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy; interprets the Dealey Plaza National Historic Landmark District and the John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza; and presents contemporary culture within the context of presidential history. Located at 411 Elm Street in downtown Dallas, the Museum is open Monday 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Audio guides for the permanent exhibit are included with admission and available in a variety of languages. For more information, visit www.jfk.org or call 214.747.6660.

About Winkshop, Inc.:

Winkshop, Inc. was founded by national American Sign Language (ASL) performer and presenter Wink to provide high-quality training, educational and entertainment materials for all ASL users and those acquiring the language. For more information, visit www.winkshopasl.com.