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# Upcoming lecture features WashPo photographers from WKU

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Mar 11, 2024

PHOTOJOURNALISTS **JABIN BOTSFORD** **DEMETRIUS FREEMAN** THE WASHINGTON POST

**ROOMMATES**  
FROM WESTERN TO THE WHITE HOUSE

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 13**  
6:15 PM | PHOTO EXHIBITION RECEPTION  
7:00 PM | GAINES LECTURE SERIES

**JODY RICHARDS HALL**  
GALLERY AND AUDITORIUM  
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

FOLLOW THE LIFE JOURNEY OF TWO WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY PHOTOJOURNALISM STUDENTS AND SEE HOW THEY LANDED A CAREER DOCUMENTING THE BIGGEST ELECTION IN A CENTURY.

THE JOHN B. GAINES FAMILY LECTURE SERIES  
**WKU** | School of Media & Communication  
POSTER COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS

Submitted

Jabin Botsford and Demetrius Freeman became friends at Western Kentucky University a decade ago. Now, they see history unfold first-hand as photographers for The Washington Post.

Botsford and Freeman will return to WKU on Wednesday for a gallery showcasing the top shots of their careers and a lecture on their experiences in the field, titled “Roommates: From Western to The White House.”

WKU Photojournalism Professor Tim Broekema, the gallery's curator, sifted through over 2,000 submitted photos of Presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden, life in Washington, D.C., Black Lives Matter protests and much more to bring the collection together.

"This collection of photography from the White House doesn't exist anywhere else ... this isn't a traveling gallery, this isn't a show that was commissioned by some organization," Broekema said. "It's not been seen anywhere else in the world."

Botsford spent four years documenting many of the Trump Administration's most consequential moments with The Washington Post. Freeman was hired to cover the other side of the aisle during Biden's campaign in 2020.

Freeman said he and Botsford shared a similar "drive and fascination" toward photojournalism when they found each other at WKU. They were willing to shoot it all, from sports and portraits to politics and protests, he said.

"We were both just hungry for more storytelling," Freeman said.

Jabin said he took a "very old school traditional route" to photojournalism, working through several internships until landing a spot with The Washington Post in 2015. He was named Photographer of the Year by the White House News Photographers Association in both 2017 and 2019.

Freeman, on the other hand, studied abroad in Denmark, worked freelance and served as a staff photographer for the New York City Mayor's Office under Bill de Blasio before taking a permanent position at The Washington Post in 2020.

The pair recalled running into each other at events as Freeman freelanced, such as in New York during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests.

"It was right before the protest and I'm photographing on a bridge, and I look over and see Jabin walking toward me, and it's like, 'What are you doing here?' " Freeman said. "Even in those little moments, we're there with each other, we're protecting each other, but then we separate off to do our jobs and then we come back together.

"It's just amazing to see some of the things that we've covered together and how differently we see and approach things, but then put it all together and tie up the story."

Botsford said running into Freeman and anyone from WKU was "like running to a family member you haven't seen in a really long time." Now, they see each other often.

"It's very settling in what feels normally like a very unsettling place," Botsford said. "We don't cover boring things, we pretty much just cover chaos at this point, so anytime you see somebody you know, it helps."

Broekema said the event is a chance to “see beyond the politics and take a look at the people that are involved in this process” with two professionals who have been through it all.

“There’s a lot of imagery to see in the show, almost 70 images, and it can take you quite a while to get through if you really take the time to immerse yourself and study the pictures,” Broekema said.

The John B. Gaines Family Lecture Series event featuring Botsford and Freeman will be held Wednesday at WKU’s Jody Richards Hall at 7 p.m. The gallery will open at 6:15 with a reception and be open to the public Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. until April 19.

The pair’s work can also be viewed on [jabinbotsford.com](http://jabinbotsford.com) and [demetriusfreeman.com](http://demetriusfreeman.com).

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Reporter