

# **EXHIBIT 19**

WHITE HOUSE MEMO

# As Trump Puts His Brand on Washington, the Kennedy Center Gets a New Name

The board for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announced that it would now be named the Trump-Kennedy Center, although a formal change may have to be approved by Congress.

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**By Shawn McCreesh**  
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President Trump’s takeover of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts reached its inevitable apogee on Thursday afternoon when it was announced that the center’s board of trustees had voted to rename it the Trump-Kennedy Center.

Even though Mr. Trump had already been calling it that for months in trollish posts online, he acted shocked that his handpicked board had thought to do this for him.

“I was honored by it,” he told reporters at the White House. “The board is a very distinguished board, most distinguished people in the country, and I was surprised by it. I was honored by it.”

Earlier that day, he had called into a meeting of the board, which is now made up almost entirely of people who are loyal to him. (By law, there are a handful of members of Congress from both parties who sit on the board, as well.)

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Unusually, the meeting was taking place not at the Kennedy Center but at the Palm Beach home of the casino magnate Steve Wynn, whose wife, Andrea, sits on the board.

Richard Grenell, the center’s Trump-appointed president, was there, and so was Lee Greenwood, who performed “God Bless the USA” at the meeting.

Another member who was in Palm Beach for it was Sergio Gor, a longtime aide to the president who was recently nominated to be the ambassador to India. It was Mr. Gor who proposed the name change.

But there was at least one person who was not down with the idea: Representative Joyce Beatty, Democrat of Ohio, who had called in to the meeting.

“It was such a surprise to me when they said we’re going to rename it,” she recounted in a phone interview. “I said, ‘Oh my gosh,’ and pushed my button. But then I was muted.”

She added: “Everything was cut off, and then they immediately said, ‘Well, it’s unanimous. Everybody is for it.’”

Ms. Wynn claimed in a phone interview that she was not aware that Ms. Beatty had been muted, and that she did not know who was responsible for it. As for how the president reacted to the name change?

“I think he was very happy,” she said.

Ms. Beatty described the meeting this way: “Everything was regurgitated about how awful anything with the center was, how run down it was, how everything was humiliating, and now they had come in as the great saviors of it.”

She added that the other members took turns praising Mr. Trump, who then pretended to be surprised when they voted to rename the joint after him. “He said, ‘Oh, I didn’t know you all were going to name it after me!’” she said.

She was not the only one who had questions about the Kennedy Center rebrand Thursday. Many of the art institution’s current and former staff members were asking each other if the name change was even legal.

The performing arts center is, by law, designated the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts — it was built to be a living memorial to the slain 35th president — and it has been generally understood that the power to change the name lies with Congress.

“We never considered or were permitted to name any part of the building for another human being because it was the official memorial for President Kennedy,” said Michael Kaiser, who was the Kennedy Center’s president from 2001 to 2014.

Members of the Kennedy family reacted with outrage to the name change.

“President Kennedy proudly stood for justice, peace, equality, dignity, diversity, and compassion for those who suffer,” Kerry Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy’s daughter, wrote on social media. “President Trump stands in opposition to these values, and his name should not be placed alongside President Kennedy’s.”

Joe Kennedy III (he is a grandson of Robert F. Kennedy) posted on social media: “The Kennedy Center is a living memorial to a fallen president and named for President Kennedy by federal law. It can no sooner be renamed than can someone rename the Lincoln Memorial, no matter what anyone says.”

One senior White House official said the administration disagreed with the legal interpretation that any name change must come from Congress.

Some other people employed at the Kennedy Center were bummed by the news but resigned to the fact that the place was basically already the Trump center in everything but name anyhow.

The rename was just the latest maneuver in the overall Trumpification of the capital. The East Wing. The Rose Garden. The colonnade. The White House residence. The flag poles. The “Department of War” and the plans for the Arc de Triomphe-style arch on the other side of the Potomac. And now this.

Why must this president’s name be slapped atop the name of another?

“The memorial of Kennedy is still there,” Ms. Wynn protested, “and Kennedy was a great lover of the arts, which is one of the reasons it was named after him. And President Trump has shown what a great lover of the arts he is as well in involving himself.”

Ms. Wynn's husband, Steve, was there for the meeting in Palm Beach on Thursday. He answered my call on speakerphone. It sounded like quite the party.

"All the husbands are here," he shouted over the din of the meeting. "Rob Kraft and Ike Perlmutter, we're all keeping our wives company."

Mr. Wynn said that he has been "friends" with Mr. Trump for 43 years and that "he's always had an interest in the Kennedy Center" for as long as he has known him.

"What I could see is the name is sort of a reflection of the men who have given it its vitality," he said. "First, John Kennedy. Now, Donald Trump. Those two guys had more to do with keeping that thing exciting and relevant."

Chris Cameron contributed reporting.

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