

## **MetEd Retiree April 4, 2024, trip to Washington DC**

The first stop in Washington DC was the National Cathedral located on Wisconsin Ave. in the Northwest part of the city. We enjoyed the sights in the Georgetown area as we rode to our destination.

Construction of the National Cathedral began in 1907, when President Theodore Roosevelt helped lay the foundation stone. President George H.W. Bush oversaw the laying of the final stone 83 years later atop the towers, in 1990. The Washington National Cathedral is about 83,000 square feet, the sixth largest in the world and the second largest in the United States. It can seat over 4,000 people. (The largest Church in the world is St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The largest cathedral in the United States is Saint John the Divine in New York City.)

One of the most visually distinct elements of the Cathedral is the Gothic architecture. The pointed arches, flying buttresses (supports that help hold up the heavy walls by pushing from the outside, and the more than 200 stained glass windows. Nine chapels tracing the life of Christ are located within the Cathedral.

Since its construction, Washington National Cathedral has seen many significant services connected to its national profile. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final Sunday sermon from the Cathedral's pulpit, just days before his assassination in 1968. It has hosted three state funerals: Eisenhower, Reagan and Ford. And one president laid to rest: Woodrow Wilson.

Lunch was served at Tony and Joe's Seafood Place at Washington Harbor. The quality and service were excellent; nobody went away hungry. My first try at Mahi Mahi was very good and won't be my last.

Next, we headed to the Arlington National Cemetery. Nearly 400,000 people are buried in its 639 acres. overlooking the Potomac River across from Washington, D.C. The burial ground was established on May 13, 1864, on land confiscated from Confederate General Robert E. Lee. An average of 25 burials are performed each day.

We boarded the Hop on-Hop off tram, which circled the cemetery, narrated by a tour guide, pointing out the significant gravesites of each section. The most popular is the gravesite of John F Kennedy along with the eternal flame, and of course The Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers which is guarded 24-hours a day by soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment.

What qualifies you to be buried at Arlington? In general, eligible persons to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery would include a) members of the Armed Forces who die on active duty; b) retired members of the Armed Forces, including Reservists who served on active duty; c) former members of the Armed Forces who have been awarded the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross (Air Force or Navy), Silver Star or Purple Heart. Former Presidents are entitled to be buried at Arlington. Only two U.S. presidents, William Howard Taft and John F. Kennedy, are buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

As we headed home, we caught a glimpse of several Washington landmarks, included the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, Capital Building, and the White House.

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