



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Launches "Empire State Executives" Tour

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO May 29, 2014

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ROME – Sen. Joseph A. Griffo is teaming up with six former U.S. presidents to bring New York history into local elementary classrooms Friday.

The traveling road show, “Empire State Executives: New York’s Presidents,” will teach students about New Yorkers in politics who made it to the highest office in the country. Griffo, R-Rome, will also explain his job in the New York Senate, and the similarities and differences between today and the past.

The events, which are made possible through a partnership with Time Warner Cable, will feature life-sized cutouts of past presidents Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt and Martin Van Buren.

The tour will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the auditorium at Robert L. Bradley Elementary School, 33 Oxford Road, New Hartford. The approximately 40-minute presentation will be given to fifth and sixth grade students studying U.S. history.

The tour continues at 11 a.m. at Ridge Mills Elementary School, 7841 Ridge Mills Road, Rome. The presentation there is to fourth grade students.

ABOUT THE PRESIDENTS

CHESTER A. ARTHUR

The 21st president took office following the assassination of President James Garfield. As president from 1881 to 1885, Arthur advocated for civil service reform. Born in Vermont, Arthur grew up in upstate New York, received his degrees from Union College in Schenectady and lived and taught in Rensselaer County.

GROVER CLEVELAND

Cleveland was known as a political reformer. He is the only president to date who served two nonconsecutive terms and also the only Democratic president to win election during the period of Republican domination of the White House that stretched from Abraham Lincoln to William Howard Taft. Cleveland worked as a lawyer and then served as mayor of Buffalo and governor of New York state before assuming the presidency in 1885.

MILLARD FILLMORE

Born of humble origins in New York state, Millard Fillmore became a lawyer and then won election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1833. He served four terms, but left in 1843 to mount an unsuccessful run for the governorship of New York. In 1848, he emerged as the Whig Party candidate for vice president under Zachary Taylor. Taylor died suddenly in 1850 and Fillmore became the nation's 13th president.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

Roosevelt was in his second term as governor of New York when he was elected as the nation's 32nd president in 1932. His New Deal programs redefined the role of the federal government in the lives of Americans. Re-elected by comfortable margins in 1936, 1940 and 1944, FDR led the United States from isolationism to victory over Nazi Germany and its allies in World War II.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The rising young Republican unexpectedly became the 26th president in September 1901, after the assassination of William McKinley. Young and physically robust, he brought a new energy to the White House and won a second term on his own merits in 1904.

MARTIN VAN BUREN

Unlike the seven men who preceded him in the White House, Martin Van Buren was the first president to be born a citizen of the United State and not a British subject. English was his second language, however, making him our only “ESL” president. He spoke Dutch at home. He rose quickly in New York politics, winning a U.S. Senate seat in 1821 and presiding over a sophisticated state political organization. Van Buren helped form the new Democratic Party from a coalition of Jeffersonian Republicans who backed President Andrew Jackson. A favorite of Jackson's, Van Buren won the White House himself in 1836.