



Omni Shoreham Hotel

Celebrating Capital Service

Omni Shoreham Hotel

A Brief History



If the Omni Shoreham Hotel didn't exist, someone would have had to create it. Few places in the country could duplicate the significant and nostalgic moments, political adventures, sports activities, entertainment firsts and delights, debutante and Inaugural balls, school proms, state society dances, and weddings that took place here, many of which have signified the end of one life phase and the beginning of another.

By today's standards and our historical interpretation, few would give Harry Bralove's dream of building the "best hotel in Washington, D.C." much chance to succeed, for Bralove chose the fall of 1929 for the realization of his dream.

Born in 1891, Bralove grew up with a strong ambition and a determination to improve his standing in life. While working for the United States Navy, he earned a degree from Georgetown Law School. After he left the Navy, he started a construction company building apartment homes. He was asked to build some apartments on 11 acres of land between Woodley Road and 28th Street, south of Calvert Street in Northwest Washington.



Harry Bralove and his son Bernard 1

When he walked the property, Bralove saw grander visions for the sprawling acreage that abutted the luxuriant Rock Creek Park. He envisioned a hotel that would combine transient and residential living. This image was brought to life through the work of architect Joseph Abel, uniting Renaissance and Art Déco architectural and decorative features. Construction costs totaled \$4 million dollars. The eight-story hotel was fireproofed, had running ice water, an indoor ice rink in the lounge, and featured high-speed Westbrook elevators. In the basement was a furniture factory, the only one in a hotel in the country. It was an asset that would

provide quality custom-built furnishings for the public areas and the guestrooms, and save the Shoreham countless dollars.

Opening rates ranged from \$5 for a single room and \$8 for a double room to \$12 for parlor and bedroom suites that were up to 2,600 square feet and included two bedrooms and two bathrooms, dining room, kitchen and pantry, and a wood-burning fireplace.

The hotel's name was taken from a previous Shoreham Hotel in Washington (built in 1889 by Levi P. Morton, Vice President of the United States under Benjamin Harrison), which was named for Morton's hometown of Shoreham, Vt., which was founded in the early 1700s and named for Shoreham, England. Truly, a hotel with such lineage had a name to live up to and the new Shoreham Hotel did that. The past represented a tradition, a concept totally within Bralove's vision and reach.

The Stars Shine Bright



*Rudy Vallee and his
Connecticut Yankees*

Bandleader and entertainer Rudy Vallee was scheduled to perform on October 30, 1930, the Shoreham's opening night. His radio program, "The Fleischmann Hour," attracted millions of listeners. The appearance


 Formal
OPENING of
The SHOREHAM
 Announcing


 Lasted Arrived
 London, 1918
 Rudy Vallee
 at 1 P. M.
 Arriving, 1918
 First at 11 P. M.

RUDY VALLEE
 ARRIVING IN PERSON BY AIRPLANE

We today will sing all his popular numbers and set in Motion a
 Combination, giving a night of enjoyment, complemented by

SING BARGAINETS OF REEFIELD POLICE FANS
 WITH W. O'BRIEN SINGERS **LAYMAN & HALL**
 IN CHESTER HALL GARDIA THEATRE, CAPITAL THEATRE, N. Y.
 FROM EARL CARROLL'S PRODUCTIONS - **THREE SUMMERS**

With... followed by...

THREE GLORIOUS NIGHTS Not To Be Missed!	Halloween October - Thirty One November - eight December - one	Saturday Evening Starting November 1 with...
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THE SHOREHAM
 CHESTER HALL GARDIA THEATRE

TEN
 DOLLARS
 INCLUDES
 COFFEE
 FOR
 OPENING

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Opening Night Advertisement

of Rudy Vallee and His Connecticut Yankees may have been considered the social affair of the year. The event, with a ticket price of \$10, was sold out. Unfortunately, it was the proverbial dark and stormy night and by the time Vallee's tri-motored Amelia Earhart plane made it through the inclement weather and they arrived at the hotel, it was actually several hours into the next day and Vallee and His Connecticut Yankees were able to perform for only 15 minutes. The musicians packed up and took the train back to New York.

From the beginning, the Shoreham was the place for special events. That tradition was enhanced when Franklin Delano Roosevelt had his first presidential inaugural ball at the Shoreham. The hotel had a ramp and elevator installed to accommodate Roosevelt's needs. For the next seventy years, whenever there was an Inaugural Ball, it was held at the Shoreham.

The stars shown brightly in the Shoreham's famed Blue Room, on the Terrace, and in the Marquee Lounge. Among the galaxy of entertainers were Judy Garland, Aretha Franklin, Pearl Bailey, Benny Goodman, Peggy Lee, Abbe Lane, George Kirby, Clancy Bros. And Tommy Makem, Gordon & Sheila MacRae, Bob Newhart, Phyllis Diller, Enzo Stuarti, Eartha Kitt, Edie Adams, Van Johnson, Peter Lind Hayes and Mary Healy, Nelson Eddy & Gale Sherwood, Jerry Vale, Teresa Brewer, Petula Clark, Jose Molina Bailes Espanoles, Bill Cosby, the New Journeymen,

Gretchen Wylor, Smothers Brothers, Milton Berle, Pat Suzuki, Paul Anka, the New Christy Minstrels, Tony Bennett, Pam Bricker, and Bob Hope.

Of particular note are comedians and political satirists Mark Russell and Joan Cushing. Russell came to entertain for two weeks and stayed twenty years; Cushing, with her act, Mrs. Foggybottom and Friends, also came for a two-week gig and stayed for ten years.



Mark Russell

Liza Minnelli had her first public performance in the Shoreham's Blue Room on September 14, 1965.

Barnee Breeskin started in the Blue Room orchestra in 1931 as a relative youngster and eventually became its leader for decades, finally retiring his Shoreham baton in late 1956. Breeskin knew the names and faces of every famous person who visited the Blue Room and played an appropriate piece of music in honor of their presence.

Breeskin was also famous for composing the Washington Redskins football team fight song, "Hail to the Redskins." Corinne Griffith, a retired silent-movie star (the "Orchard Lady of the Screen") and wife of George Preston Marshall, the team owner, wrote the lyrics. "Hail to the Redskins" made its debut on August 17, 1938.



Barnee Breeskin

The Shoreham received plenty of media coverage across the nation. Eddie Walker, Willard Scott's partner as the "Joy Boys," remembers radio broadcasts from the Shoreham, often featuring the popular Big Bands that performed in the Blue Room. Walker recalls broadcasting from the Terrace Garden on special occasions, including Mother's Day, with appropriate "Mother's Day" music.

Perle Mesta, was known as Washington's "Hostess with the Mostest," and she held many of her famed social gatherings at the Shoreham. She was named the country's first Ambassador to Luxembourg, and the 1950s musical, "Call Me Madam" with Ethel Merman, was fashioned after Mesta's life.

Party Politics

Senator Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) was among the seven U.S. senators, 18 congressmen, and diplomats and their families who resided at the Shoreham. President Harry Truman was a frequent guest, playing poker with Symington, Speaker of the House John McCormack (D-Ma.), and William "Fishbait" Miller, the doorkeeper of the House, throughout many a night in room 406D. Senator Warren G. Magnuson (D-Wa.) was another resident of the Shoreham and also played poker regularly with Truman.

Politics wasn't the only game in town. In 1941 New York Yankees Manager Joe McCarthy and teammates of Joe DiMaggio surprised the Yankee Clipper with a party in room 609D in honor

of the slugger's 56-game hitting streak, The Yankees gave DiMaggio a silver humidior that bore an engraved likeness of DiMaggio finishing his classic swing. It's said that Joltin' Joe considered this "the most touching moment in his career."

Another connection to the past is the Bird Cage Walk, the hallway leading to the Empire Room (which was first an indoor swimming pool). Named after the original Birdcage Walk in London that housed James I's aviary, the Shoreham's Bird Cage Walk featured enormous birdcages, as tall as the doors themselves, lining the left side of the hallway.

Traditions have come and gone and sometimes returned. Paul Sacco, the Shoreham's general manager from 1984 to 1991, recalls such guests as Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Walker Bush, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Ma.), and Eva Gabor. One of his fondest memories, though, is of a visit from actress Helen Hayes who recalled how she used to bring her children to the hotel's Easter Egg hunt. He reinstated the hunt after that conversation.

Other notables who have stayed at the Shoreham are Princess Irene Galitzine; Bess Meyerson; Mitzi Gaynor; Sidney Poitier; Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians; Princess Shimeju; Jacqueline Suann; Archdukes Otto, Charles, and Felix; Haile Selassie; and Ludwig Erhard.

When the Beatles made their first public appearance in Washington in 1964, they stayed in the luxurious accommodations of the Shoreham Hotel. An entire floor was reserved for them with the exception of one room where the guests refused to relocate. It's said the General Manager, Phil Hollywood, had to cut off the electricity, heating, and water service, claiming there was a power failure, before they agreed to move to a room on another floor.

Hollywood's career started in the Navy, just as Bralove's had. The Long Branch, NJ native joined the Shoreham's staff after World War II as a mail sorter and front desk clerk. He became General Manager after only 12 years with the hotel and stayed for 47 years, retiring in 1991 as Vice President and Managing Director. During his tenure that continued the Shoreham's dedication to unparalleled service, Hollywood was the housing director for three presidential inaugurations.



Phil Hollywood

As noted, the Shoreham Hotel was constructed at the beginning of the Depression, and Bralove did, indeed, have some financial problems. He asked Henry Doherty to become a minority shareholder in the hotel and, in doing so, Doherty and his family moved into a beautifully appointed suite of rooms. They were filled with Persian rugs and the Dohertys dined on Napoleon Bonaparte china. They adopted a daughter named Helen and the hotel's

executive housekeeper, Juliette Brown, lived with them and took care of the family.

Brown wasn't feeling well one early morning and died of natural causes as she was calling for help. Some time later, Helen also died of an undetermined cause. Once the Dohertys moved out of the suite in 1973, unexplainable things began to happen. Televisions and lights would suddenly turn on at 4 a.m., perhaps the time of Juliette's death. Housekeeping carts would be moved, and people reported feeling a breeze, as if someone had just run past them. One guest, staying in the room next to the former Doherty suite, called to complain of noise in the adjoining room during the preceding two evenings, but there was no one officially occupying the room.

Now fully redesigned and restored, the area is named, appropriately, the Ghost Suite. Any visitors it may receive may stop in to enjoy some of the most spectacular vistas of the city.

The Omni Shoreham has been a star beyond its stellar service, appearing in such movies as "No Way Out" (with Kevin Costner, Sean Young, and featuring our own doorman Garry Burke), "The Pelican Brief" (with Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington), and "The President's Analyst" (with James Coburn).



No Way Out

Our Home Is Your Home

One doesn't have to be a celebrity to be delighted by the accommodations, for the Omni Shoreham is noted for having the largest guestrooms in Washington.

A guest's comfort is of primary importance from the first moment in the splendid Shoreham lobby, with its half-dozen magnificent chandeliers casting their warm glow over comfortable



*Omni Shoreham's Main
Lobby*

seating areas. This high service standard continues through their stay in one of the rooms and suites (many with amazing views of Rock Creek Park, with its hiking and biking trails) until they are on their way home.

The Omni's stately elegance, that inspired superb service and satisfied its devoted guests in years past, is a tradition that lives on today. The hotel features 834 guestrooms including the famous "Ghost Suite," seven presidential suites (each with seven rooms, a whirlpool tub, and



Presidential Suite

kitchen overlooking Rock Creek Park and the William Taft Bridge), 15 luxurious one-bedroom suites, 28 junior suites, and 41 spacious ADA rooms. Each room has a fully stocked refreshment center, full-

size iron and ironing board, hair dryer, coffee maker, dual phone lines, voice mail, modem hookup with complimentary high-speed wireless Internet service, first-run movies, Nintendo 64, remote-controlled TV, and rooms in the main building have a view of Rock Creek Park or the City. The Omni Shoreham offers "Get Fit" rooms featuring a portable treadmill and healthy snacks.



Luxurious Accommodations

Conference attendees will find 100,000 square feet of meeting and function space, including a 40,000 square foot exhibit hall, seven beautiful ballrooms (including the Regency Ballroom that can seat 1,700 people), two separate conference centers, and T-1 phone lines in the meeting rooms.

The Palladian Ballroom features a series of murals by James Reynolds depicting Thomas Jefferson's versions of the architect Palladio's style and Jefferson's life. The scenes include Edgehill at Keswick, Monticello, the "Colonnade" from the University of Virginia, the Cow Barn at Bremo Bluffs, the Bremo Bluffs on the James River, Oak Hill, and Llangollen Farm in Upperville, Virginia. The Palladian Ballroom can seat 550 and hold



Palladian Ballroom Mural

1,200 people for a reception.

The outdoor swimming facilities, recently mentioned as the city's best by the Washingtonian magazine, feature a heated pool with two lap lanes, a kiddie pool, a whirlpool, relaxation and sunning deck, and a poolside café. There's something for everyone to enjoy and create their own special memories of Washington.



Outdoor pool area

The Omni Shoreham's multilingual staff is ready to accommodate a guest's every need, whether it's assistance with a phone call, ordering from one of our fine menus, or support in their sightseeing itinerary. Other services include a shoeshine stand, gift and sundries shop, boutique, logo items, and Wi-Fi capabilities in all the public meeting rooms. The Flagship property of the Omni Hotels chain has concierge services and a full-service business center.

Food for Thought



Robert's Restaurant

Dining has always been a special treat at the Omni Shoreham. Original hand-painted frescos decorate vaulted ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows and mirrors reminiscent of the Hall of Mirrors

at Versailles flank Robert's Restaurant, just off the main lobby. It is a casually refined eatery with a Continental American touch to its menu.

A Little Something offers one-stop convenience for everything from coffee to sandwiches. Guests can enjoy an elegant martini, imported beers on tap, or a cigar at the Marquee Bar & Lounge, and light fare and beverages are available at the Pool Bar during the summer season. For those who like to luxuriate and dine in private, 24-hour room service is offered.



A Little Something

Lebanese, Vietnamese, Mexican, Indian, Japanese, Cajun, Irish, Thai, and other cuisines, all a part of the famed international menu of restaurants for which Washington is known, are all within an easy walk.

The conveniences of the Omni Shoreham Hotel are matched by its convenient location. Set in the Northwest section of Washington, D.C., the hotel is just one block to the Woodley Park Metro station and less than that to the Old Town Trolley Tour stop, four blocks from the Washington Zoo, minutes from Georgetown, and less than two miles north of the White House, Capital, Smithsonian Institution museums, and other popular attractions.

Omni Hotels, rated highest in the upscale hotel category by J. D. Power and Associates, have managed the Shoreham since 1980. The property is a member of the National Trust Historic Hotels of America and Resorts and Great Hotels of the World. The hotel has been awarded AAA's Four Diamond status since 2000 (and is the largest Four Diamond property in the City), and designated "Best for Athletic Families" in Washington in the travel guidebook "Washington, D.C. With Kids by Frommer's," recognized by the Washington Diplomat as having the "Best Location in DC," and is a member of the Smithsonian's Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ) organization.

The glory days of big name talent appearing in city hotels has long gone, but the glorious tradition of fine service remains. One reason the Omni Shoreham excels at this is the dedication to service shown by so many of our employees. In July 2005, we had 535 employees who have worked here for ten or more years, including two employees with more than 40 years of service, seven with 35 plus years, and 20 with 30 plus years of dedication to our hotel and our guests.

Vice President and Managing Director Todd Scartozzi sees a brilliant future for the first-class Omni Shoreham Hotel, one that envisions another 75 years that will be as stellar as its first 75 years.

“As proud as we are about our past,” says Scartozzi, “we are even more excited about the future. Our guests have an opportunity to combine old world elegance with modern conveniences when they stay with us. In a location and setting that is unique amongst major cities in the United States, we are truly an oasis in the world’s most powerful city.”

In naming who lived, stayed, performed, wined, dined, and ‘made history at the Shoreham’ it’s easier to name who hasn’t.

Judy Colbert, an award-winning journalist, is a native Washingtonian who attended many school proms and other events at the Shoreham, wrote “Omni Shoreham Hotel, A Brief History.”



*Celebrating 75 Years
of Capital Service*

Omni Shoreham Hotel

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