

# SHARON FARMER

b. June 10, 1951

## WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER

*“Never turn down a chance to show what you can do.”*

Sharon Farmer was a White House photographer during both terms of the Clinton presidency. She was the first woman and first African-American to direct the office charged with chronicling nearly every second—from the mundane to the monumental—of the nation’s highest office.

Born in Washington, D.C., in 1951, Farmer was interested in photography from a young age. She discovered the power of the medium looking at pictures in her family’s encyclopedia. She attended Ohio State University, intending to study bassoon, but quickly switched her major to photography and honed her skills on the yearbook staff.

The Associated Press hired Farmer for a photojournalism internship during her senior year in college. After graduation, she returned to her hometown, where she became a freelancer and a photographer of album covers.

In 1993, she was hired as a White House photographer, a fast-paced job in which she used approximately 3,000 rolls of film per year and traveled the globe on a moment’s notice. In 1999, she was promoted to director of White House photography.

During her stint at the White House, Farmer captured many prominent events, including the handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and the swearing in of Nelson Mandela as the president of South Africa.

Farmer also chronicled many political races, from local to national. In 2004, she served as the head photographer for Senator John Kerry’s presidential campaign.

In addition to being featured in individual shows and group exhibitions nationwide, Farmer has lectured for National Geographic and the Smithsonian Institution and has taught at American University. She resides in Washington, D.C.

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