

# Laura Bush visits Algiers high school

*She promotes history project using artworks*

**By Jenny Hurwitz**  
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Laura Bush dropped in on Edna Karr Senior High School on Thursday to celebrate the start of a grant program that delivers reproductions of American artwork to public schools and libraries nationwide.

The program, known as "Picturing America," debuted at the Algiers school, a fact Bush said was fitting, considering the

struggles the community has endured since Hurricane Katrina. During a speech in the school's library, Bush told students they were "writing a new chapter in the story of the American spirit" by surviving the obstacles they had faced after the storm.

"For each of you, 'Picturing America' is not just a reminder of previous generations," she said. "It's how you, through your perseverance, continue that legacy today."

Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the program has awarded packets consisting of 40 reproduc-

tions of artwork and a teacher's guidebook to more than 26,000 schools and libraries across the country. Founded in February, the program is meant to encourage educators to incorporate art into their curriculums while offering students a first-hand glimpse of American history.

In addition to members of the Karr community, those in attendance Thursday included U.S. Rep. William Jefferson, D-New Orleans, state Rep. Jeff Arnold, D-Algiers, and Thomas Lindsay, deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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SUSAN POAG / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

Laura Bush addresses students Thursday at Edna Karr High School in Algiers during a visit to highlight 'Picturing America,' a collection of 40 reproductions of art given to schools and public libraries to help teach American history and culture.

# Well-known artworks illustrate American history

## **BUSH**, *from B-1*

The visit marked the second time Bush had visited New Orleans in the past three months. In May, she spoke to representatives from faith-based relief organizations at a workshop in New Orleans hosted by the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

During her visit to Karr, Bush stopped first in an advanced-placement class, where she listened to an English and history discussion about some of the artwork.

History teacher Bill Robinson asked his students to describe the common interests of the groups depicted in two pieces: Emanuel Leutze's iconic painting, "George Washington Crossing the Delaware," and James Karales' black and white, panoramic photograph of civil rights protesters marching from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., in 1965.

"The people in the pictures are moving, they're trying to press through something," said student Patrick Batiste. "It shows how American people can

come together as one and move toward a goal."

Bush sat quietly at a desk surrounded by students, nodding her head at times during the discussion.

Toward the end, she thanked the class for allowing her to sit in and singled out the painting of Washington crossing the Delaware as an image that stood apart for its idealistic and somewhat unrealistic depiction of a presidential figure.

"He's larger than life, the perfect leader," she said. "We don't see his desperation, his human worries that we know he had."

The "Picturing America" artwork grants will be shipped out in early September, said Brian Lee, director of communications for the NEH. More than 300 schools in Louisiana will receive them, officials said.

The program is in the midst of its second grant application period and is encouraging other schools to apply. Those interested can apply online at [PicturingAmerica.neh.gov](http://PicturingAmerica.neh.gov). The deadline is Oct. 31.



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