

Eastbourne Lodge on Rhode Island Avenue

Edwin Sheldon Whitehouse and his wife Mary lived at Eastbourne Lodge on Rhode Island Avenue during the mid-20th century. The house itself is a Tudor Revival style home-built c.1892 by Edwin's father William. Both Edwin and Mary came from prominent families with powerful political ties. In the 1920's Edwin would become charge d'affaires at the American Embassy in Paris as well as the U.S. Minister to Guatemala and Colombia. The couple were important social figures in New York City as well as here in Newport.



Eastbourne Lodge c.1892

One of the most famous social events the couple would attend in Newport was the Tiffany Ball in 1957. The ball was held at Marble House which was then privately owned by Frederick Prince, an investment banker and financier. The ball was thrown by the Preservation Society of Newport to raise funds for some 400 17th and 18th century buildings in Newport County. This ball became arguably the greatest party in Newport during the 20th Century. The 1,200 guests included Katherine Warren who led the Preservation Society, Mrs. Louis S. Bruguiere, "Queen of the Old Guard" and one of the last surviving members of Mrs. Astor's 400, Senator John F. Kennedy and his wife Jackie, as well as the Whitehouse's. In all, an estimated \$20 million dollars' worth of jewelry was worn by guests that evening, but one piece stood out above the rest. Mrs. Whitehouse was given the honor of wearing the 128 carat Tiffany Yellow Diamond worth \$600,000 (\$30 million today). Mrs. Whitehouse was the first person to ever wear the diamond. In fact, the diamond has only been worn by four women including Audrey Hepburn for photographs to promote the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Lady Gaga, and Beyoncé. The diamond is currently on display and Tiffany's flagship store on 5th Avenue. The ball itself helped raise over \$30,000 for the Preservation Society.



Mrs. Edwin Sheldon Whitehouse wearing the Tiffany Yellow Diamond



Senator Kennedy and his wife Jackie

Edwin Whitehouse would continue to live at Eastbourne Lodge until his death in 1965, he passed away at Newport Hospital. Although the family no longer owns the historic home the family still has deep connections to Newport. Edwin's grandson, Sheldon Whitehouse is currently our Junior Senator representing Rhode Island. He has a home on Carroll Avenue and is a member, somewhat controversially, of Bailey's Beach Club. Today the Eastbourne Lodge Estate has been subdivided but the main historic home still remains.

Every house has a story...