

= Politics and Prose =

Politics and Prose ( sometimes stylized as Politics & Prose or abbreviated as P & P ) is an independent bookstore located in Chevy Chase , Washington , D.C. , on Connecticut Avenue . The store was founded in 1984 by co @-@ owners Carla Cohen and Barbara Meade , who expanded the store fivefold to its current size . After a failed sale attempt in 2005 , the two co @-@ owners eventually sold the store to current owners Bradley Graham and Lissa Muscatine in 2011 . Politics and Prose is known for its knowledgeable staff and is seen as a part of DC culture . Its author events attract a number of famous speakers , such as Bill Clinton and J.K. Rowling , and have a reputation for their astute audiences .

= = History = =

= = = Founding and growth = = =

Carla Cohen , after losing her job with the Carter administration , decided to create an independent bookstore in Washington , D.C. , despite having no previous experience with running a business . She partnered with Barbara Meade , whom she found through the classifieds , and who , with her previous experience of managing a bookstore , became a co @-@ owner early on . Cohen decided to name the store Politics and Prose because it was " Washington @-@ sounding " and not pretentious , and the two co @-@ owners founded the store in 1984 . Meade worried that the name was a put @-@ off , and the store struggled at first to attract authors to speak at its events and relied on local journalists to publicize the location . The store 's original location in the Forest Hills neighborhood was across the street from its current spot , and in 1989 , Politics and Prose moved to their present larger location after finding success . Politics and Prose has over the years expanded their sections and collections . The store merged with a nearby children 's bookstore , the Cheshire Cat , and incorporated its staff in 1990 .

= = = Failed sale attempt = = =

Business continued to be successful during the late 1990s as other independent bookstores fell by the wayside and companies like Barnes & Noble expanded . Cohen and Meade decided to sell the store to Danny Gainsburg , who was selling his T @-@ shirt business so he would be able to afford the cost of the store . The co @-@ owners made an agreement with Gainsburg that he would gain control of the store if he was able to function amicably with the rest of the staff . Cohen and Meade set him up in a part @-@ time position to see how he would interact with the employees and sold him an equity stake in the business without informing the other staff members . After a number of other incidents , Gainsburg was pressured to leave by the staff after he kissed an employee on her birthday . The three co @-@ owners agreed that Gainsburg should resign , and Gainsburg received back his initial investment plus a premium . Gainsburg said to the Wall Street Journal , " We all started with good motives , but there was lots of naiveté on all sides . " In 2006 , a year after the botched sale attempt , Cohen and Meade both decided to hold onto the store as sole co @-@ owners for at least three to five more years and met with an outside consultant to devise an eventual exit strategy .

= = = New ownership = = =

In June 2010 , Cohen and Meade announced their intention to sell the store ; Cohen also became seriously ill around this time , and it contributed to the timing of their decision to sell . Jim Lehrer wrote of the impending sale , " ... putting Politics and Prose up for sale is like putting the Washington Monument up for sale . " There was considerable speculation in the media about possible buyers for the store . There were reportedly over 50 inquiries by October into the possible purchase of the

store from Meade and Cohen 's husband , David , who inherited her stake in the store after her death from cancer .

It was announced on March 28 , 2011 that two former employees of The Washington Post , Bradley Graham , and his wife , Lissa Muscatine , had purchased the store from Meade and David Cohen . The store was reportedly sold for \$ 2 million , although price was not the main factor in the selection of new owners . Meade fully retired from work in the store on December 31 , 2012 .

Graham and Muscatine have added literary classes and trips since purchasing the store . The co @-@ owners are also considering an expansion of the store into a Georgetown location .

= = Services and reputation = =

Politics and Prose has a reputation for staff who are able to recommend books to customers . The 14 @, @ 000 square foot space contains an Espresso Book Machine for on demand printing of self @-@ published and out of print books , a cafe on the first floor of the building called " Modern Times " , and a number of different book genres . A Washington Post review of the cafe in 2006 reacted favorably to changes to the menu .

The store is famous for its author events , in which writers usually read an excerpt from their book and take questions from the audience . The Washington Post notes that as the talks gained prominence and the store grew more popular , Cohen and Meade , the original co @-@ owners , " became known as literary tastemakers " . C @-@ SPAN broadcasts around five of the talks a month , and the store has gained a reputation for having astute and smart audiences present at readings . Famous readers at its author events have included politicians such as Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama , and former Senator Edward Brooke , authors J.K. Rowling , Salman Rushdie , and Amy Chua , photographer Annie Leibovitz , and investigative reporter David Halberstam . Cohen in the past refused to allow some prominent writers to appear in the store , such as Matt Drudge , ostensibly because of their conservative leanings .

Politics and Prose is often seen to be an important stop for authors publicizing their work and is regarded as being a significant part of DC culture . New owners Bradley Graham and Lissa Muscatine were ranked # 50 on GQ 's " The 50 Most Powerful People in Washington " because of their purchase of Politics and Prose , describing the store as " ... liberal Washington 's most sacred space . " The New Yorker 's Hendrik Hertzberg commented on the unusually intelligent questions from the audience at readings , and Slate 's editor in 2007 , said : " If there 's one bookstore in the city you want to read in , it 's obviously the place . "