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Seven Events

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How did one president's nightmare and another president's heart attack change the course of American history?

University of Dayton history professor Larry Schweikart explains the answers in his new best-selling book *Seven Events That Made America America: And Proved that the Founding Fathers Were Right All Along*, released this month by Sentinel.

"Everyone knows about the big events in American history, like the Civil War, Pearl Harbor, the assassination of President Kennedy and 9/11," Schweikart said. "But there are other, less famous events that had an equally profound impact."

The book looks at seven transformative moments and analyzes how each spurred a trend that either continued or departed from the vision the Founding Fathers had for America, Schweikart said.

For example, President Martin Van Buren had a nightmare that inspired him to create a national political party, laying the foundation for a growing partisan divide and a larger federal government. Schweikart also writes how President Dwight D. Eisenhower's heart attack led to a war on red meat and the government's move to take greater control over Americans' diets.

Seven Events debuted at No. 25 on *The New York Times* Best-Seller list June 11 in the hardcover nonfiction category. The book has also been on Amazon.com's Top 100 best-seller list since June 4.

One of the events featured in the book is how rock 'n' roll music helped end the Cold War and bring down the Iron Curtain. The chapter inspired a documentary film called *Rockin' the Wall*, told from the perspective of rockers who played at the time and from survivors of communist regimes who recalled the lifeline that rock music provided.

Portions of the film were shot in Dayton and on the University of Dayton campus. Musicians in the film include Robby Krieger of The Doors, David Paich of Toto, Mother's Finest, Mark Stein of Vanilla Fudge and Leslie Mandoki, a European star who escaped from communism.

"Rock music is expressly American," said Schweikart, who was a drummer in a rock band for more than 10 years, opening for bands such as Steppenwolf and Mother's Finest. "The music starts together and ends together, but there's always a solo in the middle. Americans know how to come together to work for a common goal, but we also have to be able to express our individuality."

The film is scheduled for release in August, with plans to sell it to cable TV outlets. Learn more at www.rockinthewall.com (url: <http://www.rockinthewall.com>).

The seven events featured in the new book are:

- Martin Van Buren Has a Nightmare, and Big Government Is Born — in the 1820s
- The Dred Scott Decision Wrecks an Economy and Hastens a War
- Johnstown Fights a Flood and Demonstrates the Power of Private Compassion
- Ike Has a Heart Attack, Triggering Dietary Nannyism
- A Steel Guitar Rocks the Iron Curtain
- Ronald Reagan Tries to Keep the Peace — and Makes His Biggest Mistake
- Obama Makes a Speech — and the Media Gets Chills Up Its Leg

Schweikart taped an interview with conservative radio and television show host Glenn Beck promoting the book and the film. Portions of the interview ran June 16 on *The Glenn Beck Show* on the Fox News Channel.

Schweikart is also scheduled to do a book-signing event July 13 at Books and Company, 350 E. Stroop Road, Kettering. Call 937-298-6540 for more information.

For more information, contact Cameron Fullam, assistant director of media relations, at 937-229-3256 or fullam@udayton.edu.