

9-11-76
Book

What He Meant Was...

FORT WORTH, Tex. (AP) —Lyndon B. Johnson may have once proposed marriage to a confidante but the woman was naive if she took him seriously, says former presidential press secretary Bill Moyers.

Moyers said at a news conference Tuesday that it should be remembered that Johnson had a flair for vast exaggerations.

Moyers' remarks at Texas Christian University were the outgrowth of a book being written by Doris Kearns, now an associate professor at Harvard University, who was a close associate of Johnson.

She said recently that Johnson once said he loved her and even proposed marriage.

Persons must realize that "hyperbole was to Lyndon Johnson what oxygen is to life," Moyers said. "LBJ said many things to many people in the heat of anger, in the wiles of persuasion and in the passion of frustration which every President gaces."

"While I really don't know whether or not he ever said to Doris what she says he said, I suspect she heard accurately what he said without understanding what he meant," Moyers said.

Anyone who worked closely with Johnson learned he "was given to stretching the truth to as thin a soup as was necessary to feed a lot of people," Moyers said.