

First Ladies Library



Honorary Chairpersons

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady Barbara Bush
First Lady Nancy Reagan
First Lady Rosalynn Carter
First Lady Betty Ford
First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson

Executive Committee Co-Chairpersons

Mary Regula
(Congressman Ralph Regula)
Suzanne Timken
(Mrs. W. R. Timken Jr.)

Janet Volnovich
Sarah Brown
Fran Seiberling Bucholzer
Mary Cain
Dr. Carol Cartwright
Carolyn Rathburn Dix
Lynne Dragomier
Dr. Sheila Fisher
Shirley Jones
Martha Lottman
Cherrie Turner
Jane Vignos
Bonnie Wheeler

April 2, 1997

Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton
First Lady of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Clinton:

It is with great joy that the executive committee of the National First Ladies' Library send you this report and future time schedule plans for the promotion and 1998 formal dedication of this unique national resource.

We want to thank you for serving as honorary chair and tell you how much we appreciate your continued interest and encouragement of the last two years.

Carl Sferrazza Anthony has now completed a year's research, and with the skilled volunteer help of technical professors at Stark State College of Technology, the first and only First Ladies' bibliography will be available via the World Wide Web.

The next fifteen months will be a monumental period of growth as the First Ladies' Library is introduced to the American people. As our nation's First Lady, we hope that you will consider taking a visible role in the exciting events leading to the dedication that are planned during this time period. Specifically, please consider the following items:

1. At the beginning of the school year in September, we hope that you will introduce the National First Ladies' Library at a news conference at the White House by accessing your own bibliography, which will be linked to the popular White House home page.

Students in Canton, Ohio, the home of the library, as well as students throughout the nation, would be simultaneously linked.

What a unique, historic experience this would be, not only for the thousands of students who would be accessing it, but hopefully for our First Lady, too.

United
States
of America
First Ladies

Martha Washington

Abigail Adams

Martha Jefferson

Dolley Madison

Elizabeth Monroe

Louisa Adams

Rachel Jackson

Hannah Van Buren

Anna Harrison

Julia Tyler

Sarah Polk

Margaret Taylor

Abigail Fillmore

Jane Pierce

Mary Todd Lincoln

Eliza Johnson

Julia Grant

Lucy Hayes

Lucretia Garfield

Ellen Arthur

Frances Cleveland

Caroline Harrison

Ida Saxton McKinley

Edith Roosevelt

Helene Taft

Ellen Wilson

Edith Wilson

Florence Harding

Grace Coolidge

Lou Hoover

Eleanor Roosevelt

Bess Truman

Marie "Mamie" Eisenhower

Jacqueline Kennedy

Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson

Theirma "Pat" Nixon

Elizabeth "Betty" Ford

Rosalynn Carter

Nancy Reagan

Barbara Bush

Hillary Rodham Clinton

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 Page 2

2. We would like you to have an active role in the program for the First Ladies' Salute to First Women Awards Gala in June, 1998 on a date to be determined by you.

This award celebration will be held in Washington, DC and will honor five nationally recognized individuals who were the first women to attain specific positions of leadership in their chosen field.

3. We ask for your signature on a letter of invitation to the women who would be honored at the First Ladies' Salute to First Women Awards Gala.

I have enclosed two vision statements that explain more fully the mission of the library.

I remember meeting with you and sharing the importance of this great chapter of women's history. You inspired me at our first meeting and honored us by giving us your enthusiastic support.

We need your help with these special events that only you as our nation's First Lady can dramatically accomplish. We hope you will embrace this project as one lasting legacy to offer America as the forty-first First Lady of the United States.

Sincerely,

Mary Regula
 Co-Chair, Executive Committee
 First Ladies' Library

United States of America First Ladies

Martha Washington
 Abigail Adams
 Martha Jefferson
 Dolley Madison
 Elizabeth Monroe
 Louisa Adams
 Rachel Jackson
 Hannah Van Buren
 Anna Harrison
 Julia Tyler
 Sarah Polk
 Margaret Taylor
 Abigail Fillmore
 Jane Pierce
 Mary Todd Lincoln
 Eliza Johnson
 Julia Grant
 Lucy Hayes
 Lucretia Garfield
 Ellen Arthur
 Frances Cleveland
 Caroline Harrison
 Ida Saxton McKinley
 Edith Roosevelt
 Helen Taft
 Ellen Wilson
 Edith Wilson
 Florence Harding
 Grace Coolidge
 Lou Hoover
 Eleanor Roosevelt
 Bess Truman
 Marie "Mamie" Eisenhower
 Jacqueline Kennedy
 Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson
 Thelma "Pat" Nixon
 Elizabeth "Betty" Ford
 Rosalynn Carter
 Nancy Reagan
 Barbara Bush
 Hillary Rodham Clinton

FUTURE VISIONS OF THE FIRST LADIES' LIBRARY

By: Carl Sferrazza Anthony

A national collection of audio recordings of all First Ladies, drawn from their books-on-tape, the Museum of Broadcasting, radio interviews and speeches as available through the Presidential Libraries.

A national collection of still pictures of First Ladies, drawn from the collections of the Library of Congress, Presidential homes and Libraries.

Eventually, copies of reels of microfilm of First Ladies' papers (mostly from the pre-Presidential Library era) might be purchased from organizations such as the Ohio Historical Society, Massachusetts Historical Society and the collections of Presidential Papers, owned by the Library of Congress, along with microfilm viewers and copiers placed in the research room.

Some of the above material - particularly that from the presidential libraries - will fall into public domain; the rest, material for which the copyright is held by others, can be at the Library for reference use only, and it would be the responsibility of those seeking copies of such material to first obtain the written permission from the holder. In this way, the First Ladies' Library can be a national reference center without restraint about its collecting process.

Eventually, perhaps an exhibit room can be established at the Library and each year a special in-depth exhibit can illustrate the life and achievements of an individual First Lady, with lectures from historians not only on the First Lady, but the President and also the history of American women of that particular era.

Perhaps, too, with the on-line capacity to be available at the First Ladies' Library two activities can be ongoing and also serve national purposes:

- a) a national dialogue of opinions about the proper and best roles of not only a First Lady, but unelected women in politics;*
- b) various national polls can be taken on-line, seeking generalized views and reactions to events, controversies, speeches, etc. of incumbent First Ladies.*

THE FIRST LADIES' LIBRARY -
A UNIQUE NATIONAL RESOURCE

By: Dr. Carol Cartwright, President
Kent State University

As the first and only facility of its kind, the First Ladies' Library will serve as a unique, national resource for patrons from school children to serious scholars. As a national archive devoted to the lives and legacies of America's First Ladies, the Library's holdings will fill an informational void that has long frustrated academicians and armchair history buffs alike.

Presidential spouses, who hail from virtually every part of the country and represent a diversity of economic and social backgrounds, are fascinating in their own right. However, the study of First Ladies holds enormous potential for generating knowledge of a far broader scope. The changing roles of the First Lady - from social hostess to social activist and from silent partner to full partner - mirror the changing roles of all American women. Thus, the availability of comprehensive data about First Ladies is likely to spark research in disciplines including U.S. history, sociology and women's studies.

The Library's scholarly centerpiece will be a comprehensive, annotated bibliography of books, manuscripts, journals, diaries and other materials about and by the First Ladies.

Commissioned by the Library Executive Committee, the bibliography was compiled by the respected historian, Carl Sferrazza Anthony, who devoted more than a year to this ambitious project.

Modern technology will allow unprecedented access to this one-of-a-kind database. The 1,000-plus-page bibliography will be available via the World Wide Web on the First Ladies' Library Internet home page, which will be linked electronically to the popular White House home page. Eventually, the Library's home page will offer units of study that teachers and school librarians anywhere in the world can use to provide or enrich social studies curricula at all levels.

Those who are able to travel to Canton, Ohio, in person will have access to the Library's own computer facilities and to its growing collection of books, newspaper and journal articles and audio and video tapes. Visitors also will be able to glimpse a bygone era as they tour the home of America's 23rd First Lady, Ida Saxton McKinley, which has been restored with great attention to historical accuracy.

In addition to its primary function as a repository of historical data, the First Ladies' Library will serve a vital public-service mission as the sponsor of year-round educational and cultural activities and events. For example, short-and longer-term outreach activities will include:

- Celebrating an annual "Mrs. President's Day," held in conjunction with President's Day, during which lectures about the life and times of First Ladies are presented at local schools and books are donated to school libraries.*
- Developing units of study about First Ladies that encourage centers to use and enjoy libraries and computers.*
- Sponsoring guest lectures at public libraries and community centers by authorities on the Presidency and First Lady.*
- Coordinating and connecting all presidential sites and presidential libraries via the Internet.*
- Developing workshops for K-12 classes that demonstrates the wide range of research materials and methodologies, including electronic sources, documentaries and other films and oral histories.*
- Sponsoring a major film festival featuring First Ladies at theaters throughout Ohio and beyond.*
- Organizing displays, receptions and musical performances at cultural sites such as art and history museums and symphony halls.*
- Enlisting high school and college students to bring history alive for audiences from schools to social clubs.*
- Holding seminars on and by First Ladies about their unique role in American history.*

- *Encouraging women's leadership roles through workshops and study groups focusing on First Ladies.*
- *Providing assistance with a proposed television documentary about the First Ladies.*
- *Creating an information center on the history and influence of First Ladies for dissemination to the nation's presidential homes and libraries.*

The First Ladies' Library project has captured the imagination of the Canton, Ohio-area community and has generated enormous excitement among the community of scholars. Since its inception, the project has also received the enthusiastic endorsement of the nation's First Ladies, each of whom is an honorary project chairperson and many of whom have expressed a desire to attend the official opening in June 1998.

As the First Ladies' Library takes shape, so, too, does the promise of valuable, new knowledge about untold chapters in American history. And so, too, does the promise of inspiring Americans, people the world over, for generations to come.