



Interactive Biographies of the 20th Century's Greatest First Ladies: Eleanor Roosevelt, Jackie Kennedy and Hillary Clinton

By Charles River Editors

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American presidents have shaped the course of global affairs for generations, but as the saying goes, behind every great man there's a great woman. While the First Ladies often remain overshadowed by their husbands, some have carved unique niches in their time and left their own lasting legacy. Dolley Madison helped establish the role of the First Lady in the early 1800s, Eleanor Roosevelt gave voice to policy issues in a way that made her a forerunner of First Ladies like Hillary Clinton, and Jackie Kennedy created glamorous trends that made her more popular than her husband.

If Dolley Madison was instrumental in molding the role of First Lady in the 19th century, credit can be given to Eleanor Roosevelt for revolutionizing the political nature of the role in the 20th and 21st centuries and making it possible for presidents like Bill Clinton to enlist their wives to handle political duties. At the

same time, history might remember Eleanor more for what she did outside of the White House, as she became a critically acclaimed and world famous international author and advocate of civil rights, women's rights. By the time she had finished working for the United Nations, working on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, President Truman rightly called her "The First Lady of the World."

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy made it seem like anything was possible, and Americans were eager to believe him. The next three years would be fondly and famously labeled "Camelot," suggesting an almost mythical quality about the young President and his family. The famous label came from John's fashionable and beautiful wife, Jackie, whose elegance and grace made her the most popular woman in the world. Her popularity threatened to eclipse even her husband's, who famously quipped on one presidential trip to France that he was "the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris."

Americans were fascinated by the young First Lady's style, and the manner in which she glamorously positioned both the First Family and the White House in those years, and Jackie remains one of the country's most popular First Ladies. But it was in the face of adversity that she truly made her lasting mark, with the country taking its cue from her in the aftermath of the president's assassination. Having devised and lit the eternal flame at JFK's tombstone, Jackie also set about securing her husband's legacy, a time still fondly and mythically remembered as Camelot today, despite his legendary transgressions and infidelities.

During the presidential campaign in 1992, Democratic challenger Bill Clinton announced that by voting for him, Americans would get two presidents "for the

price of one.” The reference to his wife Hillary signified that she would be no ordinary First Lady, and indeed she was employed frequently by her husband in the White House to try to push legislation through Congress, most notably universal healthcare. While that proved to be one of the Clinton Administration’s greatest failures, Hillary and her staff continued to act as a political surrogate for the president during his two terms. Of course, describing Hillary Clinton as just a First Lady belittles all of her accomplishments. Today she is the most powerful woman in the world and one of the most recognizable.

This book explores the lives and legacies of the three women, analyzing their relationships with their husbands and the work they did as First Lady. Along with videos and pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Eleanor, Jackie and Hillary like you never have before.

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