



## NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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Downloadable images and complete press kit available at:  
[www.constitutioncenter.org/PressRoom/ChangingExhibits/](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/PressRoom/ChangingExhibits/)

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### **NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER TO HOST *FIRST LADIES: POLITICAL ROLE AND PUBLIC IMAGE* Last Stop on Exhibit's Nationwide Tour**

Philadelphia, PA – America's first ladies have fascinated generations, influenced politics and style, advocated for social causes, and navigated an unpaid, unelected, and difficult role. From October 5 through December 31, 2007, the National Constitution Center will host ***First Ladies: Political Role and Public Image***. From the exuberant Dolley Madison and troubled Mary Todd Lincoln, to the humanitarian Eleanor Roosevelt and the intriguing wives of our recent presidents, the exhibition celebrates the remarkable individuals who have occupied this demanding post. The showing of *First Ladies* at the National Constitution Center is the last stop on the exhibit's national tour.

*First Ladies* is based on one of the Smithsonian's most visited permanent exhibitions and contains artifacts from the rarely traveled first ladies collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, Behring Center. Organized by the National Museum of American History and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), *First Ladies* is made possible by A&E Network. Macy's is the local presenting sponsor and NBC 10 is the official media partner for the Center's showing of *First Ladies*.

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## ADD ONE/FIRST LADIES EXHIBITION

The exhibition features more than two centuries of elegant inaugural and evening gowns, clothing and jewelry, White House furnishings and china, photographs and portraits, and campaign and personal memorabilia. It examines the demanding duties of the presidential partner and national hostess, explores how her role has evolved from ceremonial colleague to one of international celebrity and recognized political power, and illustrates the importance of the first lady's public image to the success of a presidential administration.

"From Martha Washington's time to our own, first ladies have acted as first citizens. I think visitors will be surprised to learn how long and how often our nation's first ladies have championed social causes and served as their husbands' political advisers and confidantes," says National Constitution Center President and CEO Joseph M. Torsella. "What won't surprise visitors, or shouldn't, is seeing what strong and accomplished women have accompanied their husbands to the White House. It makes sense, after all, that the men who managed to scale the political heights had the benefit of extraordinary women at their side."

The nation's expectations of the first ladies reflect American ideals of home, family, and womanhood – ideals that change with every generation. Some first ladies remained within the boundaries of what was considered a proper role for women in their day. Others challenged and expanded those boundaries, subtly or openly.

The exhibition is comprised of more than 150 objects organized into four sections that reveal the historical roles of the first lady: "Inventing the Role," "Political Role," "Public Image," and "Life After the White House." Highlights include:

- Martha Washington's amber necklace
- Mary Todd Lincoln's monogrammed silver tea and coffee service
- Florence Harding's "I cast my first vote" badge
- Eleanor Roosevelt's gown from the 1945 inaugural reception
- Jacqueline Kennedy's brocade silk evening dress and matching jacket
- Betty Ford's campaign button and ERA buttons
- Rosalynn Carter's beaded crown, given by the Amorie Village on a Carter Center trip to Nigeria

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## ADD TWO/FIRST LADIES EXHIBITION

- Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" board game
- Hillary Rodham Clinton's signature black pants suit from her Senate campaign
- Laura Bush's white suit worn for the 2005 Inauguration

Four audiovisual stations and one radio address kiosk provide further background and give a voice to the women who served in this national role. A&E produced the video components, as well as an online educator's guide.

To augment the exhibition, the Center's education and public programming staff in the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach will develop a variety of resource materials, special programs, and family activities. The teacher's guide to the exhibition, developed by the Smithsonian and A&E, will be available for download from the Center's website at [www.constitutioncenter.org/education](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/education).

Also in keeping with the Center's mission to foster discussion and citizen engagement, a variety of evening programs discussing current and historical topics that relate to the exhibition will be planned.

In addition, the Center will also host ***The Kennedys: Portrait of a Family Photographs*** by Richard Avedon from October 5 through December 2, 2007. Acclaimed photographer Richard Avedon's never before displayed photographs of John and Jacqueline Kennedy and their two children combine politics, style, public interest, and photographic history to provide a compelling glimpse of two icons of American life. *The Kennedys: Portrait of a Family* will be on display inside the Center's main exhibition, and is free with regular museum admission.

Admission to *First Ladies: Political Role and Public Image* is \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors ages 65 and up, and \$9 for children ages 4-12. Active military personnel and children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available. Admission to the Center's main exhibition, *The Story of We the People*, including the award-winning theater production "Freedom Rising", is included. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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## ADD THREE/FIRST LADIES EXHIBITION

Macy's, the largest retail brand of Macy's, Inc., delivers fashion and affordable luxury to customers at more than 800 locations in 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Offering distinctive assortments including exclusive fashion and home brands, Macy's stores are operated by seven regionally based retail divisions – Macy's East, Macy's Florida, Macy's Midwest, Macy's North, Macy's Northwest, Macy's South, and Macy's West – and an online store at [macys.com](http://macys.com). Macy's East is based in New York City and operates approximately 171 stores in 12 states. For additional media materials, please visit our online pressroom at [www.macys.com/pressroom](http://www.macys.com/pressroom).

NBC 10, one of 10 Owned & Operated NBC television stations, is located in Bala Cynwyd, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia. Millions of viewers throughout Greater Philadelphia, Lehigh Valley, South Jersey and Delaware tune into NBC 10 everyday for the most up-to-date news, weather, sports, consumer, health and traffic reports. Viewers also tune in daily to watch the "10!" show; an upbeat, one-hour lifestyle and entertainment show featuring local, national and internationally known celebrities. The program airs 'live' Monday through Friday at 10 a.m. Recognized as the #1 web site ([www.nbc10.com](http://www.nbc10.com)) in the top 50 markets, NBC10.com was recently awarded with the prestigious National Edward R. Murrow Award.

A&E Network brings viewers the *art of entertainment* through a unique combination of three genres – biography, documentary and drama. A&E offers a diverse mix of programming ranging from original movies, to relevant documentary specials and series, including the Emmy Award-winning series Biography®, to dramatic series and contemporary performances.

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 50 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work, and play. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at [www.sites.si.edu](http://www.sites.si.edu).

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## ADD FOUR/FIRST LADIES EXHIBITION

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. The Center serves as a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising". The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education. Also, as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6700 or visit [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org).

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