



## Jimmy Carter Library & Museum News Release

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### *"First Ladies"* Exhibit Opens Next Saturday at Carter Presidential Library

*First Ladies' Gowns, Jewelry, China and Political Items From Martha Washington to Laura Bush*

ATLANTA, GA.- Her name has never appeared on the ballot but she is one of the nation's most fascinating and beloved women---The First Lady.

Now, in an Atlanta exclusive, the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum hosts

*"First Ladies: Political Role and Public Image."*

**Opens Saturday, October 22, 2005**

**Monday-Saturday: 9:00 am – 4:45 pm.**

**Sunday: noon- 4:45 p.m.**

The exhibition—featuring first ladies' gowns and clothing, personal belongings, White House furnishings, political campaign materials, and other historical items—examines the demanding duties of the presidential partner and national hostess, explores how her role has evolved from ceremonial partner 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.

"Throughout our history, the first lady has been a central figure in extending political roles for women and gaining acceptance for women in public life," says Edith Mayo, curator emeritus at the National Museum of American History. "As the most visible women in America, the first ladies have evolved from the president's social and ceremonial partners to advocates of social causes and political allies in their own right. This evolution places the first lady at the center of both presidential history and women's history."

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." Martha Washington's amber necklace, Mary Todd Lincoln's silver tea service, Eleanor Roosevelt's gown from the 1945 inaugural reception, a signature black pants suit from Hillary Rodham Clinton's Senate campaign and literacy materials sponsored by Laura Bush are among the items in the exhibition. Four audiovisual stations and one radio address kiosk provide further background and give a voice to the women who served in this national role.

The exhibition was organized by the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American History and the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. "First Ladies" is made possible by A&E Network.

The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library & Museum is open from 9 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. Monday thru Saturday and from noon to 4:45 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors (60+), students and military with ID. Those 16 years old and younger are always free. Parking is free at the Carter Library & Museum.