

## Fashion with a heart: First ladies' red dresses on display in Canton



*The Repository/Scott Heckel*

Nancy Reagan (left) and Rosalynn Carter wore these red outfits on display at the National First Ladies' Library in Canton.

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[Photo gallery of red dresses at First Ladies National Library and Museum](#)

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CANTON —

Barbara Bush's dress has a flowing appearance, while daughter-in-law Laura Bush's dress is more slenderizing.

Hillary Clinton's dress is shorter and more businesslike, and Rosalynn Carter's "dress" isn't a dress at all. It's a suit.

What all of these garments in an exhibit at the National First Ladies' Library have in common with several other dresses provided by first ladies and celebrities are their colors.

All the dresses are shades of red.

The Heart Truth's Red Dress collection, being shown for only the third time, is part of a larger exhibit — "Caring Hearts: The Health of a Nation" — offered in the main floor exhibit hall at the National First Ladies' Library's Education and Research Center at 205 Market Ave. S. That larger exhibit focuses on first ladies' efforts to raise awareness of national health-care concerns.

"When we planned on doing an exhibit with the theme of first ladies and their health causes, we thought the red dresses would fit right in," said Executive Director Patricia Krider, who noted that library founder Mary Regula was the person who secured the rarely seen Red Dress Collection.

The red dress was instituted as a symbol for heart care awareness six years ago by The Heart Truth, a national awareness campaign for women about heart disease. The red dresses on display were gathered from former first ladies for The Heart Truth's fashion show several years ago at the Kennedy

Center in Washington, D.C. The only other time they have been displayed, said Krider, is at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

The red dresses on display were donated to the collection by Laura Bush, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barbara Bush, Nancy Reagan, Rosalynn Carter, and Betty Ford.

The exhibit also includes the red dress of Lady Bird Johnson, said Krider, as well as dresses from such celebrities as Danica Patrick, Venus and Vanessa Williams, Billy Jean King, and Carmen Del'Orefice.

The overall Caring Hearts exhibit focuses on the health causes of Lou Hoover, Eleanor Roosevelt, Betty Ford, Rosalynn Carter, Nancy Reagan, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Laura Bush.

"We thought the red dresses would be a really nice enhancement to that exhibit," said Krider.