

## NEWSLETTER

### Summer 1998

#### **ROSALYNN CARTER CUTS RIBBON TO OPEN NATIONAL FIRST LADIES' LIBRARY**

The national spotlight focused on a small Ohio city on June 8 when former First Lady Rosalynn Carter cut the ceremonial ribbon on the steps of the National First Ladies' Library, the only national institution devoted to preserving the serious contributions of first ladies and other important women in American history. She was joined by Founding Chair and President of the National First Ladies' Library Mary Regula and CBS news anchor Paula Zahn in officially dedicating the new historical repository and research facility.

Hundreds of people - many of them dressed in Victorian attire - lined the streets of Canton, Ohio to witness the opening of this new national archive, located in the historically documented, Victorian-style Saxton McKinley House.

"Today we dedicate a new national treasure, an archive to preserve important historical data about America's First Ladies and other great women," Mrs. Carter said. "This library is for everyone - from school children to accomplished scholars - and will serve as a unique national resource for millions of people to enjoy."

The Saxton McKinley House has been painstakingly restored to its original splendor in preparation for its national debut as home of the National First Ladies' Library. Known as the *Grand Lady* of Market Avenue in Canton, the Saxton McKinley House breathes new life as the first facility dedicated to documenting the lives and accomplishments of America's First Ladies.

In dedicating the Library, Mary Regula said, "Today marks the culmination of a years-long dream of mine to bring the works and achievements of America's First Ladies within reach of the American people. For far too long the contributions of these important women have gone unrecognized, yet their influence has been great. Now people from all walks of life, young and old, scholar and novice can gain knowledge into the issues and times of each First Lady."

The celebration included a VIP reception sponsored by Consolidated Natural Gas Company and continued into the night with a Grand Victorian Gala. This dinner, held in a large tent on site, was underwritten by The Hoover Company, a division of Maytag Corporation. Notable guests included actress Jean Stapleton who has played the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in the CBS television movie *Eleanor: First Lady of the World*. "Eleanor Roosevelt would be proud to see the vision of this Library come to life here today," said Ms. Stapleton, who served as Mistress of Ceremonies at the dinner.

The dedication and gala dinner were highlights of weekend-long citywide festivities that included public tours of the Saxton McKinley House led by docents in period dress; a

lecture and book signing by noted historian Carl Anthony on his new book, "AFlorence Harding: The First Lady, The Jazz Age, and the death of America's Most Scandalous President"; a discussion about the powerful role America's First Ladies have played in the country's development by Edith Mayo, executive advisor of the National First Ladies' Library; an exhibit at the McKinley Museum featuring artifacts of First Ladies associated with Ohio; an exhibit on the 1936 Berlin Olympics at the Art Institute; and a display of the historic cars of the Presidents at the Canton Classic Car Museum.

### **HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO ATTEND FIRST WOMEN AWARDS IN WASHINGTON, DC ON OCTOBER 6, 1998**

This fall, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will honor a handful of women whose contributions have impacted our nation's history in the 20th century. The *First Ladies Salute First Women Awards* will be held on October 6, 1998, at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC. Chaired by General Motors Corporation, invited guests to the dinner and preceding VIP reception include Members of Congress and the Administration, former First Ladies, presidential descendants, state First Ladies, corporate and individual members of the National First Ladies' Library and the media.

The First Women Awards are an extension of the National First Ladies' Library's mission to educate people about the serious accomplishments that women have made to the political, social and economic history of the United States. Mrs. Clinton, who is planning to attend the event on October 6, said, "I am delighted to be a part of the inaugural celebration of this prestigious award. This is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the energy, contributions, and ideas of women who have excelled as pioneers in their fields. It is acknowledgments such as this award that inspire others to break barriers and open doors."

The honorees, whose names will be withheld until the event, were chosen by a special committee appointed by the Library's national board of directors and will include familiar national names as well as women who have not traditionally been in the public eye.

Tickets are available as part of corporate and individual membership packages. Membership prices and additional information about the event may be obtained by calling Page Kjellstrom at 703-556-0863. Memberships support programs of the National First Ladies' Library.

### **SAXTON MCKINLEY HOUSE OFFERS UNIQUE GLIMPSE OF HISTORY THROUGH RESTORED ROOMS AND EXHIBITS**

The National First Ladies' Library offers patrons an interesting look at First Lady history through the eyes of the past, present and future. Visitors to the Saxton McKinley House, the physical home of the Library, will see a number of rooms that have been meticulously researched and restored to their Victorian era grandeur when President and Mrs. McKinley occupied the home in the late 1800s. Spearheaded by Chairman Dr. Sheila

Fisher, the Restoration and Acquisitions Committee recently completed Ida's sitting room and bedroom and the ballroom. The sitting room and bedroom were reconstructed from an old photograph and postcard showing Mrs. McKinley seated near a table shrine she had fashioned in memory of President McKinley after his assassination. In addition to a great carved Victorian table, chairs and buffet, the ballroom hosts a remarkable exhibit of historic and rarely seen photographs of the 58 women who served as First Lady over 42 administrations. A second exhibit features the White House and post-White House activities of the six living First Ladies, with an emphasis on major programs and initiatives.

Guests can continue their nostalgic journey through the past with a stroll through the Victorian rose garden adjacent to the Saxton McKinley House. This beautiful garden, created by several local garden clubs under the chairmanship of Carol Sponseller, features a variety of roses named after America's First Ladies.

Those interested in the current First Lady can view video excerpts from Mrs. Clinton's White House launch of the National First Ladies' Library on-line bibliography and Web site earlier this year. Visitors can also pick up information about upcoming educational lectures, book reviews and other ongoing educational outreach activities.

Armchair history buffs and scholars alike can peruse the "Library of the Future," by visiting the comprehensive on-line bibliography of over 40,000 works about and by First Ladies. This bibliography, the educational centerpiece of the Library, can be accessed from a workstation located next to Ida's sitting room. Modern videoconferencing technology provided by Nortel, which will be used to host lectures and symposia, can also be found on site.

Many people contributed to the excitement of opening this new American institution. The Library offers special thanks to all those who were instrumental in completing the restoration of the Saxton McKinley House, developing the exhibits and installing the technology.

## **A WORD OF THANKS TO CONSOLIDATED NATURAL GAS**

The National First Ladies' Library was created to fill the informational void that exists regarding the contributions of America's First Ladies to our nation's history. It is an important mission if we are to fully understand the impact that First Ladies have not only on social and political issues, but also on the changing roles of women. The Library is fortunate to have a number of corporations, foundations and individuals who have supported its mission over the last three years that the Library has been in development. During this inaugural year, the National First Ladies' Library has been especially grateful for the support and guidance of the chair of the Founding Sponsors Committee, Consolidated Natural Gas Company.

The Library had the good fortune to be introduced to CNG just as it was poised for its national debut. "The Library was interested in developing a partnership with a company

that was committed to the mission and spirit of the project and would support it from all levels of the company," said Mary Regula, Founding Chair and President.

At the suggestion of his staff, Ray Ivey, Vice President of CNG Foundation and Director of Public Affairs, attended a meeting of the Ohio Site Committee where he became very excited about the project. "I saw plans for the on-line bibliography, the Saxton McKinley House and the educational programs, and I knew that CNG had to be involved," said Ivey. "The scope and the importance of the program were far too important not to reach out to a national audience."

Since 1997, CNG has demonstrated its commitment to doing just that. With a seat on the National Board of Directors, CNG has assisted in guiding board and committee development, long range plans and programs such as the First Women Awards and First Ladies of the States. CNG's Chairman and CEO, George Davidson, took a leading role in developing the Library's Founding Sponsors program. Additionally, CNG donated the beautiful new gaslights at the Saxton McKinley House. The National First Ladies' Library appreciates the active support and participation of Consolidated Natural Gas Company, and looks forward to continuing this partnership in the future.

## **WELCOME TO NEW BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

We welcome **Dr. Sheila Fisher** of Canton, Ohio as Vice President of the Library. Fisher, who began her affiliation with the National First Ladies' Library as one of the original 13 Ohio Site Committee members, has been an active member of the National Board of Directors. She chairs the Restoration and Acquisitions Committee and has been the impetus behind the restoration of the Saxton McKinley House.

Fisher replaces **Suzanne Timken**, who resigned earlier this year. Timken, also an original Site Committee member, actively served as Co-chair with Mary Regula and played an instrumental role in early fund raising for the creation of the National First Ladies' Library. Her dedication and service were critical to the establishment of this new institution, and her participation will be missed.

Also joining the National Board of Directors is **Maria Miller** of Shaker Heights, Ohio. Recent appointments to the National Advisory Board include **William and Rita Haines** of Canton, Ohio and **Craig Schermer**, an avid collector of First Lady memorabilia, from Cleveland, Ohio.

The First Ladies of the States Committee welcomes new members **Bea Romer of Colorado, Brenda Edgar of Illinois, Theresa Racicot of Montana** and **Martha Sundquist of Tennessee**.

## **MAYTAG, HOOVER JOIN FOUNDING SPONSOR LIST**

Headquartered in North Canton, Ohio, The Hoover Company, a division of Maytag Corporation, has been a philanthropic friend of the National First Ladies' Library for several years. The Library is now pleased to welcome them as a Founding Sponsor.

Maytag Chairman and CEO Leonard Hadley chaired the Grand Victorian Gala in June. Addressing the dinner guests, Hadley said, "As a company whose consumer base is significantly composed of women, we have seen how women juggle multiple roles as wives, mothers, professionals and leaders of our country. Women are an important part of our nation's history. Tonight we honor the women who have devoted their lives to making our nation strong."

### **PRESS COVERAGE BRINGS LIBRARY TO MILLIONS**

From its January launch in Washington, DC to a White House press conference when Hillary Rodham Clinton inaugurated its Web site, to its June dedication in Canton, the National First Ladies' Library has enjoyed extensive media exposure as the Fourth Estate realizes the academic, social and historical value of this important new archive.

Stories have run on all the major networks and CNN, and national print outlets such as *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Arizona Republic*, *Orange County Register* and *Victoria Magazine* have covered the Library in their pages. National wire services such as the Associated Press and Reuters have brought stories to smaller papers across the country such as the (*Torrance, CA*) *Daily Breeze*, (*Yakima (WA)*) *Herald-Republic*, (*Battle Creek (MI)*) *Enquirer* and (*Burlington County (NJ)*) *Times*. And reporters from the local *Canton Repository* and *Akron Beacon Journal* have produced some of the most interesting, in-depth coverage of all.

"We're pleased by all the media coverage of the National First Ladies' Library," said Founding Chair and President Mary Regula. "It introduces the country to a new and important national resource."

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