



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE : April 4, 2023

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## **National First Ladies Library and First Ladies National Historic Site to Host Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Exhibition Opening May 2, 2023**

***Get to Know the Real Jackie O. at the “Beyond Camelot” Exhibit Featuring the Gifted Collection of Monte Durham from “Say Yes to the Dress Atlanta”***

**[Canton, Ohio, April 4, 2023]** – Of course you know the pillbox hat and big sunglasses, but do you really know Jackie? Get to know the *real* Jackie O. at the First Ladies National Historic Site in Canton, Ohio, this spring!

Opening May 2, 2023 and running through April 27, 2024, *Beyond Camelot: The Life and Legacy of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis*, organized by the National First Ladies Library at the First Ladies National Historic Site, features never-before-seen artifacts donated by Monte Durham of *Say Yes to the Dress Atlanta*, who will appear in Canton for the exhibit’s opening.

The exhibit will kick off with a private and exclusive “First Look” Champagne Reception featuring Mr. Durham on Monday evening, May 1, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the First Ladies National Historic Site (205 Market Avenue South, Canton, Ohio 44702). The exhibition will open to the public on Tuesday, May 2, at 9:00 a.m. with curator-led tours led all day during the Grand Opening. The exhibition runs through April of 2024.

Through intimate letters, awe-inspiring reproduction dresses, and vintage ephemera, *Beyond Camelot: The Life and Legacy of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis* will explore the layers of Jackie’s life, from her role as a mother to her position as First Lady. Go beyond the White House and learn about Jackie’s life, from her days as a “camera girl” to her late career as a book editor at Doubleday. Experience Jackie through her number-one fan, Monte Durham, as he shares the intimate stories revealed by his collectibles. Hear tales beyond the history books, from the Mona Lisa loan to the White House kindergarten classroom.

A can’t-miss centerpiece of the exhibition features an exquisite reproduction of Jacqueline Kennedy’s wedding gown created by a couture wedding dress designer (the original dress is too delicate to display and is currently preserved at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum). The dress highlights the contributions of African-American dress designer Ann Lowe, who created Jackie’s wedding gown – one of the most recognizable

wedding dresses of all time. The exhibition will also allow visitors to learn about the groundbreaking designer and her relationship with Jackie.

“I have loved everything Jackie Kennedy for many years,” said Monte Durham. “This is an incredible opportunity to share with the world something so important to me. I have enjoyed collecting ‘Jackie’ artifacts and memorabilia for many years, and the donation of a substantial portion of my collection to the National First Ladies Library in Canton is a way to keep her memory alive. When you say ‘Jackie Kennedy,’ everyone has a story; everyone has a remembrance. This exhibition will showcase the many facets of her life, and I am simply thrilled to be a part of it.”

National First Ladies Library President and CEO Patty Dowd Schmitz said, “We are honored that Mr. Durham has chosen to gift his collection to the National First Ladies Library at the First Ladies National Historic Site, and we could not be more thrilled to host him in person for our exclusive ‘First Look’ Champagne Reception on Monday evening, May 1. “Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis was an extraordinary woman whose life and legacy extends far beyond her time as First Lady. We hope our patrons will be as thrilled as we are to explore her life ‘Beyond Camelot’ at this special 2023-2024 exhibit.”

*Beyond Camelot: The Life and Legacy of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis* will open to the public on Tuesday, May 1, 2023 and run through April 27, 2024. For tickets to the exclusive “First Look” Champagne Reception with Monte Durham, go to <https://bit.ly/ChampagneReception>. Monte Durham will also be appearing at the Kent State Annual Fashion show on April 30.

For more information on “Beyond Camelot,” visit [www.firstladies.org](http://www.firstladies.org).

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## ABOUT NATIONAL FIRST LADIES LIBRARY

***\*\*\*We preserve, promote and educate about the significant role of First Ladies of the USA and their contributions throughout history.***

The National First Ladies Library was founded in Canton, Ohio, in 1995 by Mary Regula, wife of former U.S. Representative Ralph Regula. It is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to preserve, promote and educate about the significant role of First Ladies of the U.S and their contributions throughout history. The organization operates and manages the First Ladies National Historic Site in a partnership agreement with the National Park Service. In 2000, President Bill Clinton signed a bill establishing the First Ladies National Historic Site in Canton as the 380<sup>th</sup> unit of the National Park Service. The site consists of the Ida Saxton McKinley House, the family home of First Lady Ida Saxton McKinley and the longtime residence of President William and Ida McKinley, and the Education and Research Center. The Education and Research Center has exhibit space, a Victorian theatre, a research library, conference and seminar rooms, archival storage and processing rooms, and administrative offices.