THE
FIRST LADIES
EXPERIENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2026

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National First Ladies Announces New First Ladies Experience and Launches Capital Campaign

Canton landmark will expand its historic campus with an immersive experience exploring the lives and legacies of America's First Ladies for all generations

CANTON, Ohio, November 10, 2026: National First Ladies announced plans for the First Ladies Experience, a new flagship building in downtown Canton, and launched a capital campaign to bring it to life. Planned next to the historic Saxton-McKinley House and adjoining First Ladies Park, the Experience will invite visitors to discover how America's First Ladies have shaped the nation through leadership, advocacy, diplomacy, and service.

The project will expand National First Ladies' campus at the First Ladies National Historic Site, continuing its more than 25-year partnership with the National Park Service. Its setting will connect the home of First Lady Ida Saxton McKinley with a new place for discovery and the recently revitalized First Ladies Park. The park welcomed its first full summer season in 2026 following a $500,000 renovation made possible through support from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Announced during America's 250th anniversary year, the initiative will create an enduring contribution to the national celebration, advancing National First Ladies' mission to preserve, promote, and educate through the lives and legacies of the First Ladies.

"***As we mark 250 years of our nation, we have an opportunity to deepen the way Americans understand the women who helped shape it,***" said David Lee, President and CEO of National First Ladies. "***The Experience will allow their stories to reach a new generation. We want every visitor to leave with a richer understanding of our history and a stronger sense of their own capacity to make a difference.***

The Experience will combine immersive storytelling, interactive technology, and personal perspectives to explore one of the most visible yet continually evolving roles in American life. Designed for students, families, and lifelong learners, it will offer new ways to understand how women have exercised influence, navigated public expectations, and helped define national priorities.

Eight interconnected exhibition areas will guide that journey. ***The Role of the First Lady*** will introduce the role's evolution and the women, including White House Hostesses, who have shaped it. ***Before the Title*** will explore the experiences that formed them, while ***Life Behind the White House Doors*** will reveal the intersection of family life, public duty, and national tradition. ***Where Style Takes Shape*** will examine fashion as a language of identity and diplomacy; ***Advocacy & Action*** will explore the causes they championed; and ***A Role Still in the Making*** will consider their enduring legacies and the role's future.

A signature concluding experience, ***In Their Footsteps***, will feature a carefully recreated scenic replica of the White House West Sitting Room, inspired by its appearance during Jacqueline Kennedy's time as First Lady. Visitors will be invited to sit within the setting, take photographs, and encounter a more personal dimension of White House history. Its tactile, participatory approach will offer another way for learners of varying abilities to connect with the past.

Universal design will guide the building and exhibitions from the outset, with an emphasis on reducing physical, sensory, and learning barriers. Plans include accessible seating, captioned media, and opportunities to engage through sight, sound, and touch, creating a welcoming environment that recognizes the many ways people learn.

With roots in Canton and a national educational mission, the Experience is envisioned as a destination for visitors from across the United States and around the world, strengthening the city's place in the telling of America's story.

An Ohio-based creative and architectural team will help realize that vision. Exhibition designer **Giulietta Tripoli**, a Cincinnati-based multidisciplinary designer and artist, brings experience spanning cultural institutions and major brands. Her portfolio includes exhibition design for New York's Museum of Broadway, developed with its founders from concept through installation, as well as experiences for Dell at SXSW, Delta Air Lines at the Grammys, Google, HBO, La Mer and Ray-Ban.

Hyperquake, a creative strategy, branding, and experience design agency based in Cincinnati, brings expertise in connecting physical spaces with digital storytelling. Its work includes the digital interactive experiences at The Source, the Library of Congress's experiential research gallery for young people ages 8 to 15. Hyperquake helped turn exploration of the Library's collections into hands-on discovery.

SoL Harris/Day Architecture, based in North Canton, will serve as the project architect. The firm previously worked with National First Ladies on the restoration of the historic Saxton-McKinley House in the 1990s. The current project focuses on the new First Ladies Experience building; it does not include restoration work on the house.

The capital campaign will be co-chaired by Stacy Dulik and Penny Adams, two leaders with distinguished records of service. Dulik, a Stark County native, serves on the National First Ladies Library & Museum's Auxiliary Board and is the current President of The Children's Network of Stark County. She has held leadership roles with the Doctors Hospital Service League and Stark County Medical Society Auxiliary and served as President of the Aultman Hospital Women's Board. She also co-chaired the board's 2026 Angel Auction, "Boots and Bling," with Patty Paschke, a member of the National First Ladies Library & Museum's Board of Trustees. Adams serves on the museum's National Advisory Council and previously served as Deputy Press Secretary for First Lady Pat Nixon and Director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Press Office. Together, they bring community leadership, national experience, and a shared commitment to advancing the museum's mission.

"*Penny brings a deeply personal connection to the history we are entrusted to share,*" Lee said. **"*Having served First Lady Pat Nixon, she understands the dedication behind the public role and the importance of carrying those stories forward. Stacy brings that same spirit of service to the community she calls home. Her years of leadership reflect a belief that caring for others can strengthen an entire community. Together, they unite the national significance of this vision with the local commitment that will bring it to life.*"**

The campaign invites individuals, foundations, and corporate partners to help create a lasting home for discovery, education, and inspiration. To learn more about the First Ladies Experience or support the campaign, visit https://firstladies.org/get-involved/capital-campaign.

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