

Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy

Lead: The Massachusetts politician was twice rebuffed by the lovely socialite. It seemed their courtship couldn't quite get off the ground.

Intro.: "A Moment in Time" with Dan Roberts.

Content: John Fitzgerald Kennedy and Jacqueline Lee Bouvier seemed an ideal match. Both were Roman Catholic, aristocratic, wealthy and attractive, but both led very busy lives and he was involved in what seemed to be an up-hill campaign for the Senate.

After a rather casual off-and-on courtship lasting about a year they married in the spring of 1953. Her exposure to rough and tumble political life her husband relished had been slim until she became a Kennedy but by time he announced for the Presidency in the late 50s, it was clear that his wife was a substantial contribution to his political success. He would contend that when the word got out she was to campaign with him the audience would swell. They would work a town, she on one side of the street, he on another. He would laughingly complain that his wife would draw double the number of people. Her aggressive approach on the hustings was often stark contrast to an elegant style. Once during the

Wisconsin primary in 1960 she went into a supermarket and gently commandeered the PA system and said, "Just keep on shopping while I tell you about my husband, John F. Kennedy.

After they entered the White House, Mrs. Kennedy jealously guarded their children from the pressure cooker of public exposure but continued within the confines of motherhood to aid her husband's Presidency. She conducted a widely watched television tour of the White House and transformed the Washington social scene with many glittering parties.

When the couple took Paris by storm in the summer of 1961, Kennedy acknowledged his wife's popularity when he introduced himself as the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris. She charmed the crowds as she spoke to them in fluent French.

Perhaps her greatest contribution was in the days following the President's assassination when her quiet dignity in the face of great personal misfortune helped the country with its collective loss.

"A Moment in Time" is produced at the University of Richmond. This is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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