

**Volume 9**

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**First Ladies: Lady Bird Johnson**

**Lead: Her time in the White House began with the tragic assassination of President Kennedy, but Lady Bird Johnson's service as First Lady was many decades in the making.**

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

**Content: Few politicians of his generation could match the white, hot ambition of Lyndon Baines Johnson. He pursued power with a steady and furious determination and at times evidenced a stormy and occasionally abusive personality when dealing with enemies but also colleagues,**

**subordinates, friends and even his family. In the middle of all that sound and fury resided his wife from 1934, Claudia Alta Taylor, whom he always called by her nickname from birth, Lady Bird.**

**It was not an easy life. Lyndon Johnson was demanding, impetuous and at times overbearing, but she quickly adapted herself to his personality and became, in the words of her daughter, Lucy Baines, “the knot of the family...who smoothes us down and makes us all feel closer together.”**

**She was a canny businesswoman, parlaying her inheritance into a radio and television empire which she**

**personally nurtured and supervised. From the beginning Lady Bird Johnson, she was an active participant in his political ascent, working in his congressional office, sitting in on campaign strategy sessions and, in 1964, became the first First Lady to actively campaign in a Presidential contest. She concentrated on the South, helping to soften the resentment of many white southerners to the Civil Rights movement her husband had come to champion. While the Deep South eventually went to his opponent, her efforts are credited with holding the upper South for President Johnson in his overwhelming victory.**

**After the Vietnam War crippled**

**his Presidency and Johnson retired to Texas, Lady Bird Johnson continued her support for him as the dutiful wife and advocate until his death in 1973.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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**Montgomery, Ruth. *Mrs. LBJ*. New York, 1974.**

**Smith, Marie. *The President's Lady: An Intimate Biography of Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson*. New York, 1964.**

**<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/cj36.html>**

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