

# Revived interest in living wills

By Esme M. Infante  
USA TODAY

Once doctors deemed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis sick beyond hope, they let her go home to die swiftly and without medical intervention — reportedly just as she had requested in a "living will."

She's said to have been among a rising number of U.S. adults signing documents to tell doctors what should — or shouldn't — be done if they grow hopelessly ill and unable to make competent choices for themselves.

Interest in living wills spiked when former President Richard Nixon, who had signed such a document, died last month, and is expected to peak again.

*The New York Times* reports that Onassis, who died last Thursday of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, authorized a living will in February ruling out aggressive medical treatment if she became too sick to be saved.

Choice in Dying, a New York organization for patients' rights, fielded 11,000 calls last month on living wills — nearly five times the usual amount. Now it's bracing for another wave.

"We are seeing a much younger population calling us — more men, more middle-aged," says Ann Fade, the group's legal and educational program director. "A lot of people figure, 'Someday I'll fill one out.' It takes a public event like Nixon or Onassis to drive it home that they should do it now and not wait."

Experts recommend talking frankly with family members and doctors before starting a living will.

The process is inexpensive and the required forms take



**NIXON:** The late president had signed a living will.

just minutes to fill out, Fade says. No lawyer is needed, usually just a witness or two.

A few places require forms to be registered with the state or notarized (check with your doctor or state officials for requirements in your state). Otherwise, copies are simply distributed to relatives, friends or advisers.

Official forms specific to each of the states and Washington, D.C., are available by calling Choice in Dying at 212-366-5540 or writing the organization at 200 Varick St., 10th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10014. State departments of health or aging and hospitals also should have them.

An estimated 15% to 20% of U.S. adults have living wills set to legally go into effect when a doctor declares them terminally ill or permanently unconscious and unable to make sound decisions.

Most states also allow a health proxy — usually a relative or friend who has durable power of attorney specifically to make medical decisions when a patient can't.

A health proxy can also act for the patient who lies temporarily unconscious in an emergency, making decisions such as whether a limb should be amputated.

Not everyone agrees that living wills are in the best interest of the sick.

When patients specify that their lives shouldn't be prolonged with machines or drugs, their wishes may conflict with those of loved ones who want every last glimmer of life preserved. Family members and doctors can end up butting heads over the best course of action when a living will isn't specific enough.

Some experts worry that living wills may encourage doctors to halt treatment when there still may be a small hope for recovery. People also often fear they're signing away power to determine their fate.

Fade thinks those notions are unfounded: Doctors must certify when patients are irreversibly sick and incompetent.

"Or people say, 'I don't need any of that. My family would know what I want.'" But when it comes down to the wire, she says, relatives and doctors sometimes are reluctant to follow the patient's wishes for withdrawal of food, water and/or life support.

Living wills empower patients by making sure their wishes are obeyed, Fade contends.

When both a living will and a proxy are authorized, doctors may feel more assured that the agent is making sound decisions for the patient, Fade says. "They have assurance that they are speaking on your behalf, not making your decisions for you."

## REMEMBERING JACKIE

## Onassis' diverse works are lasting

By Jeannie Williams  
USA TODAY

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' legend will live on — and so will her legacies.

The former first lady has left a great deal to remember her by in many fields. A sampling:

► **On White House tours, you can still see her influence.** She was the first lady who first approached the Pennsylvania Avenue mansion as a museum, establishing the White House curator's office and White House Historical Association. She supervised a major renovation — bringing in vintage American furniture and paintings — that culminated in the successful televised 1962 tour she hosted for the American public.

The Red Room still contains most pieces placed there in the Kennedy years. The Blue Room has 19th-century gilded furniture from President Monroe's time that Onassis hunted down. And we saw the First Lady's Garden when the Clintons read tributes to Onassis there Friday morning. Also called the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden, it was established when she lived there.

► **Culture owes a debt to Onassis.** She invited artists and performers to the White House and is credited with inspiring the National Endowment for the Arts. A board member of American Ballet Theatre for a quarter-century, she most recently was honorary board chairman. "She was greatly responsible for ABT's comeback and survival," says Blaine Trump, an ABT supporter who worked with Onassis on benefit events. "She worked hard as a 'friend-raiser' and a fund-raiser for ABT. Last year, it was on the verge of closing its doors; now it's looking at a bright future."

ABT executive director Gary Dunning says, "Mrs. Onassis was a constant source of support" and "demonstrated a strong commitment to the welfare of artists everywhere."



**FAMILY:** Sen. Edward Kennedy, left, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, John Kennedy Jr., Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg and her husband, Edwin, at the 1992 Profile in Courage Award ceremony AP



**EARLY INFLUENCE:** Jacqueline Kennedy was the first to treat the White House as a public treasure, leading a TV tour in 1962. AP

At the beginning of Friday's ABT performance in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House, artistic director Kevin McKenzie spoke to the audience about Onassis' meaning to the company.

► **When you walk through New York's Grand Central**

**Terminal, you should think of Onassis.** Beginning in 1975, she worked to help prevent it from being replaced by an office building and made public statements (rare for her) during the drive to save it. Friday night, the Municipal Art Society — a

“Mrs. Onassis... demonstrated a strong commitment to the welfare of artists everywhere.”

— Gary Dunning, executive director of American Ballet Theatre

the *Taiga*, about a family living in the Siberian wilderness, due in July, to *The Cartoon History of the Universe II* and *Skies in Blossom: Zen and the Poetry of Emily Dickinson*. The list Onassis edited, says Doubleday President Stephen Rubin, “shows the breadth and depth of her interest and sensibility. The Michael Jackson book (*Moonwalk*) was really an aberration — it's a serious list of good books.”

Among them: Bill Moyers' *Healing & the Mind* and the two-volume *A World of Ideas*. Moyers calls Onassis “as witty, warm and creative in private as she was grand and graceful in public.” Doubleday's offices will close today in tribute to Onassis.

► **She leaves a legacy of**

leader in the drive — offered an Onassis tribute in the station's renovated waiting room. It's a book for the public to leave memorial messages.

► **Book editor Onassis had 11 works in the pipeline at her death.** They range from *Lost in*

nation in Dallas, puts it: “What she did for her country in the four dark days after her husband's assassination and especially during the funeral made her a heroine for the ages. Not Joan of Arc, not Guinevere herself ever showed greater nobility.” She showed that nobility again as she fought a losing battle with cancer.

► **Her fashion legacy was simple elegance.** “She was quite simply the most stylish first lady in history,” says Patrick McCarthy, editor of fashion bible *Women's Wear Daily*. Vincent Roppate, director of Manhattan's Saks Fifth Avenue Beauty Salon, did Onassis' hair a few times. “She wore the clothes; they didn't wear her. She always knew what her look was and she stayed with it.”

Onassis' look retains an impact on everyday folk, too. “This sounds unimportant, but it meant something to me: Jackie made it chic to wear low-heeled, rounded-toe shoes and made dressing-up times so much more comfortable,” says playwright Hindi Brooks, Santa Monica, Calif.

► **She was a force behind the John F. Kennedy Library.** The library, in Dorchester, Mass., is a monument to the slain president. After Onassis' death, tourists lined up in the lobby to sign a condolence book.

The library says it's too early to know what Onassis papers may end up there, but 14 hours of tape she recorded with JFK biographer William Manchester are in its vaults. Since her lips were sealed about the events that pin her eternally in the spotlight, the tapes' 2067 release is eagerly awaited.

Daughter Caroline is president of the JFK library foundation; son John is a vice chairman. They're “very involved,” says JFK foundation spokeswoman Shelley Sommer. And Onassis would probably consider them the most important legacy of all.

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## legacies

**heroism.** As a new widow, Jacqueline Kennedy played a major role in holding the nation together in 1963, especially with the Lincoln-esque funeral she organized. As CBS' Dan Rather, who covered JFK's assassi-



RELELEASE: '93 special issue of 'Ladies' Home Journal'

# Her mystique lives on in books, magazines

By Deirdre Donahue  
USA TODAY

The death of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis has unleashed a torrential media storm.

Beyond this week's *Time* and *Newsweek* cover stories and two-page appreciation in *The New Yorker*, special magazine issues are being readied. Defines include a *People Extra*, due on newsstands in June. *People* will probably devote next week's regular-issue cover story to the former first

lady.)

*Ladies' Home Journal* is updating and rereleasing its special issue, *Jackie: An Intimate Portrait*. Originally published to coincide with the 30th anniversary of JFK's assassination last year, *Jackie* chronicles her life in text and photos.

Publication director Myrna Blyth plans to release it as soon as possible. She finds the photos of Jackie with her grandchildren particularly moving. "She really seemed happy," says Blyth. Eying its treasure trove of

vintage photos, *Life* magazine is also considering a special issue but has not made a final decision.

And in the field of book publishing, while no instant biographies have been announced yet, Lester David's upcoming bio from Carol Publishing has a new subtitle: *Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: The Woman She Has Become* is now *Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: A Portrait of Her Private Years*.

It looks at "the last four to six years of her life," says publisher Steven Schragis. Expected

in stores in early July, 65,000 copies already have been ordered. (C. David Heymann's *A Woman Named Jackie* remains Schragis' top seller at 900,000 hardcover copies.)

Originally scheduled for September, Laurence Learner's *The Kennedy Women: The Saga of an American Family*, from Villard, may be released earlier.

There is also the possibility that Doubleday — where Onassis worked as an editor — may eventually publish an authorized tribute.