

Kennedy grave site swarmed

By Paul Hoversten
USA TODAY

ARLINGTON, Va. — Visitors from around the world flocked Sunday to Arlington National Cemetery, where Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis will be buried today.

Dozens of bouquets and funeral ribbons lay atop a green Astroturf-covered bier next to the grave of her first husband, President John F. Kennedy.

Crowds pressed against rope and velvet cordons 20 feet from the hillside grave site to photograph the setting and reminisce about the Kennedys.

"This is an era of American history we're going to close the door on," said Eddie DeBusk, an electrician from Knoxville, Tenn., in town for a seminar.

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"I remember when JFK was assassinated. I was 10, and it was Jackie who showed us how to mourn. She held the nation up," said DeBusk.

Mary McMahon, a fur saleswoman from Philadelphia, who accompanied her son to a cardiology convention, said she stopped by because she felt a certain kinship with Onassis as a divorced mother.

"I raised my two children by myself, so I could feel some of what she was going through," said McMahon. "She had a lot

of tragedies and a lot of obstacles in her life."

Onassis will become the second first lady to be buried at Arlington. Helen Taft and her husband, William Howard Taft, are buried about 300 yards from Kennedy.

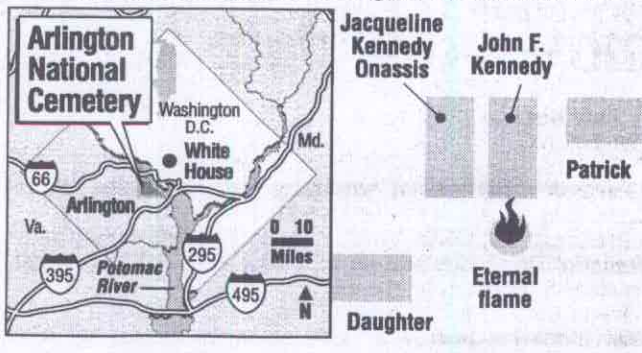
"I'm glad she'll be (buried) here for the sake of family unity," said Linda Reaby, a nursing lecturer at the University of Canberra, Australia.

Reaby, who grew up in Kansas City, Mo., recalls shaking hands with Kennedy as an 8-year-old when he stopped in Grandview, Mo., during his presidential campaign.

About two dozen bouquets sent to the office of Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., were placed on the grave covering about noon.

Jackie's final resting place

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' grave is in Arlington National Cemetery next to that of her first husband, former President John F. Kennedy, and two of their children, Patrick, who died three days after his birth, and a daughter who was stillborn.



Source: USA TODAY research

By Stephen Conley, USA TODAY

Earlier, mourners had pitched a yellow rose and a pair of pink carnations onto the granite steps leading to the grave. Someone placed on the

steps a copy of USA TODAY reporting her death. Military guards removed them when the flowers from Kennedy's office arrived.