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cancer

Jackie dies at 64 of



By Bruce Frankel
and Sandra Sanchez
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — Funeral arrangements are expected to be announced this weekend for former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, 64.

She died in her sleep late Thursday of complications of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"She kind of slipped away," said spokeswoman Nancy Tuckerman, who added the funeral is expected to be private.

Children Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg and John F. Kennedy Jr., were with her in her New York apartment.

"She was able to live her life in a noble way in a rough and tumble world," said Marianne Huber, 57, among 100 people who stood outside.

The widow of slain president John F. Kennedy, Onassis had charmed the nation with her generosity and gentleness:

► She "was a model of courage and dignity," President Clinton said in a statement.

► "Jackie was part of our family and part of our hearts for 40 wonderful and unforgettable years," said brother-in-law, Sen. Edward Kennedy.

► "She was an image of beauty and romance," said Lady Bird Johnson, who succeeded Onassis as first lady.

Her battle with cancer became public in February when she announced she had been undergoing chemotherapy.

Her condition had worsened this week and on Wednesday she discharged herself from a New York hospital.

A private person, Onassis refused interview requests about her life and times. And tapes she made about the assassination won't be released until 50 years after the death of her last surviving child.

our minds on a daily basis.

Sure, we knew she was being treated for lymphoma, but we all know people who've survived that. Not until Wednesday — when the sad, famous family was shown dutifully trooping in and out of her Fifth Avenue apartment — did it really sink in that this was the raging and more deadly type of lymphoma. Thursday, her spokeswoman conceded there was "nothing they can do for her."

Then we knew she had gone home to die.

She had a public persona, and a private one. She was loved. She was hated. She was the target of the most fawning of praise, the most vicious of gossip. People believed almost anything they heard or could hear about her — the wildest things.

Probably because she worked hard at "profile reduction," her huge effect on the USA's culture has dimmed somewhat.

But she was not only the "First Lady of Sorrows" engraved in our TV-saturated memory. She lived at the vortex of a gracious, contradictory, tumultuous life. When she walked into a room, so did history.

Her father was Black Jack Bouvier III, a rich stockbroker and noted rake. Her stepfather was Virginia hunt-country millionaire Hugh D. Auchincloss. She went to all the right schools for rich girls — Miss Porter's, Vassar, the Sorbonne.

At 23, with a degree from George Washington University, she found herself working as the "Inquiring Camera Girl" on the old *Washington Times-Herald*. She interviewed Richard Nixon. She also interviewed John F. Kennedy — and his attraction was immediate.

She broke up with a Manhattan stockbroker to announce their engagement. They married in September 1953 to immense publicity. There were 26 groomsmen and bridesmaids. She was 24. He was 36. The reception turned into a near-

riot. JFK told her he wanted to be president. She told friends it was an "outlandish ambition."

Some remember her White House days — before the assassination — as all huzzahs and rose petals. It wasn't. She drew great criticism on the campaign trail for her designer clothes and aloof elegance. Campaigning made her physically ill. She called the White House a "snake pit" when talking to friends.

She didn't like the title "first lady" — said it "always reminded me of a saddle horse."

But she was the most photogenic one in memory; the great designer Edith Head called her impact on fashion "the greatest single such influence in history."

Everyone copied her look. When the new Miss America was crowned during JFK's first year, she blurted, "If only I looked like Jackie."

Her White House behavior often was criticized at the time as style over substance, but the images that last are lively ones.

Luminaries as diverse as master cellist Pablo Casals and Hollywood recluse Greta Garbo were persuaded to attend. The country's leaders did the twist and the cha-cha in the White House.

When stuffy commissions and committees thwarted her plans to historically refurbish the executive mansion — which had become musty and irrelevantly furnished — she used the power of TV to persuade Congress to declare it an official museum: Jackie's design and taste gave it the look it has today.

Her husband shared much of his power with her. When the Soviet Union put missiles in Cuba and nuclear war loomed in October 1962, JFK took her for a walk in the Rose Garden and confided in her. The CIA tried to get her to split for safety. She hung in.

On the awful day in Dallas, that fall of 1963, the image engraved in history is of Jackie trying to pull a Secret Service man onto the back of



By Cecil Stoughton, AP

TAKING OVER: With Jacqueline Kennedy by his side, Lyndon B. Johnson takes the oath of office after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963.

the limousine as her husband slumps mortally wounded. What she really was doing was retrieving a shard of her husband's skull from the trunk top. She cradled him on the way to the hospital.

"I tried to hold the top of his head down," she later told friends.

At Lyndon Johnson's plane-cabin swearing in, she remained composed in a blood-soaked pink suit, turning away sedatives and resisting all suggestions she change clothes.

"Let them see what they've done to Jack," she told the Secret Service.

Her public dignity and reserve impressed the nation as noble during three days of sorrow.

Before she departed the White House, she oversaw the answering of 800,000 sympathy letters.

"So now he is a legend when he would have preferred to be a man," she wrote at the time.

But the worship ended five years later when she shocked the country by marrying Aristotle Onassis, the unbelievably rich Greek shipping magnate. We wanted eternal mourning. She wanted a new life.

The USA responded with vitriol. How could she marry a man who had solid gold faucets, 42 telephones on his yacht, and barstools reportedly covered with whale scrotum?

The books and articles tumbled forth, acid dripping. Former buddy Truman Capote said her notorious shopping sprees cost \$100,000 a crack — Jackie all the while "in a daze and hypnotized."

Greed was ascribed to her. Her father-in-law was said to have paid her \$1 million not to divorce JFK. Onassis was said to have paid her \$3 million in a pre-nuptial agreement. She received millions at his death.

The history that slipped out about her part of the relationship with Jack Kennedy seemed to support the popular view that — pain or no — she truly loved him.

In 1974, she told their buddy Frank Sinatra "I wish it were all starting again."

To friends, when JFK lived, she constantly compared him to Shakespeare's most romantic king, Henry V. The two often spent two hours around noon in complete privacy in the White House living quarters.

They had big plans. JFK surprised friends by telling them that after his second term, he'd like to be named ambassador to Italy because "Jackie would like it."

Just before he was murdered, they had mapped out a mountain vacation in Montana for the summer of 1964 to get ready for that year's pres-

idential campaign.

JFK stuck up for her too, even bawling out good friends like journalist Ben Bradlee, who had complained after Jackie's triumphant trip to India that she didn't visit any poor neighborhoods.

"I don't get all this crap about how she should have been rubbing her nose in the grinding poverty of India," Kennedy hollered at Bradlee. "When the French invite you to Paris, they don't show you the sewers, they take you to Versailles."

Indeed, when Jackie cleaned out her dead husband's desk in November 1963, she found two newspaper clippings. One reported she had out-drawn even President Dwight Eisenhower when traveling in India. The other quoted her as saying she was sad Jack was not there with her.

She leaves a huge influence on the way many conduct themselves in the world of politics.

Neo-feminists may state otherwise, but after Jackie, it became normal to think of first ladies as activist.

One of her cherished goals was the creation of a Cabinet post for the arts. She pestered JFK about it, and he was going to sign it into existence when he returned from Texas. The residue of that hope moved LBJ to create the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Yes, there is some irony. She and Richard Nixon, who died within weeks of each other, spent most of their last days in the same hospital.

Not many know that after her husband's murder, Jackie graciously wrote Nixon, past Kennedy foe and future president:

"You two young men, colleagues in Congress, adversaries in 1960 — and now look what happened. Whoever thought such a hideous thing could happen in this country? I know how you must feel, so closely missing the greatest prize ... and now you must commit all your and your family's hopes and efforts again. Just one thing I would say to you. If it does not work out as you have hoped for so long, please be consoled by what you have — your life and your family. We never value life enough."

JACQUELINE KENNEDY

Nation mourns a

ONASSIS 1929-1994

woman of courage

'Shaped dreams profoundly'

By Gary Fields
and Christine Sparta
USA TODAY

NEW YORK — The gracefulness that was Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' life brought mourners out across the nation to grieve and reminisce as news of her death spread.

In Washington, President Clinton noted the first lady brought dignity and grace to a mourning nation after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

"Even in the face of impossible tragedy, she carried the grief of her family and our entire nation with a calm power



By Timothy Clary, Agence France-Presse
GETTING AWAY: John F. Kennedy Jr. is escorted to a limousine by a New York police officer Thursday after visiting his mother, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, at her Fifth Avenue apartment.

that somehow reassured all of us who mourned," Clinton said.

"We hope that Mrs. Onassis' children, John and Carolyn, and grandchildren find solace in the extraordinary contributions she made to our country."

Outside Onassis' Fifth Avenue apartment, mourners came in small groups, stayed briefly in the cold, drizzling rain and left quietly.

"I just feel bad for the children. Now they have lost their mother. They lost their father a long time ago," said a tearful Susan Cunningham, 36, of Pittsburgh, who came with her sister and left a rose outside.

Jackie Hayman, 52, a fashion designer, called Onassis a "very great person. She set a standard for Americans for class and style."

Nicholas Apps, 29, who waited on her as a caterer said, "She was always very nice to me. She was always a mysterious woman."

"Few women throughout history have touched the hearts and shaped the dreams of Americans more profoundly," former president Ronald Reagan said in a statement.

Lady Bird Johnson, who succeeded Onassis as first lady, said her predecessor's dignity helped hold a grief-stricken nation together.

"In times of hope, she captured our hearts. In tragedy, her courage helped salve a nation's grief," Mrs. Johnson said. "I always thought of her as my friend."

"Jackie Onassis brought great dignity and grace to the White House and was, indeed, a charming and wonderful first lady," said former president George Bush.

"She was an important part of both a time of great hope and exhilaration for our nation



By Peter Morgan, Reuters

MEDIA CRUSH: Journalists and passers-by gather outside Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis' home, where she died Thursday.

and an hour of its greatest tragedy," said Nellie Connally, widow of the former governor who was wounded in Dallas when Kennedy was killed. "She will be missed."

Family members visited Onassis throughout the day Thursday — including children John F. Kennedy Jr. and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg and Onassis' longtime companion Maurice Tempelsman.

Onassis' parish priest, Monsignor George Bardes of St. Thomas More Roman Catholic Church, visited in the afternoon, heard her confession, gave her communion and administered the sacrament of the sick. Formerly known as last rites, the sacrament of the sick is available to any seriously ill member of the Roman Catholic Church.

At 9:30 p.m. Onassis' sister, Lee Radziwill, left the apartment in tears after a 45-minute evening visit, accompanied by Onassis' half-brother, James Lee Auchincloss.

Other callers included Robert F. Kennedy's widow, Ethel, and Sargent Shriver.

Singer Carly Simon — a neighbor from Martha's Vineyard, where Onassis has a home — visited in the early afternoon and said Onassis was conscious. "I love her very much," she said, in tears.

Sisters-in-law Eunice Shriver and Pat Lawford were jostled by the media. A stone-faced JFK Jr. left the building with Caroline and her husband, Edwin Schlossberg, at 2:30 p.m., prompting a media stampede. Maria Shriver came at 4 p.m. and stayed 40 minutes.

On the pavement were onlookers like Tom Sembros, 25, a registrar for the National Academy of Design in New York who was making his way to the nearby Metropolitan Museum of Art.

He stood outside in the rain for about an hour. "I think it's an historic moment, kind of an end of an era," he said.

Contributing: Bruce Frankel

Lymphoma's progression was swift

By Tim Friend
and Sandra Sanchez
USA TODAY

The cancer that killed Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis late Thursday progressed quickly.

Since announcing in February that she suffered from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Onassis had undergone chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

The New York Times reported today that Onassis had slipped into a coma Thursday, and the cancer had spread to her liver and brain.

What began with flu-like symptoms seemed to spread swiftly, but that is not uncommon for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, one of the fastest-rising cancers in the USA.

This year, about 45,000 new cases of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma will be diagnosed, and 21,200 people will die.

The cancer attacks the lymph system, which processes white blood cells, which in turn bolster the immune system. Tumors can arise anywhere in the body where there are lymph nodes and lymphatic channels, including the stomach, causing ulcers, and the lungs or chest cavity, making breathing difficult.

Survival rates depend on how advanced the cancer is and whether it is slow-growing or aggressive.

The non-Hodgkin's part of the name refers to Hodgkin's disease, a more specific type of lymph system cancer.

Style, strength inspired many

By Andrea Stone
USA TODAY

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis often dabbled in painting, but for a generation of women that hung on her glamour and grief, she was the canvas upon which they painted their evolving dreams and desires.

Whatever women wanted, Jackie had it. Style, fame, money. Such things to her came easily. Yet, it wasn't the jetsetter that fascinated women. It was how she transcended all that, and incredible tragedy, to be what even those of the most modest station could aspire to:

Perfect wife. Good mother. Independent woman of her own making and means:

► "Unlike a lot of icons, she hasn't simply existed in the same way. She's been many women," says Kate White, editor-in-chief of *McCall's* magazine. "That's something women today, her age or younger, really relate to."

► "She was always a woman of her time," says author Sally Quinn.

► "She was young and accomplished and vivacious and a real role model for everybody," says Sheila Tate, then a college student. "I remember every woman in America wore pillbox hats."

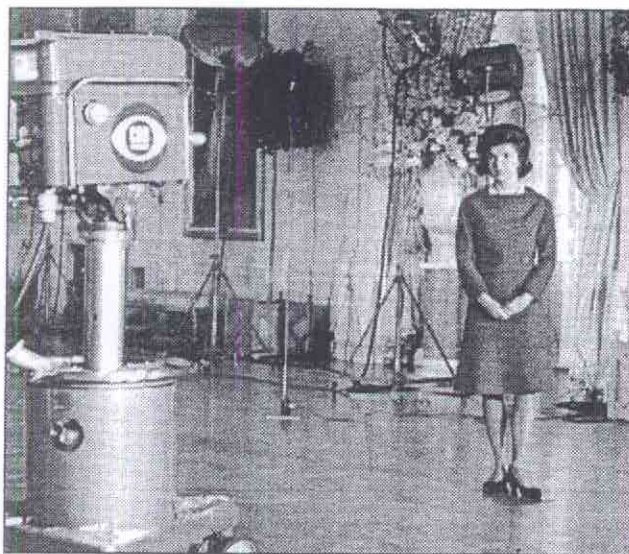
Her appeal was more intangible than looks, though.

"It was that meeting of age and elegance and freshness that made Jackie O so important," says Patrick McCarthy, editor of *Women's Wear Daily*.

The world loved her. A Polish magazine, of all things, declared she set the tone for the 1960s. When she and President Kennedy visited France, he introduced himself as "the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris."

But soon the era even she dubbed Camelot was over.

Jackie became a widow, her chic pink suit splattered with her husband's blood.



IN FEBRUARY 1962: Mrs. John F. Kennedy takes a tour of the White House in front of the television cameras.



SAY CHEESE: Jacqueline Bouvier worked as a newspaper photographer in 1953.

Yet, when we next saw her in her black widow's weeds, we saw in her grief the dignity we would hope to show were we in her unenviable place.

Behind her somber veil at the funeral, Quinn says, "She was majestic and tasteful and had enormous dignity. She really graced the nation with the way she handled herself."

Women "love that survivor aspect of her. She really triumphed. She showed she wasn't going to be a victim," says White. "For someone who had this delicate persona, she (was) very gutsy."

It took guts to marry a divorced Greek billionaire and spirit herself and her children into self-imposed exile on a private island.

"She was famous because of who she married, yes. No question about it," says Kitty Kelley, author of *Jackie Oh!* "But she was a person in her own right."

That became clear after Aristotle Onassis died and

she returned to New York, to take a job as a book editor.

"She ended up being a career woman, which most people probably would not have anticipated," says Tate, press secretary for Nancy Reagan.

"She evolved," says author Kelley. "She started out wanting to be terribly chic, terribly glamorous, the best dressed. . . . but in her own quiet way she became a working woman."

"Maybe she wasn't a classic feminist," says White, "but her strength was very inspiring."

Not that she bragged about it. After the White House, Jackie became Garboesque in the way she shunned the media.

It was in her very private world that she developed perhaps her most enviable legacy: her children. John Jr. and Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg are widely considered the best-adjusted of the Kennedy cousins.

"By protecting them, by not getting swept away by media coverage, by insisting on her values, she was there for them," says Kelley. "She set an example as a good mother."

Says White: "She decided in a very active way that (her) kids weren't going to be negatively affected by the legacy of being a Kennedy."

And what of her own, personal, legacy?

Once asked what she was most proud of, Jackie gave this understated reply:

"Well, I went through some pretty difficult times, and I kept my sanity."