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Mrs. Onassis Says She'll Miss Opening Of Kennedy Center

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 (AP) —Mrs. Aristotle Onassis announced today that she would not attend next Wednesday's formal opening of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The widow of the President for whom the national cultural center is named said through her New York press spokesman, Miss Nancy Tuckerman, that she had decided for private and personal reasons not to attend.

Mrs. Onassis had let it be known months ago that she was planning to attend the official opening, which will feature the premiere of a Mass composed at her request by Leonard Bernstein.

The center's chairman, Roger L. Stevens, said several weeks ago that President and Mrs. Nixon had decided not to attend the opening because they were turning over the presidential box to Mrs. Onassis and did not want to take attention away from her.

There was no immediate indication of whether her decision not to attend would affect their plans. The Nixons plan to attend the first orchestral concert at the center, to be played next Thursday night by the National Symphony Orchestra.

Other members of the Kennedy family are planning to attend Wednesday night's opening.