A Guide To All Of The Remarkable Women In Kamala~Harris~’s~ Life

Shortly before was sworn in as Vice President of the UnitedStates~ – the first woman, the first Black woman and the first SouthAsian~ woman to hold the role – she posted a short montage to . Alongside the words she spoke at her acceptance speech back in November, were images of women – some that Harris~ knew personally and some that she did not. She captioned the video with the words: “I’m here today because of the women who came before me.”

And she continues to surround herself with brilliant women, all of whom have captured the world’s interest, too. There is her lawyer sister, Maya~ (who acted as Harris~’s campaign chairwoman during her presidential run) and niece, . Both are great supporters of Harris~, while making waves of their own. And as stepmother to her husband Doug~’s two adult children, Cole~ and Ella~ – and “dear friends” with his first wife, Kerstin~ – Harris~ is also putting the modern, blended family front and centre on the world stage. Below, we take a look at the women who continue to inspire Kamala~Harris~ in her political and everyday life.

Shyamala~GopalanHarris~

When she and JoeBiden~ were elected in November, Kamala~Harris~ credited her late mother, Shyamala~GopalanHarris~, as being “the woman most responsible for my presence here today”. Shyamala~ was born in Chennai~, India~, in 1938~, and after graduating from DelhiUniversity~ at just 19, she travelled alone to America~ to pursue a PhD~ at UCBerkeley~. While there, she met DonaldHarris~ at a meeting of the Afro-America~n Association – they were married and had two children: Kamala~ and her sister Maya~. After the couple divorced, Shyamala~ raised the children alone, a working single mother who became a leading breast cancer researcher, making crucial discoveries about the role of progesterone in breast biology and cancer. She died of colon cancer in 2009~, aged 70~. Looking back on her mother’s life, Kamala~Harris~ noted: “She was all of five feet, but if you ever met her you would think she was seven feet tall. It’s because of her that I was raised in a community where we were taught to see a world beyond just ourselves. To be conscious and compassionate about the struggles of all people.”

Maya~ Harris~

Three years younger than Kamala~, Maya~ Harris~ followed in her sister’s footsteps to become a lawyer. She has also been active in politics, including serving as an advisor to HillaryClinton~ during her presidential run. While still only17~ and at school, she became a mother to her only child, Meena~, and in 1998~, she married TonyWest~, a lawyer who served as the third-highest-ranking official in the JusticeDepartment~ during the Obama~ administration and who is now chief counsel for Uber~. On , Maya~ and Kamala~ as children, holding hands with their mother Shyamala~. She captioned it simply: “Whew, missing Mommy~ this morning…”

Ella~ Emhoff

Kamala~Harris~ is stepmother to Cole~ and Ella~ Emhoff, her lawyer husband Doug~ Emhoff’s children from his previous marriage. Ella~, and her brother Cole~, refer to Kamala~ as “Momala~” – a mash-up of the Yiddish~ word “mamelah~”, meaning “little mother”, mom and Kamala~. It’s a term that Kamala~ has fully embraced, even using it in her Twitter~ bio. Ella~ is neither a lawyer nor training to be one, making her an outlier in the Kamala~ universe. Instead, she’s a textiles student at ParsonsSchoolofDesign~ in NewYork~. A Bushwick~ resident, she regularly posts images of herself modelling her own knitted and crocheted designs on Instagram~, and on InaugurationDay~, generated thousands (literally) of news stories. Since the inauguration, she has gained morethan130000~ new Instagram~ followers – although she did not post content from the event itself, perhaps sensing that it would disrupt her regular, more casual aesthetic.

Kerstin~ Emhoff

Ella~’s mom and Doug~’s ex-wife, Kerstin~ Emhoff, is on very good terms with Kamala~ and was present at the inauguration, excitedly posting videos and imagery to social media. The 52yearold~ is the CEO of an LA~-based production company called Prettybird~, which has won , and . Kamala~ has said that “to know Cole~ and Ella~ is to know that their mother Kerstin~ is an incredible mother” and counts her as a “dear friend”. Ella~ recently : “It’s a cool dynamic we all have. And I think it is a good model to show that you can have this and this isn’t weird.” Together, they make blending a family look easy.

Meena~ Harris~

Thirty-six-year-old is Kamala~’s beloved niece and the only daughter of Maya~. Another lawyer, she is also an author as well as the founder and CEO of Phenomenal~, a “female-powered lifestyle brand bringing awareness to causes and culture”. Meena~ has two little girls called Amara~ and LeelaAjagu~, to whom Kamala~ is a devoted great-aunt.

TheAlphaKappaAlphaSorority~

When Kamala~Harris~ attended the historically BlackHoward~University~, , the USA’s first Black sorority, which was founded at Howard~ in 1908~. Black sororities were first established as a way to reject exclusion from mainstream university institutions, and one of the sorority’s key goals has been to develop leaders. On InaugurationDay~, it honoured Kamala~’s historic achievement by declaring 20January~ to be “Kamala~ D Harris~ Day”. Speaking about her membership, Kamala~ has said: “We weren’t just told we had the capacity to be great; we were challenged to live up to that potential.”

ShirleyChisholm~

It is often said that without ShirleyChisholm~, there would have been no Barack Obama~ and no Kamala~Harris~. In 1972~, Chisholm~ became the first woman and the first African-America~n to seek the nomination for president in a major political party, facing opposition from some white feminists and other Democrats~. When she launched her own bid for the Democratic~ nomination, Kamala~Harris~ recalled Chisholm~’s campaign in her logo, with a spokesperson saying at the time, “ShirleyChisholm~’s activism… is an enduring legacy that lives on in Senator [Harris~] and to honour that legacy in her own campaign for President was a no-brainer.”