

= Eleanor Roosevelt =

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (/ ʔ?l?n??r ?ro?z?v?lt / ; October 11 , 1884 ? November 7 , 1962) was an American politician , diplomat , and activist . She was the longest @-@ serving First Lady of the United States , having held the post from March 1933 to April 1945 during her husband President Franklin D. Roosevelt 's four terms in office , and served as United States Delegate to the United Nations General Assembly from 1945 to 1952 . President Harry S. Truman later called her the " First Lady of the World " in tribute to her human rights achievements .

Roosevelt was a member of the prominent American Roosevelt and Livingston families and a niece of President Theodore Roosevelt 's . She had an unhappy childhood , having suffered the deaths of both parents and one of her brothers at a young age . At 15 , she attended Allenwood Academy in London and was deeply influenced by its feminist headmistress Marie Souvestre . Returning to the U.S. , she married her fifth cousin once removed , Franklin Delano Roosevelt , in 1905 . The Roosevelts ' marriage was complicated from the beginning by Franklin 's controlling mother , Sara , and after discovering an affair of her husband 's with Lucy Mercer in 1918 , Roosevelt resolved to seek fulfillment in a public life of her own . She persuaded Franklin to stay in politics after he was stricken with debilitating polio in 1921 , which cost him the use of his legs , and Roosevelt began giving speeches and appearing at campaign events in his place . Following Franklin 's election as Governor of New York in 1928 , and throughout the remainder of Franklin 's public career in government , Roosevelt regularly made public appearances on his behalf , and as First Lady while her husband served as President , she significantly reshaped and redefined the role of that office during her own tenure and beyond , for future First Ladies .

Though widely respected in her later years , Roosevelt was a controversial First Lady for her outspokenness , particularly her stance on racial issues . She was the first presidential spouse to hold press conferences , write a syndicated newspaper column , and speak at a national convention . On a few occasions , she publicly disagreed with her husband 's policies . She launched an experimental community at Arthurdale , West Virginia , for the families of unemployed miners , later widely regarded as a failure . She advocated for expanded roles for women in the workplace , the civil rights of African Americans and Asian Americans , and the rights of World War II refugees .

Following her husband 's death , Roosevelt remained active in politics for the rest of her life . She pressed the United States to join and support the United Nations and became its first delegate . She served as the first chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights , and oversaw the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights . Later she chaired the John F. Kennedy administration 's Presidential Commission on the Status of Women . By the time of her death , Roosevelt was regarded as " one of the most esteemed women in the world " ; she was called " the object of almost universal respect " in her New York Times obituary . In 1999 , she was ranked ninth in the top ten of Gallup 's List of Most Widely Admired People of the 20th Century .

= = Personal life = =

= = = Early life = = =

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt was born at 56 West 37th Street in Manhattan , New York City , to socialites Elliott Bulloch Roosevelt (1860 ? 1894) and Anna Rebecca Hall (1863 ? 1892) . From an early age , she preferred to be called by her middle name (Eleanor) . Through her father , she was a niece of President Theodore " T.R. " Roosevelt , Jr . (1858 ? 1919) . Through her mother , she was a niece of tennis champions Valentine Gill " Vallie " Hall III (1867 ? 1934) and Edward Ludlow Hall (1872 ? 1932) . She acted in such an old @-@ fashioned manner as a child that her mother nicknamed her " Granny " .

Eleanor had two younger brothers : Elliott Jr . (1889 ? 1893) and Hall (1891 ? 1941) . She also had a half brother , Elliott Roosevelt Mann (c . 1890 ? 1941) , through her father 's affair with Katy Mann , a servant employed by the family . Roosevelt was born into a world of immense wealth and

privilege , as her family was part of New York high society called the " swells " .

Her mother died from diphtheria on December 7 , 1892 , and Elliott Jr. died of the same disease the following May . Her father , an alcoholic confined to a sanitarium , died on August 14 , 1894 after jumping from a window during a fit of delirium tremens . He survived the fall but died from a seizure . Her brother Hall would also suffer from alcoholism . Eleanor 's childhood losses left her prone to depression throughout her life .

After the deaths of her parents , Eleanor was raised in the household of her maternal grandmother , Mary Livingston Ludlow (1843 ? 1919) of the Livingston family in Tivoli , New York . In his Pulitzer Prize @-@ winning biography of Eleanor Roosevelt , Joseph P. Lash describes her in childhood as insecure and starved for affection , and she considered herself the " ugly duckling " . However , Roosevelt wrote at 14 that one 's prospects in life were not totally dependent on physical beauty : " no matter how plain a woman may be if truth and loyalty are stamped upon her face all will be attracted to her . "

Roosevelt was tutored privately and , at the age of 15 , with the encouragement of her aunt Anna " Bamie " Roosevelt , the family sent her to Allenswood Academy , a private finishing school in Wimbledon , outside London , England , from 1899 to 1902 . The headmistress , Marie Souvestre , was a noted feminist educator who sought to cultivate independent thinking in young women . Souvestre took a special interest in Roosevelt , who learned to speak French fluently and gained self @-@ confidence . Her first cousin Corinne Douglas Robinson , whose first term at Allenswood overlapped with Eleanor 's last , said that when she arrived at the school , Eleanor was " ' everything ' at the school . She was beloved by everybody . " Roosevelt wished to continue at Allenswood , but in 1902 was summoned home by her grandmother to make her social debut .

In 1902 ? at age 17 ? Roosevelt returned to the United States , ending her formal education , and was presented at a debutante ball at the Waldorf @-@ Astoria hotel on December 14 . She was later given her own " coming out party " . Roosevelt was active with the New York Junior League shortly after its founding , teaching dancing and calisthenics in the East Side slums . The organization had been brought to Roosevelt 's attention by her friend , organization founder Mary Harriman , and a male relative who criticized the group for " drawing young women into public activity " .

= = = Marriage and family life = = =

In the summer of 1902 , Eleanor encountered her father 's fifth cousin , Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1882 ? 1945) , on a train to Tivoli , New York . The two began a secret correspondence and romance , and became engaged on November 22 , 1903 . Franklin 's mother , Sara Ann Delano , opposed the union , and made him promise that the engagement would not be officially announced for a year . " I know what pain I must have caused you , " Franklin wrote his mother of his decision . But , he added , " I know my own mind , and known it for a long time , and know that I could never think otherwise . " Sara took her son on a Caribbean cruise in 1904 , hoping that a separation would squelch the romance , but Franklin remained determined . The wedding date was set to accommodate President Theodore Roosevelt , who agreed to give the bride away .

Eleanor married Franklin on March 17 , 1905 (St. Patrick 's Day) , in a wedding officiated by Endicott Peabody , the groom 's headmaster at Groton School . The wedding date itself was selected with Theodore Roosevelt , the sitting president , in mind , since he was already scheduled to be in New York for the St. Patrick 's Day parade . Theodore Roosevelt , who signed the marriage certificate as a witness , gave his niece Eleanor away since her father had died years before . He garnered almost all the attention from the press , and his attendance at the ceremony was front @-@ page news , including in the New York Times . When asked for his thoughts on the Roosevelt @-@ Roosevelt union , Theodore Roosevelt said , " It is a good thing to keep the name in the family . " The couple spent a preliminary honeymoon of one week at Hyde Park , then set up housekeeping in an apartment in New York . That summer they went on their formal honeymoon , a three @-@ month tour of Europe .

Returning to the U.S. , the newlyweds settled in New York City , in a house provided by Franklin 's

mother , as well as at the family 's estate overlooking the Hudson River in Hyde Park , New York . From the beginning , Eleanor had a contentious relationship with her controlling mother @-@ in @-@ law . The townhouse Sara gave to Eleanor and Franklin was connected to her own by sliding doors , and Sara ran both households in the decade after the marriage . Early on , Eleanor had a breakdown in which she explained to Franklin that " I did not like to live in a house which was not in any way mine , one that I had done nothing about and which did not represent the way I wanted to live " , but little changed . Sara also sought to control the raising of her grandchildren , and Eleanor reflected later that " Franklin 's children were more my mother @-@ in @-@ law 's children than they were mine " . Eleanor 's eldest son James remembered Sara telling her grandchildren , " Your mother only bore you , I am more your mother than your mother is . "

Eleanor and Franklin had six children :

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (May 3 , 1906 ? December 1 , 1975)

James Roosevelt II (December 23 , 1907 ? August 13 , 1991)

Franklin Roosevelt (March 18 , 1909 ? November 1 , 1909)

Elliott Roosevelt (September 23 , 1910 ? October 27 , 1990)

Franklin Delano Roosevelt , Jr . (August 17 , 1914 ? August 17 , 1988)

John Aspinwall Roosevelt II (March 13 , 1916 ? April 27 , 1981)

Despite becoming pregnant and giving birth six times , Eleanor disliked sex . She once told her daughter Anna that it was an " ordeal to be borne " . She also considered herself ill @-@ suited to motherhood , later writing , " It did not come naturally to me to understand little children or to enjoy them " .

In September 1918 , while unpacking a suitcase of Franklin 's , Eleanor discovered a bundle of love letters to him from her social secretary , Lucy Mercer . He had been contemplating leaving Eleanor for Lucy . However , following pressure from Franklin 's political advisor , Louis Howe , and from his mother Sara , who threatened to disinherit her son if he divorced , Franklin remained married to Eleanor . However , the union from that point on was more of a political partnership . Disillusioned , Eleanor again became active in public life , and focused increasingly on her social work rather than her role as a wife , as she had for the previous decade .

In August 1921 , the family was vacationing at Campobello Island , New Brunswick , when Franklin was stricken with polio , which permanently paralyzed his legs . When the extent of his disability became clear , Eleanor fought a protracted battle with her mother @-@ in @-@ law over his future , persuading him to stay in politics despite Sara 's urgings that he retire and become a country gentleman . This proved a turning point in Eleanor and Sara 's long @-@ running struggle , and as Eleanor 's public role grew , she increasingly broke from Sara 's control . Tensions between Sara and Eleanor over her new political friends rose to the point that the family constructed a cottage , Val @-@ Kill , which Eleanor and her guests lived in when Franklin and the children were away from Hyde Park .

== Other relationships ==

In the 1930s , Eleanor had a very close relationship with legendary pilot Amelia Earhart . One time , the two sneaked out from the White House and went to a party dressed up for the occasion .

Roosevelt also had a close relationship with Associated Press (AP) reporter Lorena Hickok , who covered her during the last months of the presidential campaign and " fell madly in love with her " . During this period , Roosevelt wrote daily 10- to 15 @-@ page letters to " Hick " , who was planning to write a biography of the First Lady . The letters included such endearments as , " I want to put my arms around you & kiss you at the corner of your mouth , " and , " I can 't kiss you , so I kiss your ' picture ' good night and good morning ! " At Franklin 's 1933 inauguration , Eleanor wore a sapphire ring Hickok had given her . FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover despised Roosevelt 's liberalism , her stance regarding civil rights , and her and her husband FDR 's criticisms of Hoover 's surveillance tactics , and so Hoover maintained a large file on Roosevelt , which the filmmakers of the biopic J. Edgar (2011) indicate included compromising evidence of this relationship , which Hoover intended to blackmail Roosevelt with . Compromised as a reporter , Hickok soon resigned her position with

the AP to be closer to Eleanor , who secured her a job as an investigator for a New Deal program .

There is considerable debate about whether or not Roosevelt 's relationship with Hickok was sexual . It was known in the White House press corps at the time that Lorena Hickok was a lesbian . Scholars , including Lillian Faderman and Hazel Rowley , have asserted that there was a physical component to the relationship , while Hickok biographer Doris Faber has argued that the insinuating phrases have misled historians . Doris Kearns Goodwin stated in her 1994 Pulitzer Prize ? winning account of the Roosevelts that " whether Hick and Eleanor went beyond kisses and hugs " could not be determined with certainty . Roosevelt was close friends with several lesbian couples , such as Nancy Cook and Marion Dickerman , and Esther Lape and Elizabeth Read , suggesting that she was familiar with the lifestyle ; Marie Souvestre , Roosevelt 's childhood teacher and a great influence on her later thinking , was also a lesbian . Faber published some of Roosevelt and Hickok 's correspondence in 1980 , but concluded that the lovestruck phrasing was simply an " unusually belated schoolgirl crush " and warned historians not to be misled . Researcher Leila J. Rupp criticized Faber 's argument , calling her book " a case study in homophobia " and arguing that Faber unwittingly presented " page after page of evidence that delineates the growth and development of a love affair between the two women " . In 1992 , Roosevelt biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook argued that the relationship was in fact romantic , generating national attention .

A few months after FDR 's first inauguration , Eleanor wrote to " Hick " : " And so you think they gossip about us I am always so much more optimistic than you are . I suppose because I care so little about what ' they ' say . "

In the same years , Washington gossip linked Eleanor romantically with New Deal administrator Harry Hopkins , with whom she worked closely . Roosevelt also had a close relationship with a New York State Police sergeant , Earl Miller , whom her husband had assigned as her bodyguard . Roosevelt was 44 years old when she met Miller , 32 , in 1929 . He became her friend as well as official escort , taught her different sports , such as diving and riding , and coached her in tennis . Biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook writes that Miller was Eleanor 's " first romantic involvement " in her middle years . Hazel Rowley concludes , " There is no doubt that Eleanor was in love with Earl for a time ... But they are most unlikely to have had an ' affair ' . "

Eleanor 's friendship with Miller happened at the same time as her husband 's rumored relationship with his secretary , Marguerite " Missy " LeHand . Smith writes , " remarkably , both ER and Franklin recognized , accepted , and encouraged the arrangement Eleanor and Franklin were strong @-@ willed people who cared greatly for each other 's happiness but realized their own inability to provide for it . " Eleanor and Miller 's relationship is said to have continued until her death in 1962 . They are thought to have corresponded daily , but all letters have been lost . According to rumor , the letters were anonymously purchased and destroyed , or locked away when she died .

In later years , Eleanor was said to have developed a romantic attachment to her physician , David Gurewitsch , though it was likely limited to a deep friendship .

= = Public life before the White House = =

In the 1920 presidential election , Franklin was nominated as the Democratic vice presidential candidate with presidential candidate James M. Cox . Eleanor joined Franklin in touring the country , making her first campaign appearances . Cox and Roosevelt were defeated by Republican Warren G. Harding , who won with sixteen million votes to nine million .

Following the onset of Franklin 's polio in 1921 , Eleanor began serving as a stand @-@ in for her incapacitated husband , making public appearances on his behalf , often carefully coached by Louis Howe . She also started working with the Women 's Trade Union League (WTUL) , raising funds in support of the union 's goals : a 48 @-@ hour work week , minimum wage , and the abolition of child labor . Throughout the 1920s , Eleanor became increasingly influential as a leader in the New York State Democratic Party while Franklin used her contacts among Democratic women to strengthen his standing with them , winning their committed support for the future . In 1924 , she campaigned for Democrat Alfred E. Smith in his successful re @-@ election bid as governor of New York State against the Republican nominee and her first cousin Theodore Roosevelt , Jr . By 1928 , Eleanor

was promoting Smith 's candidacy for president and Franklin 's nomination as the Democratic Party 's candidate for governor of New York , succeeding Smith . Although Smith lost the presidential race , Franklin won handily and the Roosevelts moved into the governor 's mansion in Albany , New York . During Franklin 's term as governor , Eleanor traveled widely in the state to make speeches and inspect state facilities on his behalf , reporting her findings to him at the end of each trip .

In 1927 , she joined friends Marion Dickerman and Nancy Cook in buying the Todhunter School for Girls , a finishing school which also offered college preparatory courses , in New York City . At the school , Roosevelt taught upper @-@ level courses in American literature and history , emphasizing independent thought , current events , and social engagement . She continued to teach three days a week while FDR served as governor , but was forced to leave teaching after his election as president .

= = First Lady of the United States (1933 ? 1945) = =

Upon FDR 's inauguration on March 4 , 1933 , Eleanor became First Lady of the United States . Having known all of the twentieth century 's previous First Ladies , she was seriously depressed at having to assume the role , which had traditionally been restricted to domesticity and hostessing . Her immediate predecessor , Lou Henry Hoover , had ended her feminist activism on becoming First Lady , stating her intention to be only a " backdrop for Bertie . " Eleanor 's distress at these precedents was severe enough that Hickok subtitled her biography of Roosevelt " Reluctant First Lady " .

With support from Howe and Hickok , Roosevelt set out to redefine the position . In the process she became , according to her biographer Cook , " the most controversial First Lady in United States history " . With her husband 's strong support , despite criticism of them both , she continued with the active business and speaking agenda she had begun before becoming First Lady , in an era when few married women had careers . She was the first presidential spouse to hold press conferences and in 1940 became the first to speak at a national party convention . She also wrote a widely syndicated newspaper column , " My Day " , another first . In the first year of FDR 's tenure , determined to match his presidential salary , Eleanor earned \$ 75 @,@ 000 from her lectures and writing , most of which she gave to charity . By 1941 , she was receiving lecture fees of \$ 1 @,@ 000 .

Roosevelt maintained a heavy travel schedule in her twelve years in the White House , frequently making personal appearances at labor meetings to assure Depression @-@ era workers that the White House was mindful of their plight . In one widely circulated cartoon of the time from The New Yorker magazine (June 3 , 1933) , an astonished coal miner , peering down a dark tunnel , says to a co @-@ worker " For gosh sakes , here comes Mrs. Roosevelt ! " .

In early 1933 , the " Bonus Army " , a protest group of World War I veterans , marched on Washington for the second time in two years , calling for their veteran bonus certificates to be awarded early . The previous year , President Herbert Hoover had ordered them dispersed , and the US Army cavalry charged and bombarded the veterans with tear gas . This time , Eleanor Roosevelt visited the veterans at their muddy campsite , listening to their concerns and singing army songs with them . The meeting defused the tension between the veterans and the administration , and one of the marchers later commented , " Hoover sent the Army . Roosevelt sent his wife . "

= = = Arthurdale = = =

Roosevelt 's chief project during her husband 's first two terms was the establishment of a planned community in Arthurdale , West Virginia . On August 18 , 1933 , at Hickok 's urging , Roosevelt visited the families of homeless miners in Morgantown , West Virginia , who had been blacklisted following union activities . Deeply affected by the visit , Roosevelt proposed a resettlement community for the miners at Arthurdale , where they could make a living by subsistence farming , handicrafts , and a local manufacturing plant . She hoped the project could become a model for " a new kind of community " in the U.S. , in which workers would be better cared for . Her husband

enthusiastically supported the project .

After an initial , disastrous experiment with prefab houses , construction began again in 1934 to Roosevelt 's specifications , this time with " every modern convenience " , including indoor plumbing and central steam heat . Families occupied the first fifty homes in June , and agreed to repay the government in thirty years ' time . Though Roosevelt had hoped for a racially mixed community , the miners insisted on limiting membership to white Christians . After losing a community vote , Roosevelt recommended the creation of other communities for the excluded black and Jewish miners . The experience motivated Roosevelt to become much more outspoken on the issue of racial discrimination .

Roosevelt remained a vigorous fundraiser for the community for several years , as well as spending most of her own income on the project . However , the project was criticized by both the political left and right . Conservatives condemned it as socialist and a " communist plot " , while Democratic members of Congress opposed government competition with private enterprise . Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes also opposed the project , citing its high per @-@ family cost . Arthurdale continued to sink as a government spending priority for the federal government until 1941 , when the U.S. sold off the last of its holdings in the community at a loss .

Later commentators generally described the Arthurdale experiment as a failure . Roosevelt herself was sharply discouraged by a 1940 visit in which she felt the town had become excessively dependent on outside assistance . However , the residents considered the town a " utopia " compared to their previous circumstances , and many were returned to economic self @-@ sufficiency . Roosevelt personally considered the project a success , later speaking of the improvements she saw in people 's lives there and stating , " I don 't know whether you think that is worth half a million dollars . But I do . "

= = = Civil rights activism = = =

Eleanor became an important connection for Franklin 's administration to the African @-@ American population during the segregation era . Despite the President 's desire to placate Southern sentiment , Eleanor was vocal in her support of the African @-@ American civil rights movement . After her experience with Arthurdale and her inspections of New Deal programs in Southern states , she concluded that New Deal programs were discriminating against African @-@ Americans , who received a disproportionately small share of relief moneys . Eleanor became one of the only voices in the Roosevelt White House insisting that benefits be equally extended to Americans of all races .

Eleanor also broke with precedent by inviting hundreds of African American guests to the White House . When the black singer Marian Anderson was denied the use of Washington 's Constitution Hall in 1939 by the Daughters of the American Revolution , Eleanor resigned from the group in protest and helped arrange another concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial . Roosevelt later presented Anderson to the King and Queen of the United Kingdom after Anderson performed at a White House dinner . Roosevelt also arranged the appointment of African @-@ American educator Mary McLeod Bethune , with whom she had struck up a friendship , as Director of the Division of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration . To avoid problems with the staff when Bethune would visit the White House , Eleanor would meet her at the gate , embrace her , and walk in with her arm @-@ in @-@ arm .

The significance of Eleanor Roosevelt is she helped reform social life . She was involved by being " the eyes and the ears " of the New Deal . She looked to the future and was committed to social reform . One of those programs helped working women receive better wages . The New Deal also placed women into less machine work and more white collar work . Women did not have to work in the factories making war supplies because men were coming home so they could take over the long days and nights women had been working to contribute to the war efforts . Roosevelt brought unprecedented activism and ability to the role of the 1st Lady .

Eleanor also lobbied behind the scenes for the 1934 Costigan @-@ Wagner Bill to make lynching a federal crime , including arranging a meeting between Franklin and NAACP president Walter Francis White . Fearing he would lose the votes of Southern congressional delegations for his legislative

agenda , however , Franklin refused to publicly support the bill , which proved unable to pass the Senate . In 1942 , Eleanor worked with activist Pauli Murray to persuade Franklin to appeal on behalf of sharecropper Odell Waller , convicted of killing a white farmer during a fight ; though Franklin sent a letter to Virginia Governor Colgate Darden urging him to commute the sentence to life imprisonment , Waller was executed as scheduled .

Roosevelt 's support of African @-@ American rights made her an unpopular figure among whites in the South . Rumors spread of " Eleanor Clubs " formed by servants to oppose their employers and " Eleanor Tuesdays " on which African @-@ American men would knock down white women on the street , though no evidence has ever been found of either practice . When race riots broke out in Detroit in June 1943 , critics in both the North and South wrote that Roosevelt was to blame . At the same time , she grew so popular among African @-@ Americans , previously a reliable Republican voting bloc , that they became a consistent base of support for the Democratic Party .

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 , 1941 , Roosevelt spoke out against anti @-@ Japanese prejudice , warning against the " great hysteria against minority groups . " She also privately opposed her husband 's Executive Order 9066 , which forced Japanese @-@ Americans in many areas of the U.S. into internment camps . She was widely criticized for her defense of Japanese @-@ American citizens , including a call by the Los Angeles Times that she be " forced to retire from public life " over her stand on the issue .

= = = Use of media = = =

As an unprecedentedly outspoken First Lady , Roosevelt made far more use of the media than her predecessors had , holding 348 press conferences over the span of her husband 's 12 @-@ year presidency . Inspired by her relationship with Hickok , Roosevelt placed a ban on male reporters attending the press conferences , effectively forcing newspapers to keep female reporters on staff in order to cover them . She only relaxed the rule once , on her return from her 1943 Pacific trip . Because the Gridiron Club banned women from its annual Gridiron Dinner for journalists , Roosevelt hosted a competing event for female reporters at the White House , which she called " Gridiron Widows " .She was interviewed by many newspapers ; the New Orleans journalist Iris Kelso described Mrs. Roosevelt as her most interesting interviewee ever .

In February 1933 , just before Franklin assumed the presidency , Eleanor published an editorial in the Women 's Daily News conflicting so sharply with his intended public spending policies that he published a rejoinder in the following issue . On entering the White House , she signed a contract with the magazine Woman 's Home Companion to provide a monthly column , in which she answered mail sent to her by readers ; the feature was canceled in 1936 as another presidential election approached . She continued her articles in other venues , publishing more than sixty articles in national magazines during her tenure as First Lady . Eleanor also began a syndicated newspaper column , titled " My Day " , which appeared six days a week from 1936 to her death in 1962 . In the column , she wrote about her daily activities but also her humanitarian concerns . Beasley has argued that Roosevelt 's publications , which often dealt with women 's issues and invited reader responses , represented a conscious attempt to use journalism " to overcome social isolation " for women by making " public communication a two @-@ way channel " .

= = = World War II = = =

On May 10 , 1940 , Germany invaded Belgium , Luxembourg , and the Netherlands , marking the end of the relatively conflict @-@ free " Phoney War " phase of World War II . As the U.S. began to move toward war footing , Roosevelt found herself again depressed , fearing that her role in fighting for domestic justice would become extraneous in a nation focused on foreign affairs . She briefly considered traveling to Europe to work with the Red Cross , but was dissuaded by presidential advisers who pointed out the consequences should the president 's wife be captured as a prisoner of war . She soon found other wartime causes to work on , however , beginning with a popular movement to allow the immigration of European refugee children . She also lobbied her husband to

allow greater immigration of groups persecuted by the Nazis , including Jews , but fears of fifth columnists caused Franklin to restrict immigration rather than expanding it . Eleanor successfully secured political refugee status for eighty @-@ three Jewish refugees from the S.S. Quanza in August 1940 , but was refused on many other occasions . Her son James later wrote that " her deepest regret at the end of her life " was that she had not forced Franklin to accept more refugees from Nazism during the war .

Eleanor was also active on the home front . Beginning in 1941 , she co @-@ chaired the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) with New York City Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia , working to give civilian volunteers expanded roles in war preparations . She soon found herself in a power struggle with LaGuardia , who preferred to focus on narrower aspects of defense , while she saw solutions to broader social problems as equally important to the war effort . Though LaGuardia resigned from the OCD in December 1941 , Eleanor was forced to resign following anger in the House of Representatives over high salaries for several OCD appointments , including two of her close friends .

In October 1942 , Roosevelt toured England , visiting with American troops and inspecting British forces . Her visits drew enormous crowds and received almost unanimously favorable press in both England and America . In August 1943 , she visited American troops in the South Pacific on a morale @-@ building tour , of which Admiral William Halsey , Jr. later said , " she alone accomplished more good than any other person , or any groups of civilians , who had passed through my area . " For her part , Roosevelt was left shaken and deeply depressed by seeing the war 's carnage . A number of Congressional Republicans criticized her for using scarce wartime resources for her trip , prompting Franklin to suggest that she take a break from traveling .

Roosevelt supported increased roles for women and African @-@ Americans in the war effort , and began to advocate for factory jobs to be given to women a year before it became a widespread practice . In 1942 , she urged women of all social backgrounds to learn trades , saying : " if I were of a debutante age I would go into a factory ? any factory where I could learn a skill and be useful . " Learning of the high rate of absenteeism among working mothers , she also campaigned for government @-@ sponsored day care . She notably supported the Tuskegee Airmen in their successful effort to become the first black combat pilots , visiting the Tuskegee Air Corps Advanced Flying School in Alabama . At her request , she flew with the Chief Flight Instructor Charles " Chief " Alfred Anderson for more than an hour , which had great symbolic value and brought visibility to Tuskegee 's pilot training program .

After the war , Eleanor was a strong proponent of the Morgenthau Plan to de @-@ industrialize Germany in the postwar period . In 1946 , she attended the National Conference on the German Problem in New York , which issued a statement that " any plans to resurrect the economic and political power of Germany " would be dangerous to international security .

= = Years after the White House = =

Franklin died on April 12 , 1945 after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage at Warm Springs , Georgia . Eleanor later learned that FDR 's mistress , Lucy Mercer Rutherfurd , had been with him when he died , a discovery made more bitter by learning that her daughter Anna had also been aware of the ongoing friendship between the president and Rutherfurd . After the funeral , Eleanor packed and moved out of the White House , returning to Val @-@ Kill . In instructions left for Eleanor in the event of his death , Franklin proposed turning over Hyde Park to the federal government as a museum , and she spent the following months cataloging the estate and arranging the transfer . After FDR 's death , Eleanor moved into an apartment at 29 Washington Square West in Greenwich Village . In 1950 , she rented suites at The Park Sheraton Hotel (202 West 56th Street) . She lived here until 1953 when she moved to 211 East 62nd Street . When that lease expired in 1958 , she returned to The Park Sheraton as she waited for the house she purchased with Edna and David Gurewitsch at 55 East 74th Street to be renovated . The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum opened on April 12 , 1946 , setting a precedent for future presidential libraries .

= = = United Nations = = =

In December 1945 , President Harry S. Truman appointed Eleanor as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly . In April 1946 , she became the first chairperson of the preliminary United Nations Commission on Human Rights . Eleanor remained chairperson when the Commission was established on a permanent basis in January 1947 . She played an instrumental role , along with René Cassin , John Peters Humphrey and others , in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) .

Eleanor spoke in favor of the Declaration , calling it " the international Magna Carta of all men everywhere " in a speech on the night of September 28 , 1948 . The Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly on December 10 , 1948 . The vote was unanimous , with eight abstentions : six Soviet Bloc countries as well as South Africa and Saudi Arabia . Roosevelt attributed the abstention of the Soviet bloc nations to Article 13 , which provided the right of citizens to leave their countries .

Roosevelt also served as the first United States Representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and stayed on at that position until 1953 , even after stepping down as chair of the Commission in 1951 . The UN posthumously awarded her one of its first Human Rights Prizes in 1968 in recognition of her work .

= = = Postwar politics = = =

In the late 1940s , Democrats in New York and throughout the country courted Roosevelt for political office .

At first I was surprised that anyone should think that I would want to run for office , or that I was fitted to hold office . Then I realized that some people felt that I must have learned something from my husband in all the years that he was in public life ! They also knew that I had stressed the fact that women should accept responsibility as citizens . I heard that I was being offered the nomination for governor or for the United States Senate in my own state , and even for Vice President . And some particularly humorous souls wrote in and suggested that I run as the first woman President of the United States ! The simple truth is that I have had my fill of public life of the more or less stereotyped kind .

Catholics comprised a major element of the Democratic Party in New York City . She supported reformers trying to overthrow the Irish machine Tammany Hall , and some Catholics called her anti @-@ Catholic . In July 1949 , Roosevelt had a bitter public disagreement with Cardinal Francis Spellman , the Archbishop of New York , over federal funding for parochial schools . Spellman said she was anti @-@ Catholic , and supporters of both took sides in a battle that drew national attention and is " still remembered for its vehemence and hostility . "

In 1954 , Tammany Hall boss Carmine DeSapio led the effort to defeat Eleanor 's son , Franklin Delano Roosevelt , Jr . , in the election for New York Attorney General . Eleanor grew increasingly disgusted with DeSapio 's political conduct through the rest of the 1950s . Eventually , she would join with her old friends Herbert Lehman and Thomas Finletter to form the New York Committee for Democratic Voters , a group dedicated to opposing DeSapio 's reincarnated Tammany Hall . Their efforts were eventually successful , and DeSapio was forced to relinquish power in 1961 .

When President Truman backed New York Governor W. Averell Harriman , a close associate of DeSapio , for the 1952 Democratic presidential nomination , Roosevelt was disappointed . She supported Adlai Stevenson for president in 1952 and 1956 and urged his renomination in 1960 . She resigned from her UN post in 1953 , when Dwight D. Eisenhower became President . Although Roosevelt had reservations about John F. Kennedy for his failure to condemn McCarthyism , she supported him for president against Richard Nixon . Kennedy later reappointed her to the United Nations , where she served again from 1961 to 1962 , and to the National Advisory Committee of the Peace Corps .

By the 1950s , Roosevelt 's international role as spokesperson for women led her to stop publicly criticizing the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) , although she never supported it . In 1961 , President Kennedy 's undersecretary of labor , Esther Peterson proposed a new Presidential

Commission on the Status of Women . Kennedy appointed Roosevelt to chair the commission , with Peterson as director ; she died just before the commission issued its report . It concluded that female equality was best achieved by recognition of gender differences and needs , and not by an Equal Rights Amendment .

Throughout the 1950s , Roosevelt embarked on countless national and international speaking engagements ; continued to pen her newspaper column ; and made appearances on television and radio broadcasts . She averaged one hundred fifty lectures a year throughout the fifties , many devoted to her activism on behalf of the United Nations . In 1961 , all volumes of Roosevelt 's autobiography , which she had begun writing in 1937 , were compiled into The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt (Harper & Brothers , ISBN 0 @-@ 306 @-@ 80476 @-@ X) .

Roosevelt received thirty @-@ five honorary degrees , thirteen of which were from universities outside the United States . Her 1948 speech " The Struggle for Human Rights " was listed as # 55 in American Rhetoric 's Top 100 Speeches of the 20th Century (listed by rank) , and her 1948 speech " On the Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights " was # 98 on that same list .

= = Death and tributes = =

In April 1960 , Roosevelt was diagnosed with aplastic anemia soon after being struck by a car in New York City . In 1962 , she was given steroids , which activated a dormant case of bone marrow tuberculosis , and she died of resulting cardiac failure at her Manhattan home at 55 East 74th Street on the Upper East Side on November 7 , 1962 , at the age of 78 . President John F. Kennedy ordered all United States flags lowered to half @-@ staff throughout the world on November 8 in tribute to Roosevelt .

Among other prominent attendees , President Kennedy and former presidents Truman and Eisenhower honored Roosevelt at funeral services in Hyde Park on November 10 , 1962 , where she was interred next to her husband in the rose garden at " Springwood " , the Roosevelt family home . At the services , Adlai Stevenson said : " What other single human being has touched and transformed the existence of so many ? " , adding , " She would rather light a candle than curse the darkness , and her glow has warmed the world . "

After her death , the family deeded the family vacation home on Campobello Island to the governments of the U.S. and Canada , and in 1964 they created the 2 @,@ 800 @-@ acre (11 km2) Roosevelt Campobello International Park .

In 1977 , Eleanor 's stone cottage at Val @-@ Kill two miles east of Springwood and its surrounding property of 181 acres (0 @.@ 73 km2) , that had been her home after the death of her husband and the only residence she had ever personally owned , was formally designated by an act of Congress as the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site , " to commemorate for the education , inspiration , and benefit of present and future generations the life and work of an outstanding woman in American history . "

In 1996 , the Eleanor Roosevelt Monument , in New York 's Riverside Park , was dedicated . It is said to be the first monument to an American president 's wife . The centerpiece is a statue sculpted by Penelope Jencks , and the surrounding granite pavement contains inscriptions designed by the architect Michael Middleton Dwyer , including summaries of her achievements , and a quote from her 1958 speech at the United Nations advocating universal human rights .

= = Ancestors = =