

= Jill Biden =

Jill Tracy Biden (née Jacobs , previously Stevenson ; born June 3 , 1951) is an American educator who is married to the 47th and current Vice President of the United States , Joe Biden , making her the Second Lady of the United States since 2009 .

She was born in Hammonton , New Jersey , and grew up in Willow Grove , Pennsylvania . She married Joe Biden in 1977 , and became stepmother to his two young sons from his first marriage , Beau and Hunter , whose mother and baby sister died in a car accident . Joe and Jill Biden have a daughter , Ashley , born in 1981 .

Jill Biden has a bachelor 's degree from the University of Delaware , master 's degrees from West Chester University and Villanova University , and a doctoral degree from the University of Delaware . She taught English and reading in high schools for 13 years , and also taught adolescents with emotional disabilities at a psychiatric hospital . From 1993 to 2008 , she was an English and writing instructor at Delaware Technical & Community College . Since 2009 , she has been a professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College and is thought to be the first Second Lady to hold a paying job while her husband is Vice President . She is the founder of the Biden Breast Health Initiative non @-@ profit organization , co @-@ founder of the Book Buddies program , is active in Delaware Boots on the Ground , and is co @-@ founder of Joining Forces with First Lady Michelle Obama .

= = Early life = =

Jill Tracy Jacobs was born on June 3 , 1951 in Hammonton , New Jersey . Moving several times while very young , she and her four younger sisters spent the majority of their childhood in Willow Grove , Pennsylvania . Her father , Donald C. Jacobs (1927 ? 1999) , was a bank teller who became head of a savings and loan in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia . His family name had originally been Giacoppa before her Italian grandfather anglicized it . Her mother , Bonny Jean (Godfrey) Jacobs (1930 ? 2008) , was a homemaker . The family was not particularly religious , but in ninth grade , Jacobs independently took classes in order to join the Presbyterian church .

Jacobs always intended to have her own career . She began working at age 15 , which included waitressing at the Jersey Shore . She attended Upper Moreland High School , where she was somewhat rebellious and enjoyed her social life , but always liked English class . She graduated in 1969 .

= = Education and career , marriage and family = =

Jacobs enrolled in a junior college in Pennsylvania to study fashion merchandising , but soon found it unsatisfying . She married Bill Stevenson , a former college football player , in February 1970 . Within a couple of years he opened the Stone Balloon in Newark , Delaware , near the University of Delaware . It became one of the most successful college bars in the nation .

She enrolled at the University of Delaware , where she declared English as her major . She then took a year off from college and did some modelling work for a local agency in Wilmington . She and Stevenson drifted apart .

Subsequently , she returned to college and met Senator Joe Biden as a senior at Delaware in March 1975 . They met on a blind date set up by Joe 's brother , though Biden had seen her photograph in a local advertisement . She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Delaware later in 1975 . She began her career teaching high school English . Meanwhile , she was going through turbulent divorce proceedings with Stevenson ; the court case ended in 1976 , with her not getting the half @-@ share in the Stone Balloon she had wanted .

She and Joe Biden were married by a Catholic priest on June 17 , 1977 , at the Chapel at the United Nations in New York City . This was four and a half years after his first wife and infant daughter died in a motor vehicle accident ; Joe had proposed several times before she accepted ,

hesitant to take on the commitment of raising his two young sons who had survived the accident . She continued to teach and then , while pregnant , received a Master of Education with a specialty in Reading from West Chester University in 1981 . The Bidens ' daughter Ashley Blazer was born on June 8 , 1981 , and Jill stopped working for two years while raising the three children .

She then returned to work , teaching English , acting as a reading specialist , and teaching history to emotionally disturbed students . She taught in the adolescent program at the Rockford Center psychiatric hospital for five years in the 1980s . In 1987 , Biden received a second Master of Arts degree , this one in English from Villanova University . During her husband 's 1988 bid for the Presidency , she said she would continue her job of teaching emotionally disturbed children even if she became First Lady . In all , she spent 13 years teaching in public high school , including 3 years at Claymont High School .

From 1993 through 2008 , Biden was an instructor at the Stanton / Wilmington campus of Delaware Technical & Community College , where she taught English composition and remedial writing , with an emphasis on instilling confidence in students . She has said of teaching at a community college , " I feel like I can make a greater difference in their lives . I just love that population . It just feels really comfortable to me . I love the women who are coming back to school and getting their degrees , because they 're so focused . "

Biden is president of the Biden Breast Health Initiative , a nonprofit organization begun in 1993 that provides educational breast health awareness programs free of charge to schools and other groups in the state of Delaware . In the following 15 years , the organization informed more than 7 @, @ 000 high school girls about proper breast health . In 2007 , Biden helped found Book Buddies , which provides books for low @-@ income children , and has been very active in Delaware Boots on the Ground , an organization that supports military families . She runs five miles , five times a week , and she has run in the Marine Corps Marathon .

Biden later returned to school for her doctoral degree , studying under her birth name , Jill Jacobs . In January 2007 , at age 55 , she received a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of Delaware . Her dissertation , Student Retention at the Community College : Meeting Students ' Needs , was published under the name Jill Jacobs @-@ Biden .

= = Role in 2008 presidential campaign = =

Following George W. Bush 's reelection in 2004 , she urged her husband to run again for President , later saying : " I literally wore black for a week . I just could not believe that he won , because I felt that things were already so bad . I was so against the [Iraq War] . And I said to Joe , ' You 've got to change this , you have to change this . ' " During Joe Biden 's 2008 campaign to be the Democratic nominee , she continued to teach during the week and would join him for campaigning on weekends . She said that she would have taken an activist role in addressing education as her chief focus of concern as a potential First Lady . She also said that she was basically apolitical and would not seek inclusion in Cabinet meetings .

Once her husband was selected as the Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama 's running mate , she began campaigning again . She wore a Blue Star Mothers Club pin in recognition of Beau Biden 's deployment to Iraq . She was not a polished political speaker , but was able to establish a connection with the audience . She also made some joint appearances with Michelle Obama . Throughout the time her husband was running for vice president , Jill Biden continued to teach four days a week at Delaware Technical & Community College during the fall 2008 semester , and then campaigned over the long weekend , while grading class papers on the campaign bus .

= = Second Lady of the United States = =

= = = First term = = =

Despite moving to Number One Observatory Circle (the vice presidential residence in Washington)

as Second Lady of the United States , Biden intended to keep teaching at a Washington @-@ area community college , and several of them recruited her . In January 2009 , she began teaching two English courses as an adjunct professor at the Alexandria campus of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) , the second largest community college in the nation . It has been rare for Second Ladies to work while their spouses serve as Vice President , and Biden is thought to be the first Second Lady to hold a paying job while her husband is Vice President . Biden planned to be a public advocate for the importance of community colleges and to advise the Obama administration on issues related to them . In White House announcements and by her preference , she is referred to as " Dr. Jill Biden " .

Catherine Russell , a former adviser to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee , was named Biden 's chief of staff for her Second Lady role . Courtney O ? Donnell , a former spokesperson for Howard Dean and Elizabeth Edwards , was named her communications director and Kirsten White , a lawyer at Morgan , Lewis & Bockius , her policy director . As Second Lady , Biden has a staff of eight overall and occupies a corner suite in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building .

On The Oprah Winfrey Show just before the inauguration , Jill Biden said that Barack Obama had offered her husband either the Vice @-@ Presidency or the position of U.S. Secretary of State . However , Joe Biden 's spokesperson stated that Biden had only been offered one job by Obama . In May 2009 , Obama announced that Biden would be in charge of an initiative to raise awareness about the value of community colleges .

In June 2009 , Biden gave the commencement address at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn , New York , and received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the City University of New York . Biden continued teaching two English reading and writing classes at NOVA in fall 2009 . In January 2010 , she gave the commencement speech at the University of Delaware 's winter commencement , the first such address by her at a major university . In August 2010 , Biden appeared as herself in an episode of Lifetime 's Army Wives , making it part of her campaign to raise awareness of military families .

In April 2011 , she and Michelle Obama founded a national initiative , Joining Forces , to showcase the needs of U.S. military families . In September 2011 , Biden lent her support to USAID 's FWD campaign , a push for awareness surrounding the deadly famine , war , and drought affecting over 13 million people in the Horn of Africa . She continued to teach at NOVA , and by 2011 held a permanent position as an associate professor , teaching three English and writing composition courses two days per week . Her position there was as normal as she could make it , sharing a cubicle with another teacher , holding regular office hours for students , and trying to get her accompanying Secret Service agents to dress as unobtrusively as possible . Her life with her husband at Number One Observatory Circle tended towards the informal and was centered around family and their nearby grandchildren . In June 2012 , she published a children 's book , Don 't Forget , God Bless Our Troops , based around her son Beau 's deployment . The same month , the Bidens ' daughter Ashley , a social worker and staffer at the Delaware Department of Services for Children , Youth , and Their Families , was married .

= = = Role in 2012 presidential campaign = = =

In the 2012 U.S. presidential election , in which her husband was running for re @-@ election as vice president , Biden played a modest role . She did not cut back on her teaching schedule and made few solo campaign appearances . This reflected her continuing distaste for both politics and public speaking , even though the Obama campaign considered her valuable in connecting to military families , teachers , and women .

= = = Second term = = =

Following the re @-@ election of Obama and her husband on November 6 , 2012 , Biden began a second term as second lady . She wore a silk blue gown by Vera Wang when she appeared at the inaugural balls in January 2013 .

During her second term , Biden continued to be involved with supporting military personnel , including staging multiple visits to the Center for the Intrepid rehabilitation facility for amputees and attending the inaugural Invictus Games in London . During the 2014 U.S. midterm Congressional elections she campaigned for a number of Democrats , including some ones in high @-@ profile contests such as Mark Udall in Colorado and Michelle Nunn in Georgia .

In May 2015 she suffered the death of her stepson Beau Biden from brain cancer . She was present at her husband 's side in the Rose Garden on October 21 , 2015 , when he announced he would not run for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in the 2016 election . By her own account , Biden was disappointed by his decision , believing her husband was highly qualified for the position , and " would have been the best president . "

Biden continued to teach at NOVA , handling a full load of five classes during the Fall 2015 semester . During 2016 , she was present with her husband on a listening tour for Cancer Moonshot 2020 , an effort he was leading . In March 2016 she headed the official party that welcomed American astronaut Scott Kelly back to Earth from his almost full year in space .