

= Imelda Marcos =

Imelda Romuáldez Marcos ( born 2 July 1929 ) is the widow of the Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos , the 10th president . She served as First Lady from 1965 to 1986 during the dictatorship of her husband . She remains one of the richest politicians in the Philippines through her collection of clothing , artwork , and jewelry , along with money in offshore bank accounts under the pseudonym " Jane Ryan " . As a result , she has been called a kleptocrat by her critics who accuse her of plunder .

Marcos was born in Manila but moved to Tacloban prior to World War II after the death of her mother . She returned to Manila in 1950 to pursue a career as a singer and as a beauty queen . In 1954 , she married Ferdinand Marcos , who became president of the Philippines in 1965 , and in 1972 declared martial law . As first lady , she built developments in and around the metropolis of Manila while spending much of her time abroad on state visits and shopping sprees .

The assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 caused mass protests that eventually led to the People Power Revolution . The Marcos family were forced into exile , and Aquino 's widow Corazon was installed as president . After the death of her husband Ferdinand , she returned to the Philippines and was later elected four times to the House of Representatives as a congresswoman for Leyte in 1995 and for Ilocos Norte in 2010 , 2013 and 2016 .

Marcos is infamous for her extravagance . This included owning more than a thousand pairs of shoes , some of which are now housed in a museum in Marikina . She worked as a fashion designer and model . She has sometimes been referred to as the " Steel Butterfly " , by her supporters .

= = Early life = =

Imelda Remedios Visitación Romuáldez y Trinidad was born on July 2 , 1929 , in Manila , Philippines to Remedios Trinidad ( died 1938 ) and Vicente Romuáldez . Her uncle was Philippine Supreme Court Associate Justice Norberto Romuáldez . The Romuáldez paternal ancestors were from a land @-@ owning family in Tolosa , Leyte with mixed Visayan and Spanish ancestry . She has five other siblings , including Benjamin Romualdez ( 1930 ? 2012 ) . After their mother died in 1938 , the family moved to Tacloban . She claimed to have met Douglas MacArthur when he landed in Palo , Leyte at the end of World War II . She speaks Tagalog and English , the languages of Manila , as well as Waray , the language of Leyte . She is Roman Catholic .

She returned to Manila in 1950 at the request of her cousin Daniel Z. Romualdez , where she worked in a music store on Escolta street as a singer to attract customers . She entered the Miss Manila beauty pageant in which she came second but was named the Muse of Manila after contesting the result . She briefly dated Benigno Aquino , Jr. in the early 1950s before she met her future husband . On May 1 , 1954 , she married Ferdinand Marcos , a Nacionalista Party congressman from Ilocos Norte . The marriage resulted in four children : Imee ( born on November 12 , 1955 ) , Ferdinand Jr . ( born on September 13 , 1957 ) , and Irene ( born on September 16 , 1960 ) , and an adopted girl named Aimee .

= = First Lady = =

Marcos served as First Lady after her husband Ferdinand was elected on November 9 , 1965 as the 10th President of the Philippines . Her role in the presidency was controversial partly because she was involved in altercations with celebrities . One such was with The Beatles when the band allegedly snubbed her invitation for a state dinner at the presidential palace . Another such was with Dovie Beams because of the actress ' alleged relations with Ferdinand . On September 23 , 1972 , Ferdinand declared martial law and rewrote the constitution of the country .

As First Lady , she became " the other half of the conjugal dictatorship . " She stirred controversy after an assassination attempt against her occurred on December 7 , 1972 , when an assailant tried to stab her with a bolo knife but was shot by the police. The motive appeared to have been her role in her husband 's presidency but human rights dissidents believed it was staged by the government .

Marcos orchestrated public events using national funds to bolster her and her husband's image . She secured the Miss Universe 1974 pageant in Manila , which required the construction of the Folk Arts Theater in less than three months . She organized the Kasaysayan ng Lahi , a festival showcasing Philippine history . She also initiated social programs , such as the Green Revolution , which was intended to address hunger by encouraging the people to plant produce in household gardens , and created a national family @-@ planning program . During the early 1970s , she took control of the distribution of bread called nutribun , which actually came from the United States Agency for International Development ( USAID ) .

In 1978 , she was appointed a member of the Interim Batasang Pambansa ( National Congress ) representing Region IV @-@ A. She was also appointed as Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary , allowing her to tour the United States , the Soviet Union , Yugoslavia , and Cuba . Throughout her travels , she became friends with Richard Nixon , Muammar Gaddafi , Saddam Hussein , Fidel Castro , and Joseph Tito . She traveled to Iraq to secure oil and to Libya for a peace treaty with the Moro National Liberation Front .

Imelda Marcos held the position of Minister of Human Settlements , allowing her to construct the Cultural Center of the Philippines , the Philippine Heart Center , the Lung Center of the Philippines , the Philippine International Convention Center , the Coconut Palace , the Manila Film Center , and the Calauit Safari Park . She purchased property in Manhattan in the 1980s , including the US \$ 51 million Crown Building , the Woolworth Building in 40 Wall Street , and the US \$ 60 million Herald Centre . She declined to buy the Empire State Building because she felt it was " too ostentatious . "

= = Power struggle = =

Imelda Marcos was instrumental in the 1980 exile of opposition leader Benigno Aquino , Jr . , who had suffered a heart attack during his imprisonment . Martial law in the Philippines was later lifted in 1981 but Ferdinand Marcos continued to be president . While her husband began to suffer from lupus erythematosus , she effectively ruled in his place . Aquino returned in 1983 but was assassinated at the Manila International Airport upon his arrival . With accusations against her beginning to rise , Ferdinand created the Agrava Commission , a fact @-@ finding committee , to investigate her , ultimately finding her not guilty .

On February 7 , 1986 , snap elections were held between Ferdinand Marcos and Corazon Aquino , the widow of Benigno Aquino Jr . Despite her husband claiming to have won the elections , allegations of vote rigging led to mass protests that would be later known as the People Power Revolution . On February 25 , the Marcos family fled to Hawaii . After she left Malacañang Palace , she was found to have left behind 15 mink coats , 508 gowns , 1 @,@ 000 handbags , and pairs of shoes . The exact number of her shoes varies with estimates of up to 7 @,@ 500 pairs . However , Time reported that the final tally was only 1 @,@ 060 . The location where her shoes and jewelry were destroyed and the contents stolen .

In October 1988 , Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos , together with eight associates ( including Adnan Khashoggi , a Saudi Arabian businessman and weapons smuggler believed to have been involved with her husband's regime ) , were indicted by a federal grand jury in Manhattan on charges of racketeering , conspiracy , fraud and obstruction of justice . Tobacco heiress Doris Duke posted \$ 5 million bail for the former First Lady . The Marcos couple's defense team was led by criminal defense attorney Gerry Spence . Actor George Hamilton , an unindicted co @-@ conspirator , testified at trial under a grant of immunity , acknowledging that he had received a \$ 5 @.@ 5 @-@ million loan from an associate of hers . In July 1990 , following a three @-@ month trial , she was acquitted of all charges . By that time , Ferdinand had died in exile in Hawaii on September 28 , 1989 .

= = Later years = =

Marcos was allowed to return to the Philippines by Corazon Aquino on November 4 , 1991 . The

following year , she ran for president in the presidential elections on May 11 , 1992 , finishing 5th out of 7 candidates . On May 8 , 1995 , she was elected as a congresswoman of Leyte , representing the first district , despite facing a disqualification lawsuit in which the Supreme Court ruled in her favor . She sought the presidency again on May 11 , 1998 , but later withdrew to support the eventual winner Joseph Estrada and she finished 9th among 11 candidates . In November 2006 , she started her own business , a fashion label that included designing jewelry . In March 2008 , she was acquitted of charges of having illegally taken money from the country by the Manila Regional Trial Court due to reasonable doubt .

Marcos ran for the second district of Ilocos Norte in the elections on May 10 , 2010 to replace her son , Ferdinand Jr . , who ran for Senate under the Nacionalista Party . During her term , she held the position of Millennium Development Goals chairwoman in the Lower House . In 2011 , the Sandiganbayan 's Fifth Division ordered her to return US \$ 280 @, @ 000 in government funds taken by her and her husband from the National Food Authority . She won re @-@ election on May 14 , 2013 in a bid to renew her term . On May 9 , 2016 , she was re @-@ elected again for her third and final term .

= = Wealth = =

Marcos allegedly owned assets worth US \$ 10 billion . On one occasion , she spent \$ 2 @, @ 000 on chewing gum at the San Francisco International Airport and , on another , she forced a plane to do a U @-@ turn mid @-@ air just because she forgot to buy cheese in Rome . Her collection of shoes , now lies partly in the National Museum of the Philippines and partly in a shoe museum in Marikina . Typhoon Haiyan ( Yolanda ) damaged her ancestral home in Tacloban , which also serves as a museum , although she still retains homes in Ilocos Norte and Makati , where she resides .

She allegedly owns Swiss bank accounts under the pseudonym " Jane Ryan " . Her claimed fortune came from Yamashita 's gold , a semi @-@ mythical treasure trove that is widely believed in the Philippines to be part of the Japanese loot in World War II . Her property used to include jewels and a 175 @-@ piece art collection , which included works by Michelangelo , Botticelli , Canaletto , Raphael , as well as Monet 's L 'Église et La Seine à Vétheuil ( 1881 ) , Alfred Sisley 's Langland Bay ( 1887 ) , and Albert Marquet 's Le Cyprès de Djenan Sidi Said ( 1946 ) .

Switzerland 's federal tribunal ruled in December 1990 that cash in Swiss banks would only be returned to the Philippine government if a Philippine court convicted her . In March 2008 , a judge in Manila in the Philippines acquitted her of 32 counts of illegal transfers of funds to Swiss bank accounts between 1968 and 1976 , determining that the government had failed to prove its case . In 2012 , she declared her net worth to be US \$ 22 million and she was listed as the second @-@ richest Filipino politician behind boxer and politician Manny Pacquiao .

In October 17 , 2013 , the attempted sale of two Claude Monet paintings , L 'Eglise de Vetheuil and Le Bassin Aux Nymphéas , became the subject of a legal case in New York against Vilma Bautista , a one @-@ time aide to Imelda Marcos . Bautista was sentenced in 2014 to 2 ? 6 years in prison for attempting to sell " valuable masterpieces that belonged to her country " . On January 13 , 2014 , three collections of Imelda Marcos 's jewelry : the Malacanang collection , the Roumeliotes collection , and the Hawaii collection ; along with paintings of Claude Monet were seized by the Philippine government . In 2015 , a rare pink diamond worth \$ 5 million was discovered in her jewelry collection . On February 16 , 2016 , the government of the Philippines announced that the three collections , valued at about \$ 21 million , were to be auctioned off before the end of Benigno Aquino III 's term on June 30 , 2016 .

= = Legacy = =

Marcos influenced fashion in the Philippines , although her role as a patroness of the arts and fashion is still controversial . The second track of Mark Knopfler 's 1996 album Golden Heart , is a sardonic song about her . She was the subject of the 2003 documentary film , Imelda . In 2010 ,

British producer Fatboy Slim and musician David Byrne released a concept album about her life called Here Lies Love , which later became a rock musical . In Manila , local performance artist Carlos Celdran performs his Living La Vida Imelda walking tour , which was also performed in Dubai during 2012 .

#### Foreign honors

Jordan : Gran Cordon ( 1st Class ) of the Supreme Order of the Renaissance ( March 1 , 1976 )

Romania : Order of August 23 , 1944 ( April 9 , 1975 )

Sovereign Military Order of Malta : Dame Grand Cross of the Order pro merito Melitensi

Spain : Dame Grand Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic ( February 18 , 1974 )