

Ivanka Trump May Move Into the First Lady's Office

For more than 115 years, the office situated at the southwest corner of the second floor of the East Wing of the White House has been officially termed the First Lady's Office, occupied by the first lady of the United States and her small staff of social and administrative secretaries.

But come Jan. 20, that office won't be occupied by First Lady Melania Trump. Instead, according to published reports Thursday, it will be occupied by President-elect Donald Trump's eldest daughter, Ivanka.

Liberals are in an uproar, but in all honesty, the president-elect has history and tradition on his side in this one. With Melania choosing to stay at Trump Tower in Manhattan to keep the Trumps' son, Barron, away from the glass bubble that is the White House, her duties will need to be carried by someone else.

So let's talk about history, shall we?

Every president has had a First Lady, beginning with the very first, "Lady Washington"—Martha Washington. But not every president has had a wife to fill that role. Some examples:

- Thomas Jefferson: He had been a widower for nearly two decades when he was sworn in. The duties of First Lady fell upon the wife of his vice president (James Madison), Dolley Madison, and his daughter, Martha. The title of First Lady belonged to Martha, though.
- Andrew Jackson: His wife, Rachel, died after the election, but before his inauguration, so the duties and title of First Lady were passed to his eldest living female relative, a niece named Emily Donelson.
- Martin Van Buren: Also a longtime widower when he

assumed the presidency, the title and duties of First Lady fell upon his daughter-in-law, Sarah "Angelica" Van Buren (at 20 years old, she remains the youngest First Lady ever).

- John Tyler: His first wife, Letitia, died of a stroke while serving as First Lady. He married his second wife, Julia (who was just 24 years old—five years younger than his eldest daughter, Mary) two years later. There is no record of who carried the duties in the intervening months.
- James Buchanan: Innuendo from political opponents aside, history records he lost the love of his life before they could be married and vowed never to love again. He certainly never married, and so the duties of First Lady fell upon his orphaned niece, Harriet Lane, whom he had previously adopted.
- Chester Arthur: His wife, Nell, died of pneumonia in 1880 (He mourned the loss by having a stained window commissioned for the nearby St. John's Episcopal Church, which he could see from his office window every night). His sister, Mary McElroy, took over the duties of First Lady and cared for his children.
- Grover Cleveland: A bachelor when he entered office for the first of his two non-consecutive terms and married when he left, the duties of First Lady were carried out by his sister, Rose, for the first two years of his term. Upon his marriage to Frances Folsom, however, those duties became hers to fulfill.
- Woodrow Wilson: His first wife, Ellen, died of kidney failure during his first term in office, and he sank into a deep depression for more than six months. Slightly more than a year later, he married his second wife, Edith. It is unclear who performed the duties of First Lady in the intervening months, but it's unlikely with world events leading up to World War I as they were and the president's emotional condition that there would have been much need for a White House hostess.

Granted, none of these examples matches what will come about on Jan. 20, but the idea of having a relative fill in as an alternative to the First Lady is not without precedent. The interesting questions that should be asked, then, are:

- Will the First Lady's agenda be Melania's, Ivanka's or a combination?
- Will Melania and Ivanka both require government-paid staff?
- As White House hostess, how will Ivanka's role be different from her more recent predecessors?

These are questions only time will be able to answer.

In the meantime, it's humorous to watch the liberal mainstream media spin its wheels over yet another contrived controversy. We'll be sure to let you know when there's something to actually be concerned about. {eo}

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