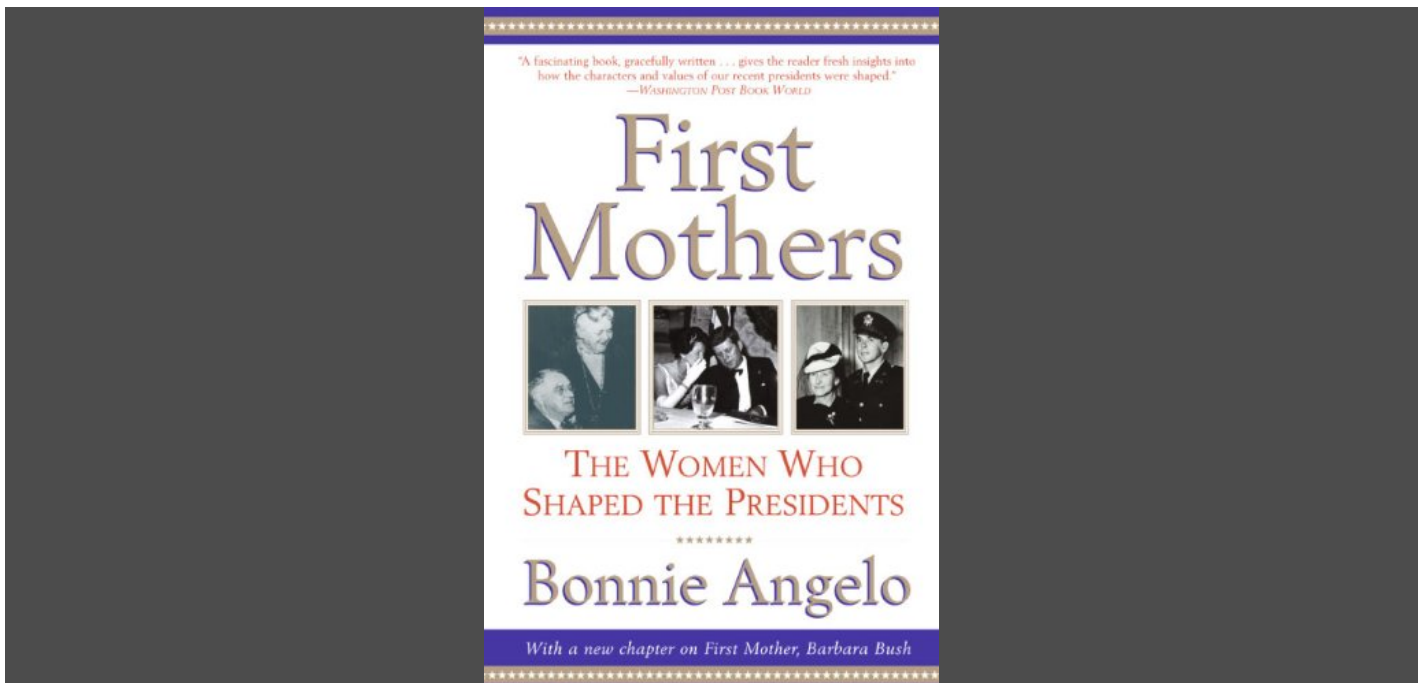


PDF | First Mothers: The Women  
Who Shaped the Presidents

by Bonnie Angelo



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Bonnie Angelo, a veteran reporter and writer for *Time*, has captured the daily lives, thoughts, and feelings of the remarkable women who played such a large role in developing the characters of the modern American presidents. From formidably aristocratic Sara Delano Roosevelt to diehard Democrat Martha Truman, champion athlete Dorothy Bush, and hard-living Virginia Clinton Kelley, Angelo blends these women's stories with the texture of their lives and with colorful details of their times. *First Mothers* is an in-depth look at the special mother-son relationships that nurtured and helped propel the last twelve American presidents to the pinnacle of power.

**Amazon.com Review**

Succinct and highly readable, this group portrait of the 11 women who gave birth to America's 20th-century presidents might just put a more favorable spin on the phrase "mama's boy." From Franklin Roosevelt to Bill Clinton, all these chief executives were devoted to their mothers (relations with Dad were often more problematic), and that devotion had a direct effect on their presidencies--for the most part, a positive one. Sara Delano Roosevelt's adoration gave her son the self-confidence necessary to champion the New Deal's more unpopular measures. Martha Truman's personal experiences of the Civil War's bitter aftermath inspired Harry's determination to lend a hand to the vanquished as well as the victorious after World War II. Ida Eisenhower's pacifism didn't prevent her from supporting Dwight's decision to pursue a military career, but it shaped him into that welcome rarity, "a military leader who hated war." Lillian Carter's defiance of Southern mores to espouse civil rights and her precedent-shattering stint in the Peace Corps (at age 68) affected Jimmy's emphasis on human rights as well as his post-presidential commitment to serve the less fortunate. Virginia Kelley gets slapped for imparting to Bill Clinton the sense that "rules were for other people," but she's also credited with instilling his famous ability to feel other people's pain. In *First Mothers*, Bonnie Angelo, a longtime correspondent for *Time* magazine, delineates 11 different lives with a journalist's gift for cogency and an ability to see underlying similarities. Many of the facts here are familiar, but her interpretations are fresh. --Wendy Smith

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