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**Running Head: THE CHANGING ROLE OF FIRST LADY**

# **The East Wing Beat: The Changing Role of First Lady**

**An Analysis of *New York Times* Coverage  
of First Ladies, 1900-2004**

Jacqueline (Arcesi) Scheible

Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Master of Science Degree in Communication  
& Media Technologies

Rochester Institute of Technology

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Signature Page

**Bruce Austin**

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Bruce Austin, Professor and Chairman  
Dept. of Communications  
Thesis Advisor

**Rudy Pugliese**

---

Rudy Pugliese  
Associate Professor, Department of Communications  
Faculty Advisor/Thesis Advisor

**Ron Hira**

---

Ron Hira  
Assistant Professor, Department of Public Policy  
Thesis Advisor

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### **Abstract**

First Ladies take on highly visible public roles within the American political system. They serve as role models for American women, symbolically representing the upper-middle-class-white American woman. The mass media cover extensively the women who become first ladies and symbolism associated with the firstladyship. The purpose of the present study is to provide a systematic examination of *New York Times* coverage of first ladies to understand and interpret change that has occurred in coverage. The findings suggest that first ladies have the opportunity to take advantage of the first lady podium and use it to meet public expectations and fulfill personal agendas, causing media to respond by covering them differently than in the past.

## Introduction

She's popular; she's famous; she's intriguing. The first lady of the United States, no matter who she is, takes on a highly visible role by virtue of marriage to an American president and serves the public for life, garnering public attention, unlike any other popular figure in American culture. Although the duties of first lady are unspecified within the American political system, the symbolism representing the firstladyship and the tradition of past first ladies resonates deeply with the American public. Eleanor Roosevelt championed social and political causes; Jacqueline Kennedy introduced the American public to style and an image; and Nancy Regan served her husband as a behind the scene influential partner. Whatever the reasons, the mass media may help to build public perceptions about the women who become our first ladies, since mass media are a primary source of information for the American public regarding public figures (Graber, 1994; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Bissell & Scharrer, 2000). Over the years, the media has had to keep up with the changing nature and maturing role of first lady within the American political system (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield 1991).

## The Social Impact of First Lady and the Media Response

The first ladyship is a unique role in the American political system that involves no formal political office or position: There is no job description for presidential wife, nor are there any provisions contained in the U.S. Constitution or public law regarding a role for presidential wives. In the nation's history, however, the office of first lady has become informally institutionalized and integrated with the office of the president

(Watson, 2000), incorporating various roles: host to dignitaries, champion for various social causes and agent for political agendas. Presidential wives serve in these roles “based on tradition and prior first lady experiences” (Winfield & Friedman, 2003, para.7). More notably, however, presidential wives serve in a symbolic role, as role model for upper-middle-class American women (Winfield & Friedman, 2003; Edwards & Chen 2002). Historian Gill Troy comments, “We use the first lady not only as a role model, but also a metaphor for what the modern American woman is all about” (quoted by Copland, 2002, para. 53).

According to Bissell and Scharrer (2000) first ladies are often described in terms of traditional and stereotypical roles grounded in gender stereotypes, associated with women being, “submissive, warm, nurturing and gentle” (p. 58). Winfield (1997) defines the symbolic nature of first lady as being associated with areas of “good works, protocol, and as an escort, usually found in laudable, positive terms” (para. 17). Gardetto (1997) claims that first lady symbolism represents a role far more complex than simply the status of wife to the president; she symbolically represents domesticity and her relationship to the private “world of household and family and a woman’s proper place is in the home” (p. 226). Her assumption is grounded in Western political theory, specifically “the symbolic separation of public and private realms of social life, the elevation of the public world of politics in relation to the private world of household and family and the association of men with the former and women with the latter” (p. 226).

The aforementioned characterizations of the role of first lady help to explain the expected and/or perceived “traditional” role and stereotype that is associated with the role

of first lady, which is often shaped by mass media. According to Winfield (1991), “the American media have both judged and relayed societal expectations about what is acceptable or not acceptable behavior for a first lady” (p. 166). Media have a considerable amount of power in shaping news and social reality. Claiming that news translates to a constructed social reality, Tuchman (1978) suggests, “the news media have the power to shape news consumers’ opinions on topics about which they are ignorant” (p. 2). Media reports of first ladies, therefore, not only shape a “public face” of presidential wives, but also play a role in communicating the symbolic nature of the role of first lady in the broader societal fabric of American culture.

### **Study Rationale**

Much of the scholarly literature related to media coverage of first ladies centers on Hillary Rodham Clinton because she deviated from traditional first lady standards, creating ensuing news reporting dilemmas for reporters (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield, 1997, 2001; Gardetto, 1997; Edwards & Chen, 2000). Since Clinton overstepped perceived traditional first lady boundaries, the media likely covered her differently, or more negatively than previous first ladies (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield, 1997). Past first ladies, however, have also taken on nontraditional roles and have even been said to influence presidential decisions (Marton, 2001; Watson, 1999). Edith Wilson aided her husband Woodrow Wilson in various presidential duties during his illness, Eleanor Roosevelt took on political pursuits of her own during Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s administration and Roslyn Carter advanced a social activist role by



promoting a greater understanding of mental health issues, to name only a few examples (Marton, 2001).

Clearly, presidential wives have routinely served outside of the traditional first lady role throughout history; yet, there has been a lack of study on the impact of first ladies both politically and socially. Watson (2000) claims that scholarship on first ladies in general is in its nascent stages; it has mainly evolved since the 1980s as an “interdisciplinary endeavor, attracting scholars from such disciplines as history, women’s studies, and communication and journalism” (para. 2). Likewise, studies of media coverage of first ladies were limited until Clinton assumed the role. Most studies of media coverage of first ladies lack a long-term focus, and tend to only study select first ladies, during only the first one or two years that they served as first lady (Bissell & Scharrer. 2000; Winfield, 1997, 2001; Gardetto, 1997; Edwards & Chen, 2000). Winfield (1997) analyzed news coverage dating back to the nineteenth century, but examined six of nineteen first ladies for only a portion of the term that they served as first lady. Most subsequent research on media coverage of first ladies draws on Winfield’s established frames, even though they have not been challenged or tested systematically.

The purpose of the present study is to provide a systematic examination of news coverage by the *New York Times* of first ladies since 1900, exploring how coverage of first ladies has changed and how trends or patterns of news content have emerged. The findings will help to make predictions about future news content of first ladies and the social significance of the role of first lady. A content analysis of *New York Times* coverage of first ladies in the years 1900-2004 was employed to explore manifest text

content. In addition, the mass communication theories of gatekeeping, agenda setting and framing were used to provide an interpretive lens to help explain and contextualize the findings.

From a scholarly perspective, this study enriches the study of news framing of first ladies. In the field of mass communication scholarship, studies have tended to focus on message media effects (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Through a systematic study of media content of first ladies, we can gain an understanding about those things that are less visible within the process of making news: the organizational and external media forces that affect message creation (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). The study also adds to existing literature on media coverage of first ladies that falls short of revealing strong analytical consistency in how pre-Clinton first ladies were covered by the media. It is also intended to encourage further research on the subject of first ladies.

## **Literature Review: Understanding Media Coverage of First Ladies**

The literature relevant to this study is two-fold, incorporating scholarship on mass communication theory related to newsmaking, and an emerging body of literature related to media coverage of first ladies.

### **Communication Theory**

This study draws on scholarship of mass communication theories. Mass communication research in the areas of gatekeeping, framing and agenda setting examine the content of messages—how they are chosen as news items (gatekeeping), how they are

organized and arranged (framing) and how they are perceived (agenda setting). These theories have often been used to study political roles within a culture.

Gatekeeping theory explains how news content decisions are made, specifically “message selection, handling and control” (Shoemaker, 1991 p. 1). Gatekeeping is more than a series of decision points that news flows through. First introduced by Lewin (1947) and later advanced by various scholars including White (1950) and Shoemaker (1991), gatekeeping examines the flow of news items through various communication channels. Within these channels various “gates” exist where “gate keepers,” comprised of an individual or group, have the power to pick what items are reported (White, 1950). Shoemaker (1991) argues that gatekeeping not only involves news selection, but also “withholding, transmission, shaping, display, repetition and timing of information as it goes from sender to receiver” (p. 1). The processes of gatekeeping, therefore, encompasses a decision-making process of an individual or select group of individuals—the gatekeepers—and the subsequent process of selecting news, assigning stories to journalists and news shaping or framing.

According to Shoemaker (1991), “gatekeeping is important and powerful because gatekeepers provide an integrated view of social reality to the rest of us” (p. 4). News is a constructed reality and news workers transform everyday occurrences into news events (Tuchman, 1978). When only a select number of messages are chosen from nearly millions of messages, there is a significant amount of power yielded by gatekeepers to choose news content and create social reality. Although it is commonly thought or expected that editors and journalists gather and report news without bias, it is unlikely

that personal values stray from the news decision-making process (Tuchman, 1978).

White (1950) suggests that that news selection decisions are “highly subjective” (p. 386), based on “value-judgments, personal experiences, and attitudes and expectations” of the communication of news by gatekeepers (p. 386).

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) claim as news items pass through “gates,” news is affected within the system due to various internal and external forces including ideology, organizational procedures and goals, and extra media forces outside of basic value judgments of journalists (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). According to Tuchman (1978) “news is an artful accomplishment attuned to specific understandings of social reality” tending to “legitimate the status quo” (p. 216). This universal understanding becomes based on routines within the gatekeeping process that are consistent among all or many news organizations (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Ultimately, social reality will be reflected in how these routines impact the manner in which a news story is communicated: a concept known as “news framing.”

News framing is used in the news shaping process. Entman (1993) defines framing “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). He claims communicators make judgments on how they want to report something by placement of text and reappearances of text or images to make them more “noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences” (p. 53), claiming that framing is a way to “describe the power of a communicating text” (p. 51). Framing under this

model depends on “outcome and effect” (Reese, 2001, p. 10). For example, if a journalist determines that a first lady hosting dignitaries best signifies her role, then the hostess news frame will be repeated in the news text to make the image more meaningful and salient.

Reese (2001) constructed a working definition for framing: “frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 11). News frames form patterns over time and help audiences to understand people, places and things. Winfield (2001) claims “frames structure how journalists cover figures, and functions as the story “pegs” around which the narrative flows” (para. 10). “The acceptance and sharing of a media frame depends on what understandings the reader brings to the text to produce negotiated meaning” (Reese, 2001, p. 15). Reader assumptions, therefore, lead to the concept of agenda-setting theory and its relationship to framing.

Agenda setting predicts the relationship between what is reported and what the audience perceives as important (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the news media have the ability to create public awareness of issues they choose and “shape public reality,” claiming “readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance is attached to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position” (p. 176). Under this prediction, the positioning of stories has an impact on the perceived importance of content and therefore audiences not only learn about reported topics, but also prioritize issues based on the manner in which they are reported (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to Scheufele (2000) the concept of

framing and agenda setting are related; framing is actually an extension of agenda setting. He contends that agenda setting relies on the notion of “attitude accessibility,” suggesting that mass media can make issues more salient and bring on increased attention, whereas framing affects how the audience understands issues based on the descriptive information provided by reporters.

### **Scholarship on Media Coverage of First Ladies**

There is a growing body of literature on media coverage of first ladies. Most of it addresses image, political activity, White House projects, public opinion, and gender stereotypes (Bissell & Scharrer 2000; Winfield 1997, 2001; Gardetto, 1997; Edwards & Chen, 2000). Most prominent in the literature is Winfield research (1994; 1997; 2001; 2003). Winfield’s (1997) study examined press coverage of first ladies dating back to the nineteenth century. Winfield’s study established research frames—often used by scholars on the subject—and compares coverage found in the nineteenth century with coverage in the twentieth century. The examination and conclusions center on coverage of Hillary Rodham Clinton one of only two other twentieth century first ladies covered by the study. In addition to examining only a small sample of twentieth century first ladies, the articles examined only covered the first year that each of these presidential wives served in their first lady role to predict media expectations of the role of first ladies.

Winfield (1997) seeks to explain how and why framing of the role of first lady has changed over time. Winfield’s research provides great insight into the study of media coverage of first ladies: it presents the right questions for inquiry regarding

framing and explores the topic systematically; however, her questions need to be tested further using more examples of first ladies. Winfield (2001) defines first lady frames, based on her previous research and more qualitative study: 1) the upper middle-class wife of the president, 2) as an escort with her husband, 3) in a charitable role serving humans 4) as a policy maker and 5) in a politically influential role. More recently, as shown in the literature (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Burrell 1997; Winfield, 1997; Winfield 2001; Winfield & Friedman, 2003) an increasingly prominent frame of first ladies accentuates political activity and political roles. Scharrer and Bissell (2000) suggest “in the act of gatekeeping-selecting information and potential news as “in” or “out” –and creating frames emphasizing and highlighting specific aspects of a person, event, or issue—public perceptions of the first lady could be influenced” (p. 59). Accordingly, framing of first ladies can be said to be less about what is actually reported, but more about how stories are reported and which aspects are given the most attention and importance. Thus, some frames of first ladies may never appear in the news, depending on the agenda-setting goals of gatekeepers.

A majority of research on media coverage of first ladies addresses how Hillary Rodham Clinton was a new kind of first lady, a politically active presidential wife (Beasley, 1993; Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield, 1997; Winfield, 2001; Gardetto, 1997). Winfield (2001) contends when a woman moves beyond the traditional role of the first lady, the media often responds with coverage that is negative in tone. Winfield (2001) examined how journalists struggled to cover Clinton’s nontraditional leanings, asserting that she created a reporting dilemma. Media treatment is soft news when a first

lady remains traditional in her actions or can be reported on traditionally; however, when the first lady operates in a manner of seeking to influence policy or openly exerting a sense of power, it becomes hard news and is reported negatively (Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield, 2001).

Bissell and Scharrer's (2000) content analysis examines how media coverage of first ladies has changed from that of covering the traditional role to that of covering a politically active first lady. "With increased presence in political roles and actions—best exemplified by Clinton, the data begin to suggest news stories involving the first lady may move from soft news to hard news and be accompanied by a negative tone" (p. 79). They claim "as a public figure's power grows, the watchdog function of the press grows as well" (p. 79). They also suggest "the public does not feel comfortable with attempts at expanding the role of the first lady to encompass political decision-making and activity" (p. 79). Members of the press may hold similar views or suspect their readers hold these views, and may penalize first ladies who step outside of this comfort zone.

Bissell and Scharrer (2002) recognize that their studies are exploratory in nature because they attempt to uncover patterns of content "in an area that has not received much research attention" (p. 78). The researchers acknowledge that their research was "preliminary and limited" and form the basis for further exploration in a topic that has "become for interesting and worthy of investigation in the recent past" (p. 78). Overall, Bissell and Scharrer (2000) provide a useful framework for building a content analysis codebook for further analysis of the topic and developing a systematic and longer-term



study, specifically examining the complacency of journalists to cover our first ladies in consistent manner.

Overall, the literature related to mass communication theories provides an interpretative mode to understand the newsmaking process and the findings of this study. The studies regarding media coverage of first ladies help to identify research questions and provide the basic building blocks for further scholarly research on all first ladies, not only Clinton.

## **Research Questions**

The focus of this study is coverage of first ladies in the *New York Times* 1900-2004. The following research questions are answered to understand and interpret change that has occurred in coverage of first ladies over the years.

RQ1: What subjects do the *New York Times* cover related to first ladies?

RQ2: What patterns or trends are found in coverage of first ladies?

RQ3: What are the dominant news frames found in *New York Times* coverage of first ladies?

RQ4: What news frames have evolved since 1900?

RQ5: What predictions can be made about future media coverage of first ladies?

## **Methodology and Sampling Decisions**

This study employed content analysis to answer the research questions by examining manifest message content of *New York Times* articles systematically and

quantitatively. The *New York Times* was used due to its prominence as a prestigious news source and its national coverage. The *New York Times Index* is a key source for news archives (Tuchman, 1994). According to Gardetto, "it [*New York Times*] is the newspaper of record in contemporary America, it is well indexed and many researchers turn to it for clues about how influential media elites conceived an event at the time it occurred" (p. 225). According to Kiouisis (2004), it is an elite media source and various researchers consider it as an agenda-setting source for nonelite media sources nationally. Only one newspaper was chosen to make the study manageable. The *New York Times* was chosen since it is a newspaper of record since 1900.

Articles were examined for terms appearing in the headline and text to identify specific characteristics within the text. The article topics and tone of news story were also examined to identify themes and patterns that can be found in the coverage related to first lady traits and actions. A complete description of items examined can be found in the *Content Analysis Codebook* Exhibit A with the accompanying *Coding Form* Exhibit B. Coding was completed separately by a panel of six individuals comprised of the researcher (female), two 20-something working women, a retired Doctorate in Chemistry (male), a civil engineer/former instructor at MCC (male) and friend of the researcher (female); thus providing a perspective from various generations and genders, but all from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Testing was done on a separate group of three individuals to help to refine the content analysis codebook questions and to test for bias in discrepancies in answers. The test coders were asked to code three articles each. Also two coders were retested on three of the articles that they had originally coded. There

were no deviations in the two responses. Descriptive analysis was completed using SPSS.

Sampling was done in various stages via *New York Times* indexing service through ProQuest by the researcher. Twenty *New York Times* articles were randomly chosen for each first lady administration beginning January 1, 1900 through June 30, 2004 for a total expected population of 360 articles. Some articles were discarded for various reasons as noted below resulting in a final random sample of 341 (N=341). This collection process was chosen as it is in line with the number of articles tested in previous studies and it provides for a standard population for each first lady since 1900. The purpose of having the exact number of articles for each first lady was to be able to examine each administration for trends or patterns. Sampling was done based on the following:

- ❖ During the Wilson administration, two women assumed the role of first lady. Ten articles were chosen for each since the study sampling is done for 20 articles for each first lady administration.
- ❖ For each first lady administration, the last name and Mrs. were used in the search category and the first lady's first name and last name were used that appeared in the headline.
- ❖ Sampling was done by date from the oldest to the newest for each administration.
- ❖ From the population of all possible articles for each first lady, a random sample of 20 was chosen by dividing the total number of articles found by 20 and selecting

every article for the quotient found. (e.g., 345 total articles divided by 20 equals 17.25; therefore, every 17<sup>th</sup> article would be chosen).

- ❖ Some articles that surfaced using this method were not chosen, as they offered no value to the study for various reasons described in this section. Some articles were only a few words in length and it would have added more value to extract the very next article. Other articles were discarded if they turned up to be about another person (e.g., the president's mother) or for the any of following reasons since they do not add relevance to this study:
- ❖ Articles that went on to report on the president. Under this circumstance the article is in a sense about the president and not the first lady. It is the intention of this study to examine articles related to first ladies only and not others.
- ❖ Articles that addressed the first ladies aid, although White House staff is newsworthy, it has no relevance to this study. Again, it is the intention of this study to examine articles related to first ladies only and not others.
- ❖ Articles that discussed what something or somebody else did for the first lady (e.g, Congress named the first lady. A party was held for Mrs. Reagan.). These articles related more to the event or activity and not the first lady.
- ❖ Re-occurring articles on a health issue were also discarded. It served this study better to choose another article, rather than to keep taking articles related to the same subject. During Ford's Administration, Betty Ford was diagnosed with Breast Cancer resulting in an abundance of articles on this subject. Health issues

such as this are newsworthy, however, for this study it is more useful to look at articles outside of this area.

- ❖ For Hillary Rodham Clinton, only articles related to her as a first lady were chosen. Most in 1999-2000 related to her Senate race. Many others related to Travelgate or Whitewater, or her husband's infidelity. ProQuest searching functions for articles since 1996, allows to add a term first lady as the subject; thus, extracting a population of articles related specifically to the first lady role. This same scenario was used for Laura Bush.
- ❖ In the circumstances where an article was not selected, the very next article appearing in the population retrieved was chosen, causing randomization to be done from the last article extracted. (e.g., if every tenth article was being selected and the 10<sup>th</sup> article was not relevant, then the 11<sup>th</sup> article was chosen; thus from the 11<sup>th</sup> article the next article to be selected would continue with the original quotient found.

Overall, the approach used here lacks scientific rigor, however, due to the nature of the topic it is difficult to answer the research questions poised by this study solely scientifically. Accordingly, the results from this method were backed by a combination of a more qualitative review of the news articles and comparison with current scholarship on the subject. Winfield's (1997 and 2000) studies had taken this direction as well, since the subject is difficult to study on a purely scientific basis.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The data show that coverage of first ladies by the *New York Times* centers on what the first lady does, rather than whom she is with 87.4% of the headline terms centering on actions and 11.7% related to personal qualities. One of the research questions poised in this study relates to the subjects covered by the *New York Times* regarding first ladies. In comparing headline terms with the article topics the categories that were most prominent in the data were the travel activities of first lady and speaking engagements of first ladies. The results are as follows:

<u>Article Topic</u>	<u>Percent of Stories</u>
Travel Activities	10.8%
Speaking Engagements	10.2%
Ideals of Traditional Upper-Middle-Class American Woman	9.1%
Nurturing charitable role	7.9%
Social Activist Role	3.2%

Those topics receiving the lowest marks were stories about books, articles or interviews related to first ladies; careers of the first lady prior to becoming first lady; conflicts with others; and history, past behaviors, past experiences, all of which were fewer than 1%.

Headline text content that referred to the first lady with the title “Mrs.” occurred 77.2% of the time, and 7.3% of the time the first lady’s first and last name appeared in the headline content. According to the results, the *New York Times* did not use first names in headline text in the first part of the century, except for one article on Grace Coolidge.

Jackie for Jacqueline Kennedy appeared only once, and Claudia appeared once for Lady Bird Johnson. It was not until Pat Nixon assumed the role that a trend developed of headline text including first and last names of first ladies. Subsequent first ladies were referred to by their first and last name more consistently than not. This trend suggests that the changing roles of women in society and the feminist movement of the 1970s may have been mirrored in news coverage of political woman. During this time, first ladies were increasingly becoming more known by their name, than by their mere marital status to the president.

The findings also show that coverage of first ladies was rarely negative in tone, suggesting that the media respect and report positively on the women who serve as first lady. In more than 50% of the stories, a positive tone was recorded. The category of either positive or negative accounted for 40% of the stories. Since previous studies regarding negative coverage of first ladies focused on political activities of first ladies and stories, only 3.2% of this sample was identified for politically active first ladies. Thus, further exploration on tone of news story alone is needed to build more significant assumptions regarding tone of coverage, perhaps using a more defined population.

In efforts to better understand the internal organization structures that help formulate message creation and determine framing, attempts were made to identify any trends or patterns that may be measurable in terms of who was writing stories about first ladies: a male or female journalist. Of those identified, 12.3% were written by female journalists and 8.5% written by male journalists with 57% unknown because a name was not listed or the name was not recognized as either male or female. Therefore, little

empirical evidence was found to relate the sex of the journalist with manifest text content or to further explore Shoemaker and Reese's (1991) assumptions related to the impact of various internal forces including ideology, organizational procedures and goals related to newsmaking. The data does, however, show that more female journalists than male journalist covered first ladies, which helps to explain trends and patterns in content related to value judgments and gender bias. A closer review of this internal force in the newsmaking process helps to explain the impact of gender in newsmaking.

Beasley (1993) claims that the media underrepresented women: "women account for 52% of the population, but only 34% of the news media workforce, with only 10% at decision making levels" (para. 6). Women and men can be said to cover news differently: women use more sentiment into their stories (Beasley, 1993). Although these statistics are somewhat outdated, they are relevant to understanding the coverage of Clinton, whose name appears often in relation to the study of media coverage of first ladies. When covering first ladies, male journalists—especially the older generation—were uncomfortable with covering a "powerhouse" first lady like Hillary Rodham Clinton (Winfield, 1994). Beasley (1993) points out that coverage of women by women is not necessarily better, however. During the 1992 presidential campaign, many stories written by women treated Clinton negatively; a trend that Beasley (1993) contends was aimed to draw interest from male editors (gatekeepers) who were making editorial decisions about news content. As we have learned from Tuchman (1978) and White (1950), editors and journalists are likely to be biased in reporting on stories. As more women assume gatekeeping roles in newsrooms, it is likely that more personal gender bias in coverage



will affect story prominence and messaging in coverage of first ladies, specifically how they are framed.

In answering the research questions related to dominant and evolving news frames of first lady frames since 1900, it can be concluded that more frames than previously identified in past research studies are present. As reported earlier, Winfield (1997 & 2000) identified news frames for first ladies that have been often used by several scholars in research on the subject. Her analysis offers the following frames, which were tested for this study:

1. *Escort Role*: The first lady is mentioned by virtue of accompanying her spouse, not because of any independent function.
2. *Protocol role*: Leading fashionable society at social, ceremonial and diplomatic events.
3. *Noblesse oblige role*: Charitable and good works concern with orphanages, the homeless or the poor which represents a natural extension of women's volunteer work in the community.
4. *Policy role*: helping to formulate, develop and influence public policy issues.
5. *Power behind the throne*: focusing on actions that are independent of the president but suggests that the first lady is garnering power.

Of the stories examined, 41.8% did not fit into any one of the above framing descriptions. The protocol role frame was reported at 23.4%, with the noblesse oblige

role at 14.6%. The escort, policy and power behind the throne frames each were reported less than 10% of the time.

For those articles that did not fit into a current frame, coders were asked to identify terms that helped to explain how the story was framed based on Entman (1993) “to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (p. 52). In an analysis of the terms and communicating text of the articles under examination, two new reoccurring frames were identified: travel and activities of first lady related to the office of first lady and supporting husband’s presidency or campaign. Also based on a review of the data and through a more qualitative study of selected articles an emerging frame is manifest related to character/individuality—specifically what personal qualities and individual issues and pursuits that define who she is—first ladies bring to the role and the American public.

Recognizing and understanding the framing results of this study helps to make predictions about future coverage of first ladies, a central question of this study. According to data, most first ladies stories in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not framed in the standard frames related to the traditional role of first ladies. This suggests that generalizations about news framing of first ladies are difficult to make, and always have been. More specifically, the firstladyship and the symbolism associated with the role cannot be framed when individuality is taken into account. In a more qualitative study of the articles that did not fit into a clear framing category, there is a trend in coverage

indicating that first ladies serve in various roles outside of the traditional protocol, escort and ideals of traditional woman roles. As such, first lady coverage has and will continue to evolve, becoming more comprehensive, detailed and descriptive about how the first lady performs in the role and what personal qualities and motives she brings to the firstladyship.

As women begin to expand their influence in political offices, we will find the first lady serving as a symbol not only for the upper-middle-class white American women, but as a rhetorical and influential first lady, one who speaks more publicly and openly about personal opinions and issues (Parry-Giles & Blair 2002). First ladies will continue to serve as role models, representing contemporary American women. According to Parry-Giles and Blair (2002), “contemporary first ladies use a variety of media in articulating their messages from the first lady pulpit” (p. 576). Gutin (2000) claims that while first ladies have always had the opportunity to use the first lady podium, some have done so more than others. Therefore, it will be up to the first lady to decide on how she wants serve in her role. Most will continue to follow precedent established by prior first ladies, which is becoming progressively more rhetorical with each first lady. Barbara Bush is an exception, because she chose to remain a more non-rhetorical and traditional first lady.

As the trend toward a more influential first lady continues, the media will need to respond by covering individual character and issues of importance to the first lady, as the American public progressively expects “first ladies to promote their own cause, regularly” (Parry-Giles & Blair, p. 586). First ladies will also have more power than in

the past to get their messages to the public. Gutin (2000) claims “even the first ladies of the twentieth century who were emerging spokespersons or independent advocates became known to the population in large measures because of their public communication efforts” (para. 6). First lady press office functions within the White House became more prominent following Jacqueline Kennedy’s hiring of a press secretary (Marton, 2001), setting a precedent that continues today: first ladies today have at their disposal full press office operations.

The first lady has the podium and power to instill her image and persona on the public and the media are progressively becoming more open to hearing what they have to say. This is evident in coverage of our two most recent first ladies. As reported earlier, scholarly studies surfaced regarding Clinton and the person she brought to the role (Beasley, 1993; Bissell & Scharrer, 2000; Winfield 1997, 2001; Gardetto, 1997). Clinton became controversial and newsworthy on her own, aside from being first lady, in terms of Travelgate and Whitewater controversies, the Monica Lewinski scandal, and her health care agenda. There were also numerous articles related to her Senate race, dominating the subject on this first lady. When examining articles related to Clinton as a first lady, they appeared to be positive and about her role as first lady. She even received high marks in the category of “ideals traditional-upper-middle-white American woman” in the data analysis done for this study. Therefore, framing Clinton became a news-reporting dilemma for reporters, since she had other issues aligned to her person and activities outside of her role as first lady. Newsmaking became more about framing Clinton, than about framing the role of first lady.

Gardetto (1997) suggests that Americans are still in disagreement about what it means to be a wife and, moreover, the wife of the highest-ranking and most visible U.S. politician. Coverage of Clinton fell on the cusp of this predicament, strengthening precedent that was set in motion decades before she took office. Eleanor Roosevelt championed social and political causes; Jacqueline Kennedy introduced the American public to style and an image; Roslyn Carter took on a social activist role by promoting a greater understanding of mental health issues and Betty Ford brought controversy to the firstladyship with her perils of addiction and open statements on premarital sex. Clinton did not really do anything different from her predecessors; it was the way the media decided to cover her that illuminated perceived deviations from the first lady role.

Today, one of our more traditional first ladies, Laura Bush, has been putting her fingerprints on all types of projects and issues, from the nation's consoler and chief following 9/11 as dubbed by NBC, to advocate for limiting stem cell research, to national librarian. We see her taking advantage of the media, to further promote herself as a likeable and traditional first lady, who has many interests and causes to champion.

This trend in coverage of first ladies strengthened during Roslyn Carter's tenure as first lady, in the heat of the second wave of feminism. The coverage examined in this study shows that Carter and those who subsequently held the role of first lady received more coverage regarding nontraditional first lady roles than their predecessors, except for Eleanor Roosevelt. Roosevelt served the role differently than any other first lady in time. The stories about Roosevelt were about her political activities and her power behind the throne. Roosevelt certainly introduced the concept of a powerhouse first lady, however,

those who immediately followed her chose not to follow in her footsteps. Truman, Eisenhower and even Kennedy all made choices about how they would serve in the role. Truman and Eisenhower, similar to Barbara Bush, served more quietly and traditionally as wife to the president—again by personal choice. Kennedy's press secretary was in charge of protecting the first lady from the press, rather than promoting the first lady (Marton, 2001). Overall, the media will need to respond by creating messages that align with individuality to create a public face for the women who hold the office of first lady and will likely struggle to do so considering the changes that have occurred in the role of first lady and women in general as a result of changing roles of women in American culture.

Three extra media forces will impact agenda setting related to first ladies: competition with other media outlets, first lady press relations operations and public expectations. As an agenda-setting newspaper, the *New York Times* will have to compete with many visual media outlets as the first lady role continues to become more visible. Changing technology will have media outlets competing for prominence on first lady news to get stories to the masses accurately and timely in an extremely competitive environment. Gatekeepers will have many decisions to make relating to the evolution of a more rhetorical first lady to meet the public's expectations in seeing how these women will perform their roles (Beasley as quoted in Copland, 2002). As first ladies take on aggressive media relations programs through press offices of their own, gatekeepers will have to challenging decisions to make regarding how they choose to frame first ladies and the individuality these woman bring to the role in this highly competitive

environment. If we apply Scheufele's (2000) claim that framing and agenda setting are related, where framing is actually an extension of agenda setting, it can be suggested that newsmaking of first ladies will become more of what individual first ladies push to set their own agendas, taking on a new kind of power, under the notion of "attitude accessibility." The media will still have the responsibility of helping audiences understand information based on the descriptive information they provided to shape news. The information they will be describing will come from the press office of the first ladies.

Regarding scholarship on first ladies is likely to evolve as well, specifically in the interdisciplinary area. One angle that is likely to surface, is that of first lady individuality or character, similar to studies of presidential character, a subject related to studying public life often explored in presidential studies (McDonald, 1997; Sidey, 1992). According to Sidey (1992), "character is one of those things few people can describe but many apparently feel they can identify when they live in its presence long enough" (para.6). McDonald (1997) claims that character relates to internal qualities: "common signification referred to reputation or public perceptions" (para.4). Although presidential character studies tend to deal with statesmen's duties and qualities related to how they carry out the role of president, it is plausible that this same type of study can evolve for the role of first lady and her duties. In addition, framing studies of first ladies will become more difficult to generalize: each first lady will be framed individually on character and how she carries out the role, as has been evident with our modern day first ladies.

## **Conclusion**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has ushered in a new kind of first lady: the rhetorical first lady. Women who assume the role of first lady will have the opportunity to take advantage of the first lady podium and use it to meet public expectations and fulfill personal agendas, causing media to respond by covering them differently than has been recorded in the past. It has often been argued in scholarship that first ladies tended to be framed more traditionally in line with legitimizing “status quo,” as Tuchman (1978) relates to the newsmaking process. However, this study shows that it has always been difficult to make generalizations about first ladies. Today, as first ladies have taken on more rhetorical and influential roles in line with changing roles of women in society, we may find that mass media will need to respond to individuality rather than symbolism. External media forces of competition, public expectations and first lady communication efforts will impact future coverage.

The assumptions made here are underscored by the results of the framing analysis done for this study. Framing will take a new direction. Framing will be guided by individual character of each first lady, rather than by making generalizations about the role of first lady. First lady roles will revolve around the individual and the interpretive roles and symbolic responsibilities she carries on from her predecessors. As gatekeepers and journalists attempt to respond to the rise of the rhetorical first lady, the ensuing coverage is likely look different from how it has in the past. The decisions that go into newsmaking will be more in the power of the first lady and dependant on societal change.



Regarding the scholarship on first ladies and media coverage, it will also be difficult to make generalizations on this subject: more studies related to individual coverage, as surfaced with Clinton, would further enrich the subject of media coverage of first ladies. The current scholarship in the area of media coverage of first ladies is useful in illuminating the challenges and opportunities Clinton may have brought to the editorial decision-making process by carrying on as a non-conformist first lady. The research also set the basis for many new studies to further enrich the study of first ladies. Similar studies that explored Hillary Rodham Clinton's media coverage could be done with any modern-day first lady to examine how individual interpretive roles have been framed and to interpret the assumptions made here.

Several limitations exist with this study. First, for an ambitious project, there are few results reported in this study, although the results answer the research questions specific to this study. Analyzing over 300 news articles provided the opportunity to explore the topic more comprehensively than done, perhaps comparing decades and individual first ladies, or political party affiliations, a type of analysis that would warrant a qualitative and quantitative approach, as was done to draw conclusions for this study related to our more modern-day first ladies. In addition, news coverage of any political person also falls within other historical events in which news stories flow and dominate. Historically, many events have dominated news coverage and have affected first lady media coverage. At the time of Watergate, the news centered on the president and Mrs. Nixon literally went unnoticed. In this century, following the events of 9/11, Laura Bush

became a nurturing spokesperson for the American public. Thus, trends and patterns of media coverage of first ladies can become muddled in our nation's history.

Secondly, since only a single news source was under examination, the results are limited to one editorial angle that may not be aligned with all newspapers. However, it was necessary to use a single source in efforts to make the project manageable. The research counts on the credibility of *The New York Times* and its agenda-setting ability as an elite media source.

Thirdly, the population of articles examined did not provide strong evidence about the internal structures within news rooms that affect the gatekeeping processes. This information would need to be gathered more qualitatively through interviewing editors and reporters within the news outlets. Thus, yet another direction for further research on this subject could help to better understand internal processes in the newsroom.

Fourthly, any study of this nature becomes subjective to some degree, especially when dealing with a range of characters and personalities who determine meaning of message of content text. In efforts to provide as much objectivity as possible, the researcher chose coders from various genders, lifestyles and ages. Testing was done with a group of four individuals who were not chosen as coders to prepare a detailed codebook and to answer questions that would plausibly arise during the coding process.

Finally, as noted earlier this research approached employed by this study lacks scientific rigor, due to the nature of the topic it is difficult to answer the research questions poised by this study solely scientifically. The questions are about personal

qualities, actions and future predictions. These questions need to be addressed or backed by more qualitative study. Accordingly, the results from this method were backed by a combination of a more qualitative review of the news articles and comparison with current scholarship on the subject. Winfield's (1997 and 2000) studies had taken this direction as well, since the subject is difficult to study on a purely scientific basis.

Although these limitations exist, the study establishes enough consistency to make accurate predictions about first lady media coverage to better understand this unique role within our American political system, the power these women garner, and how the media responds to public expectations for these women. The study is intended to promote further study on first ladies to enrich the subject.

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## **THE CHANGING ROLE OF FIRST LADY**

### **EXHIBITS**



## **NEW YORK TIMES COVERAGE OF FIRST LADIES**

### **Content Code Book Instructions**

This booklet serves as the instructions for coding articles. Record answers on recording forms provided. For each category listed, indicate the number that corresponds to the best answer, unless a written response is requested. Each recording form allows for the coding of six articles, one per column. At the top of each column there is space for an article ID#. You will find the article ID#s in the upper right-hand corner of each article in blue ink.

For each article record the following categories:

**A. DATE OF ARTICLE:** List date in terms of month/date/yyyy.

**B. HEADLINE CONTENT:** Identify terms used in the headline text to include words “first lady” the name of a specific first lady, both.

1. Title Mrs. and last name of a U.S. First Lady (e.g., Mrs. Reagan)
2. First and Last name of a U.S. first lady without a title. (e.g. Nancy Reagan)
3. Both a first lady’s name and the terms first lady

**C. HEADLINE TEXT TERMS:** Indicate descriptive text within the headline. Adjectives or verbs will describe who the first lady is (adjective/descriptive) or what she does (verb/action). For example, if the article were about the first lady’s character or who she is, coding would entail a classification as descriptive with a two to four word brief statement about the trait identified (1 well-liked). An example for first lady actions within headline text could be a first lady visiting a baseball game. Coding for this would entail categorizing it as action with a two to four word brief statement about the action identified (2 attending sporting event).

1. Terms related to who she is (adjective). Brief statement \_\_\_\_\_
2. Terms related to what she does (action). Brief statement \_\_\_\_\_

**D. IDENTIFY FIRST LADY IN WHICH THE ARTICLE IS ABOUT:** Indicate the first lady name that appears in the headline.

1. Edith Kermit Carow Roosevelt
2. Helen Herron Taft
3. Ellen Louise Axson Wilson
4. Edith Bolling Galt Wilson
5. Florence Kling Harding
6. Grace Anna Goodhue Coolidge
7. Lou Henry Hoover
8. Anna Eleanor Roosevelt
9. Elizabeth Virginia Wallace Truman
10. Mamie Geneva Doud Eisenhower
11. Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy
12. Claudia Taylor Johnson
13. Patricia Ryan Nixon
14. Elizabeth Bloomer Ford
15. Rosalynn Smith Carter
16. Nancy Davis Reagan
17. Barbara Pierce Bush
18. Hillary Rodham Clinton
19. Laura Welch Bush

**E. ARTICLE TOPIC:** The article is about the first lady related to the following topics. The topic(s) will be identifiable in the headline, or within the first sentence or two of the news story. Two or more of these items may be listed in the article. Record all items that apply in the order that they appear in the article.

1. *Ideals of traditional upper-middle-class American woman:* Indicates the first lady is serving in supportive, nurturing female capacity. This is the traditional role as associated with gender roles with women being submissive, dependent, emotional, warm, gentle, and nurturing. Stereotypical roles of women and first ladies fall into this category. If the text refers to first lady standards, traditional first lady roles, the term traditional is used in general it should be placed in this category.
2. *An escort with her husband:* The first lady is accompanying the president at local events or on world excursions. Often these articles may focus on president as the primary character, but then may shift to first lady and what she plans to do while on the excursion. Under the latter circumstances, the first lady will be taking on her own agenda. If she is going to visit an orphanage to visit children while at a destination with her husband, she is serving in a nurturing charitable role, not an escort role, unless her husband is visiting the orphanage too.
3. *Nurturing charitable role:* First lady is serving humankind (i.e., shown with the elderly or sick children.), perhaps related to a social issue, but not advocating for a social issue.
4. *Social activist role:* Identifies first lady social actions, ideas or motives. Social issues are those having to do with the ranks of society—human beings living together as a group in a situation in which their dealings with one another affect their common welfare of all.
5. *Political role:* Identifies first lady political actions, ideas or motives. Political issues are ones that involve policies, politics or political parties and the agendas of such.
6. *Hobbies:* Identifies things the first lady enjoys as leisure and fun activities or those that she doesn't enjoy (e.g., sports, book interests, arts and culture).
7. *Health issues:* Identifies issues related to the first lady's health.
8. *White House projects:* First lady decorative and restoration projects (e.g, the holiday Christmas tree would be decorating; new china would be a restoration project). This does not include entertaining at the White House which is a category in itself.
9. *Hosting at the White House:* Identifies hosting and entertaining at the White House; a role for leading fashionable, ceremonial and social events. This would also include cooking interests.
10. *Family – children, siblings, parents:* The article's main focus is that of the first lady's immediate family members, specifically the first lady's relationship with the family member(s).
11. *Power and influence:* These words appear in the story associated with the first lady or the story alludes to the first lady aiding the president in decision.
12. *Speeches and public engagements:* Identifies event or events where the first lady is the main draw, speaker or is being honored.
13. *Books, articles or interviews about the first lady:*

14. *Career prior to becoming first lady*: Identifies the first ladies occupation prior to becoming first lady, or past occupations (e.g., Jacqueline Kennedy was a reporter; Laura Bush was a Librarian; Hillary Rodham Clinton was a Lawyer).
15. *History, past behaviors, past experiences*: (e.g., Laura Bush's accident as a teenager; Betty Ford's divorce)
16. *Sentiments regarding husband's policy position or presidential decision*: Identifies first lady comments about husband's policy role or issue, not related to aiding her husband, but strictly when asked what her thoughts are about her husband's decision or her husband's actions related to presidency or his style in handling the duties of the presidency.
17. *Conflict or disagreement with someone*: Identifies a conflict the first lady may have had with a person, perhaps media, where first lady may have commented negatively about an incident or press coverage.
18. *Style and image*: Identifies first lady image—hairdo, clothes, gowns, makeup, and pearls. This could also include other image related items such as type of car the first lady drives and decorating and style at vacation home.
19. *Campaigning for husband*: First lady is campaigning for husband's re-election.
20. *Campaigning for party candidate, not husband*. First lady is promoting a party candidate for any political role.
21. *First lady opinion polls*: Identifies results of an opinion poll regarding the first lady identified.
22. *Travel schedule of first lady*: Identifies first lady travel activities, not accompanying her husband, but for her own agenda or trip. If the trip relates to other topics, list those as well.
23. *Meeting with dignitaries*: The first lady is meeting with dignitaries on her own not at White House, which would be White House entertaining, nor accompany the president on a trip which would be coded as an escort role.
24. *First lady character*: Indicates personality traits or style of first lady. Such characteristics that may be identified include humor, shyness, boldness, organized, and energetic to name a few. This section would include comments made by others—friends, staff, media reports—regarding first lady personal qualities.
25. *Unknown topic*. The topic does not fit into anything else within the section.  
For this topic, try to give a brief description of the topic \_\_\_\_\_

**F. NEWS FRAMES IDENTIFIED:** “News frames are constructed from and embodied in the keywords, metaphors, concepts, and visual images emphasized in the narrative. Frames can be detected by probing for particular words and visual images that consistently appear in a narrative and convey a theme” (Entman, 1991, p. 7). Of those topics identified above, some ideas will be more salient than others in the text. Use the following frames to describe the story (Winfield, 1997):

1. *Escort Role*: The first lady is mentioned by virtue of accompanying her spouse, not because of any independent function.
2. *Protocol role*: Leading fashionable society at social, ceremonial and diplomatic events.

3. *Noblesse oblige role*: Charitable and good works concern with orphanages, the homeless or the poor which represents a natural extension of women's volunteer work in the community.
4. *Policy role*: helping to formulate, develop and influence public policy issues.
5. *Power behind the throne*: focusing on actions that are independent of president but suggests that the first lady is garnering power (i.e., first lady attending cabinet meetings, setting up an office near presidential advisors as did Hillary Clinton, or holding an executive branch appointment, as did Eleanor Roosevelt, or making statements about.)
6. *No clear fit in above categorizes*: Briefly describe pattern of terms, or concepts in the story: \_\_\_\_\_. An example would be regarding Betty Ford as follows: First lady is a warm and caring individual who has endured many obstacles in life including Breast Cancer and Alcoholism.

**G. TONE OF NEWS STORY ABOUT FIRST LADY IDENTIFIED:** Either positive or negative toward first lady, with one being the most negative on a scale of one to five and five being the most positive on a scale one to five. The numbers form a scale between the two extremes. On your coding form, you are to write in the number that best describes where the character falls on the scale. Think of the story as written about you and apply the tone according to your feelings.

**Most Negative**

1. very negative
2. negative
3. neither positive or negative
4. positive
5. very positive

**Most Positive**

**H. COMPARISON WITH OTHER FIRST LADIES:**

1. No comparisons made, article is strictly about first lady in headline
2. Comparison is made to another or other first ladies

**I. PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF PHOTO ACCOMPANIES REPORT**

1. Photo accompanies story (may not show actual photo but rather "blocked for copyright reasons").
2. No Photo
3. Illustration/drawing present

**J. TEXT WORDS:** This information will be copied from the cover sheet. A few articles may not have a cover sheet, however, word count will be handwritten on these articles.

**K. SECTION/DATeline:** This information will be copied from the cover sheet if available. If not available, record as n/a. May also be listed on article (e.g., Special to *New York Times*).

**L. STORY WRITTEN BY**

1. Associated Press Story (will include the letters AP at beginning of article)
2. Male Journalist
3. Female Journalist
4. Unknown not sure if female or male

New York Times Coverage of First Ladies  
Recording Form

EXHIBIT B  
Name:

CATEGORY	ID#	ID#	ID#	ID#	ID#	ID#	ID#
A. Date of Article							
B. Headline Content							
C. Headline Text Terms							
D. Identify First Lady							
E. Article Topic							
F. News Frames Identified (for number 6, provide explanation per instructions) use back if needed							
G. Tone of News Story							
H. Comparison with Other First Ladies							
I. Presence or Absence of Photo							
J. Text Words							
K. Section/Dateline							
L. Story Written By							

# JACQUELINE M. SCHEIBLE

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born February 10, 1996  
Dover, New Jersey

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### **CGR (CENTER FOR GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH, INC.) ROCHESTER, NEW YORK** **Development and Communications Associate**

**2001—PRESENT  
& 1993—1999**

- ❖ Oversee development and direction of communications activities to support organization's mission and goals.
- ❖ Manage stories and content for website, e-marketing programs and marketing communication publications.
- ❖ Execute annual fundraising campaign inclusive of defining annual theme and target audiences.
- ❖ Plan and coordinate meetings, special events and conference participation.
- ❖ Act as direct liaison to Board of Trustees comprised of business, community, academic and civic leaders.
- ❖ 1993-1999 served as Development and Marketing Associate/Office Manager/Assistant to President.
- ❖ 1997-1999 worked as project director for CGR client—The Link Foundation—assisting foundation trustees and academic special advisors with board activities, special events, grant policies, and administration of doctorate fellowship programs.

### **PAYCHEX, INC., ROCHESTER, NEW YORK** **Human Resources Representative**

**2000—2001**

- ❖ Chaired United Way Pacesetter Campaign responsible for all activities for Rochester-based employees.
- ❖ Planned and coordinated college recruiting conference.
- ❖ Managed distribution of HR policy revisions and documentation through proper channels.

### **ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK** **European Union Simulation Class Coordinator/Advisor**

**1999—2000**

- ❖ In absence of department chair, oversaw school's participation in simulation program held in Prague.
- ❖ Facilitated class discussions, identified research topics and issued class assignments for one credit course.
- ❖ Completed fundraising, managed budget and coordinated all overseas travel arrangements and activities.

### **VARIOUS POSITIONS – ROCHESTER, NEW YORK/CHICAGO, ILLINOIS** **Sales, Administrative, Real Estate Leasing, and Travel and Tourism**

**1986—1993**

- ❖ Estée Lauder—cosmetic sales; Rainaldi Real Estate and Capital Associate Realty Partners—commercial real estate administration and leasing; Santo Tours and Blue Bird Coach Lines—travel coordinator.

## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

M.S. Candidate, Communications and Media Technologies, RIT, Rochester, New York

B.A. Political Science, St. John Fisher College, Rochester, New York; graduated *summa cum laude*

## MISCELLANEOUS

*Public Relations Society of America* (PRSA) - Member

Wrote screenplay *Defining Grace*

Enjoy tennis, rollerblading, running and golf