

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Correspondence, Office of: Records
Folder Title: Biography – Nancy Reagan
Box: 58

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

BIOGRAPHY OF NANCY REAGAN

Nancy Davis Reagan was born on July 6, 1923, in New York City. Raised in Chicago, she graduated from Girls' Latin School and went on to Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts. She majored in drama at Smith.

In her early career, Nancy Davis worked as an actress in stage, film and television productions. Her stage performances ranged from summer stock to road tours to Broadway. In 1949, she was signed to a seven-year contract by MGM. She married Ronald Reagan on March 4, 1952, and made eleven films in all, including three after her marriage. Her last film, at Columbia in 1956, was "Hellcats of the Navy" in which she and her husband appeared together.

Shortly after her husband became Governor of California in 1967, Mrs. Reagan began visiting wounded Vietnam veterans and became active in projects concerning POW's and servicemen missing in action in Vietnam. During the War, she wrote a syndicated column, donating her salary to the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Action in Southeast Asia.

While First Lady of California, she made regular visits to hospitals and homes for older citizens, and schools for physically and emotionally handicapped children. During one of these hospital visits in 1967, she observed participants in the Foster Grandparent Program and became its champion. This unique program brings together senior citizens who need to be productive with handicapped children who need extra time, love and attention. As First Lady, Mrs. Reagan continues to work to expand the program on the national level and to promote private funding in local communities. She has co-authored a book with Jane Wilkie, "To Love a Child", and a song by the same title was written and dedicated to her by Hal David and Joe Raposo. Frank Sinatra recorded the song and all proceeds from the book and record sales are going to the Foster Grandparent Program.

Mrs. Reagan's special project is fighting drug and alcohol abuse among youth. To place a national spotlight on the problem, she has traveled nearly 100,000 miles and gone to 50 cities in 28 states and 4 foreign countries in conjunction with her campaign to fight school-age drug and alcohol abuse. She has appeared on television talk shows, taped public service announcements, written guest articles, and visited prevention programs and rehabilitation centers across the country, talking with young people and their parents. She appeared on NBC's "Diff'rent Strokes" in an episode about drug abuse, co-hosted a special edition of "Good Morning America" on

ABC which was devoted exclusively to the subject, and narrated a PBS special called "The Chemical People" to encourage communities to organize against drug abuse. In April 1985, she expanded her drug awareness campaign to an international level by inviting First Ladies from around the world to attend a two-day briefing in Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, Georgia, on the subject of youth drug abuse. During the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations, Mrs. Reagan hosted 30 First Ladies for a second international drug conference.

As First Lady, Mrs. Reagan is serving as Honorary chairman of numerous organizations, including the National Federation of Parents for Drug-Free Youth; the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities; the Wolf Trap Foundation Board of Trustees; the National Trust for Historic Preservation; the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation; the National Republican Women's Club; and is Honorary President of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

In each Annual Gallup Poll since 1981, the American public has voted Mrs. Reagan one of the ten most admired women in the world, and in both 1981 and 1985, voted her number one. In 1981, 1982, and 1983, she was named one of the ten most admired women in the world by readers of Good Housekeeping magazine, and in 1984 and 1985, she ranked number one in that poll. She has received numerous awards for her leadership role in the fight against drug abuse, including recognition from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the United Service Organization (USO), the Salvation Army, the Entertainment Industries Council, Rotary Clubs International, Lions Club International, and from drug treatment programs such as Phoenix House and Second Genesis. Mrs. Reagan also has received humanitarian awards from United Cerebral Palsy and the International Center for the Disabled and the "Lifeline Award" from Variety Clubs International. In 1983, she received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Pepperdine University for her commitment to public service.

She is the only daughter of Dr. Loyal Davis and Mrs. Edith Davis of Chicago and Phoenix. Her father, who died August 19, 1982, was Professor Emeritus at Northwestern University after serving as Professor of Surgery there for more than 30 years. She has a brother, Dr. Richard Davis, who resides in Philadelphia with his wife and two children.

The Reagans have four children, all of whom are married. Patti is pursuing an acting career in California. Ron is affiliated with ABC-TV in Los Angeles and is a free-lance writer. Maureen is a special consultant at the Republican National Committee and is the United States Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Michael hosts a radio talk show in Los Angeles and is the director of a fundraising corporation. The Reagans have two grandchildren, Cameron and Ashley Marie, offspring of Michael Reagan.