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*Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.*

—Benjamin Franklin

## Outstanding First Ladies: A Sample Of The Centuries

Part 3 of a series

Every First Lady has left her own mark on the position. And some, like Jacqueline Kennedy, have been fascinating and accomplished figures in their own right.

Here is another First Lady of influence and personal achievement.

**Dolley Payne Todd Madison**—Though Dolley Todd became a widow at the age of twenty-five, she emerged with her sociable temperament intact. Her charms attracted the attention of the Virginia congressional leader, James Madison, who may have seen in her a complement to his intensely introspective personality. Once they were married, Dolley dropped the constraints of her Quaker upbringing and soon proved herself a skilled and vivacious hostess. When Thomas Jefferson made Madison his secretary of state, the Madison home became the center of Washington society. Dolley often served as White House hostess for the widowed Jefferson—an excellent preparation for her role as First Lady.

One of Dolley's first acts as First Lady was to invite a group of congressmen and senators to see the still-unfinished White House. It was a calculated move; they quickly appropriated the money the First Lady needed to decorate and furnish the house. With the help of architect Benjamin Latrobe, she made it both elegant and comfortable—a perfect setting for the dinners where she mixed writers and artists with politicians and diplomats,

just as Jacqueline Kennedy would do 150 years later. But Dolley went further. In truly democratic style, she also welcomed the general public to her weekly receptions, and managed to put everyone at ease with her generosity and warmth. Most of America admired the way Dolley mingled “the minister from Russian and the under clerks of the post office,” though some complained about this mixing of “greasy boots and silk stockings.”

Dolley was the consummate diplomat, charming her husband's opponents as well as his friends and actively cultivating political support for him. But her most famous act came during the War of 1812. The British were marching on the capital, and her husband was away at the front. But Dolley refused to leave the White House and slept with a saber by her bed. When the troops assigned to protect the White House panicked and fled, she held her ground, determined to set an example for the populace. Finally, the President sent word that she *must* leave. Still, she took the time to pack up the Presidential papers, the new silver service and china, a precious copy of the Declaration of Independence, and Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, which still hangs proudly in the White House.

*(From: Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years...Selections from the exhibit: The John F. Kennedy Library and Museum currently being exhibited at The Field Museum, Chicago)*

*To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved.*

— George Macdonald

## Alzheimer's Disease— How To Be Prepared Medically And Legally

While the search for a cure continues full speed ahead, the number of people affected by Alzheimer's Disease continues to grow. The Alzheimer's Association of Southeast Florida, which raises monies for research and assists local families, estimates that 43,000 patients reside in Palm Beach County; 45,000 in Broward County, and 10,000 on the Treasure Coast. These numbers don't even include the spouses, caregivers and other family members affected.

Because the disease is of concern to many of my clients, I invited Elayne Forgie, founder of ElderCare at Home and the first-ever Florida instructor for the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, to speak at my firm's recent Client Appreciation Breakfast. Ms. Forgie noted that many drugs can slow the disease's progress, and stressed the importance of staying mentally active, as the Alzheimer's Association's “Maintain Your Brain” campaign, promotes.

From a legal perspective, the best thing you can do to cope with the disease is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Because the disease is progressive, it's critical to lay the legal groundwork immediately. The sooner preparations are made, the less stress a family will undergo in the long run. At a minimum, the patient should have in place a legally sound power of attorney for healthcare and for property, so that when the time comes, a trusted person can seamlessly begin to make the patient's business and medical decisions. If the well spouse

has named the patient as his/her power of attorney, obviously someone else needs to be appointed, perhaps a trusted adult relative.

Because there's a significant chance the patient may ultimately need long-term nursing care, it's also a good idea to review positioning and titling of assets to conserve assets and prevent the spouse from being impoverished. A certified elder law attorney can help you hash out these decisions, which certainly are among the most complex and difficult any family must face.



**Joseph S. Karp,**  
C.E.L.A.

This year as last year, The Karp Law Firm is sponsoring Memory Walks in Broward, Palm Beach and Martin Counties. Memory Walk 2005 is the nation's #1 fundraiser to help people battling Alzheimer's disease.

**Please lace up your sneakers and come out to walk with us in one of these events: Sat., April 2 at John Prince Park, Lake Worth; Sat., April 9 at North Beach, Hollywood; and Sat., April 16 at Flagler Park, Stuart.** For more information, call the Alzheimer's Association at 800-861-7826 or log on to [www.memorywalks.com](http://www.memorywalks.com). See you there!

*Joseph S. Karp is a nationally certified and Florida Bar-certified elder law attorney (C.E.L.A.) specializing in the practice of Trusts, Estates and Elder Law. His offices are located at 2500 Quantum Lakes Drive, Boynton Beach; 2875 PGA Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens; and 1100 SW St. Lucie W. Blvd., Port St. Lucie. Call him at 561-752-4550 (Boynton); 561-625-1100 (Palm Beach Gardens); or 772-343-8411 (Port St. Lucie). Toll-free from anywhere: 800-893-9911. E-mail: [KLF@KarpLaw.com](mailto:KLF@KarpLaw.com).*

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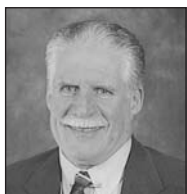
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