Inventing a Voice

INVENTING A VOICE

The Rhetoric of American First Ladies of the Twentieth Century

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Inventing a Voice is a comprehensive work on the lives and communication of twentieth-century first ladies. Using a rhetorical framework, the contributors look at the speaking, writing, media coverage and interaction, and visual rhetoric of American first ladies from Ida Saxton McKinley to Laura Bush. The women's rhetorical devices varied-some practiced a rhetoric without words, while others issued press releases, gave speeches, and met with various constituencies. All used interpersonal or social rhetoric to support their husbands' relationships with world leaders, party officials, boosters, and the public. Featuring an extensive introduction and chapter on the "First Lady as a Site of 'American Womanhood,'" Wertheimer has gathered a collection that includes the post-White House musings of many first ladies, capturing their reflections on public expectations and perceived restrictions on their communication.

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