



ELENI KOUNALAKIS
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

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On the 200th anniversary of the birth of Julia Dent Grant, we honor a remarkable woman whose life reflected devotion to country, public service, and personal growth during one of the most consequential periods in American history.

During the American Civil War, Mrs. Grant traveled thousands of miles to support her husband, Ulysses S. Grant, as he commanded Union forces. Her steadfast presence offered encouragement during the conflict that would preserve the nation. As First Lady from 1869 to 1877, she became one of the longest serving first ladies of the nineteenth century and an active presence in the White House. She oversaw significant refurbishments of the presidential residence, welcomed Americans from all walks of life to public receptions, and took an active interest in the political life of the nation.

Following the presidency, Mrs. Grant accompanied her husband on a historic journey around the world, serving as an informal ambassador for the United States and reflecting the nation's growing standing abroad. Later in life, she also developed a special connection to California, becoming the first former First Lady to travel across the continent to the western states and spending time in San Diego.

Julia Dent Grant should be remembered not only as a devoted spouse, but also as a pioneering first lady, humanitarian, and figure of historical significance whose life intersected with the history of our state. On this anniversary, I encourage Californians to learn more about the life and legacy of Julia Dent Grant, whose steadfast support during the American Civil War, active leadership in the White House alongside Ulysses S. Grant, and lasting connection to San Diego reflect a life of service, resilience, and dedication to the nation. By remembering her story, we honor not only her contributions to American history but also the evolving role of women in public life.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Eleni Kounalakis (RET.)
Lieutenant Governor of California