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PENNSYLVANIA STATE MUSEUM EXHIBITS FIRST LADIES' INAUGURAL GOWNS

First Lady Judge Marjorie O. Rendell's gown and others are on display

HARRISBURG – Elegant and stylish gowns worn by six of Pennsylvania's First Ladies at their husbands' gubernatorial inaugurations are displayed in a new exhibit, *Inaugural Chic: Gowns of Pennsylvania's First Ladies* at The State Museum of Pennsylvania.

The dresses range from a pink and white strapless sequined tulle gown worn in 1951 by Helene Fine, wife of Gov. John S. Fine, to the brilliant dark blue silk taffeta dress worn by the commonwealth's current First Lady, Judge Marjorie O. Rendell.

"It is wonderful to see the excellent condition of these gowns, thanks to the care they receive at The State Museum," said Judge Rendell. "The dresses represent the fashion of their day and are very interesting historical artifacts."

The oldest gown in the exhibit is a damask and brocade dress worn by Mary Beaver at her husband's 1887 inauguration. Other gowns were worn by the wives of Governors George Earle, William Scranton and Milton Shapp. They are displayed in a new gallery space featuring unique mirrors from the museum's collections. The mirrors date from the 1700's and 1800's and represent various styles and periods. The older dresses received conservation treatment, and display mannequins were created by museum staff. *Inaugural Chic: Gowns of Pennsylvania's First Ladies* will be on exhibit through April 28, 2007. Admission to the museum and the exhibit is free.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission is the official history agency of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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THE STATE MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission