

*Clare
Boothe
Luce*



★★★★★★★★ AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT ★★★★★★

“Courage is the ladder
on which all other virtues mount.”

— CLARE BOOTHE LUCE

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AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT



Clare Boothe Luce
CENTER FOR CONSERVATIVE WOMEN

The Clare Boothe Luce Center for Conservative Women is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that empowers young women to live happier, freer lives and contribute to a stronger, freer America. Since 1993, we have educated and mentored thousands of young women through specialized internships, summits and seminars, campus lectures, firearms training, and other programs—all in the spirit of Clare Boothe Luce. Our mission includes a commitment to promoting strong conservative women who will serve as positive role models for young women everywhere.

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Dear Reader,

In 1993, when Michelle Easton — a wife, mother, and patriot who served in the Reagan administration — founded the **Center for Conservative Women** to help prepare young women for conservative leadership, she named it after one of her heroes: *the incomparable Clare Boothe Luce*.

Why honor Clare in this way?

Because today’s — and tomorrow’s — young women deserve the opportunity to be inspired by the life and ideas of this extraordinary historical figure.

Clare was a trailblazer.

A managing editor of *Vanity Fair* magazine, World War II battlefield journalist, celebrated playwright and author, congresswoman, and historic ambassador to Italy, she was a courageous and principled conservative who won hearts and minds with her intelligence, integrity, wit, and charm.

She got her start by showing up at *Vogue* magazine when the publisher, Condé Nast, and editor were in Europe. She sat down at an empty desk and wrote photo captions — *brilliantly!* — for three weeks. When Nast returned, he was impressed with her work. He offered her a job at the respectable salary of \$35 a week.





Throughout Clare's life, she was the recipient of many honors, including Congress's Distinguished Service Award, the Sylvanus Thayer Award (the highest honor that West Point confers on a civilian — Clare was the first woman to receive it), and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (the highest civilian honor bestowed by the U.S. government — Clare received it from President Ronald Reagan).

Upon her death in 1987, *Time* magazine called Clare: ***“the preeminent Renaissance woman of the century.”***

But it would be a mistake to reduce her life's story to a series of career accomplishments, notable as they were.

Clare was a woman of exceptional character with an uncanny inner strength, keen moral compass, and steely determination to do good in the world.

As a writer, editor, and World War II correspondent, she shrugged convention and forged a path for capable women who were eager to contribute to public life.

As the first female ambassador to an important American ally, she staunchly fought the rise of atheistic communism, exceeding all expectations.

As a wife and mother, she nurtured family relationships that brought joy and strength to her loved ones and would bear fruit for generations to come.

Tragically, Clare endured life's most bitter blow in the premature and sudden loss of her beloved daughter, Ann.

Her grief prompted her to seek spiritual guidance from Archbishop Fulton Sheen who helped her find strength and purpose to do God's work in the world.

Sometimes that meant turning down opportunities for greater achievement. When she decided not to run for the United States senatorial nomination at the 1950 Connecticut Republican Convention, she quoted a Scottish ballad by Sir Andrew Barton:

***“I will lay me down for to bleed a while /
then I'll rise up and fight again.”***

Clare was a fighter who took hard knocks and continued onward with grace, intelligence, and thoughtfulness.

What follows on the pages ahead are vignettes of her incredible life.

I wish someone had shared Clare's story with me when I was a child growing up in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s in New Jersey. Which is why I pass it on to the Luce Center's young women, as well as my five children.

The world has changed quite a bit since Clare's time. But eternal truths remain. And passing on the stories of courageous, principled heroes is still the best way to inspire future generations of courageous, principled heroes.

At this crucial time in America's history, we are in desperate need of young women who match the intellectual strength and dynamic goodness of Clare Boothe Luce.

Telling her story will inspire future generations of women to reclaim America's traditional values and better serve our families, communities, and country with integrity and honor.

In Friendship and Freedom,

Kimberly Beggs

P.S. If you would like to pass on Clare Boothe Luce's inspirational story to a young woman in your life, please contact me at kimberly@cblwomen.org. We would be delighted to send a copy of this booklet, along with information about our life-changing programs, to a loved one on your behalf.



KIMBERLY BEGG

President

Clare Boothe Luce Center
for Conservative Women



★ AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT ★



Clare Boothe Luce is sworn in by Chief Justice Fred Vinson to become United States Ambassador to Italy, America's first woman ambassador to a major country

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower surprised allies and critics, both in the U.S. and abroad, when he nominated a woman to serve as the American ambassador to Italy.

Never before had an American woman held such an important diplomatic post.

Following her Senate confirmation, a petite and stylish woman with piercing blue eyes disembarked in Naples, Italy, to the cheering and fanfare of a Neapolitan crowd.

Her diplomatic appointment, a novelty in itself, could have allowed her the freedom to do nothing more than shake hands, host functions at the resplendent ambassador's residence, Villa Taverna, built above Etruscan tunnels, and, at the most, make trite speeches on ceremonial occasions.

In short, as ambassador, the woman could have enjoyed *la dolce vita*, or the sweet Italian life, to the hilt.

But such a cosmetic role and such conventionality were not in keeping with Clare Boothe Luce's character.

In 1953, Italy was still immersed in the arduous task of postwar rebuilding and tensions were high over control of the Adriatic seaside town of Trieste and its surrounding region.

A new "cold war" descended and communism threatened free people across the globe. Trieste became a hot spot, a face-off of East vs. West.

Following World War II, the United Nations Security Council named Trieste an independent free state, but control over the area remained an electrically charged question as its neighbors Italy and Tito's communist Yugoslavia both were staking claims to a territory that boasted a mixed population of Italian and Slavic citizens.

The Trieste question threatened the stability of the entire region and ongoing relations with postwar Europe.

A staunch defender of freedom, Clare perceived that there was a real threat of communism struggling to take hold of Italy, and the Trieste dispute might spark a domino effect of key communist victories.

Gravely alarmed by the Trieste situation and the potential ramifications for not just Italy and America, but for the entire world, in September 1953, Clare wrote C.D. Jackson, President Eisenhower's Special Assistant, asking him to bring the Trieste matter to the President's attention at an opportune moment.



Clare Boothe Luce, U.S. Ambassador to Italy, waves to a crowd upon arriving in Italy



Castello Miramare at Trieste

Knowing the demands on the President's time and the difficulty in describing an intricate border dispute, Clare included a succinct estimate of the Trieste situation which she had penned two months prior:

"Estimate of the Situation:

For the want of Trieste, an Issue was lost.

For the want of an Issue, the Election was lost.

For the want of the Election, DeGasperi was lost.

For the want of DeGasperi, his NATO policies were lost.

For the want of his NATO policies, Italy was lost.

For the want of Italy, Europe was lost.

For the want of Europe, America?

And all for the want of a two-penny town."

Part of U.S. Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce's Trieste assessment, dated June 30, 1953, to Special Assistant to President Eisenhower, Charles Douglas Jackson.

In keeping with character, Clare's diplomatic summary of the Trieste situation was prescient and memorable.

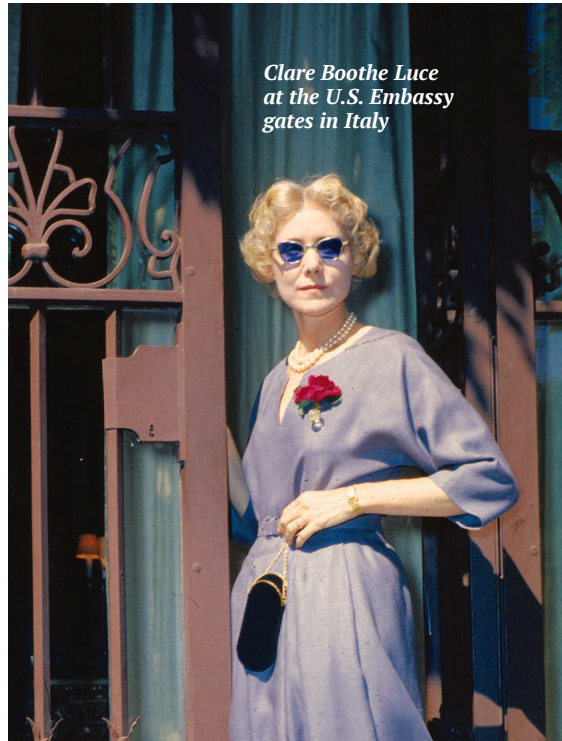
What transpired in the following months was behind the scenes leveraging, with America and Clare Boothe Luce taking integral roles amongst a cast of international players, until the question was ultimately settled with a division of the territory to both countries, with Italy keeping the city of Trieste and the U.S. sending 400,000 tons of wheat to Yugoslavia.

As ambassador, Clare's perception and her clarity of purpose had triumphed.

In Clare's obituary published by *The New York Times*, the newspaper praised Clare's "effective diplomacy... she waded into her job with customary energy and contempt for obstacles. She helped lay the diplomatic groundwork for an international conference that worked out a compromise on the status of Trieste..."

In the midst of the Cold War, in a country where the threat of communism was ever-present, to be an effective American diplomat required clarity of purpose, determination, and tact.

Fortunately, Clare possessed all three attributes.



Clare Boothe Luce at the U.S. Embassy gates in Italy

"Unlike so many of her fellow Washingtonians she was neither fearful nor ashamed of what she meant to say."

— THE WASHINGTON POST

- 1903** Ann Clare Boothe is born in New York City to a family with a theatrical background.
- 1911** She is an avid young reader. Before she is nine years old, she starts reading Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* with her father's encouragement.
- 1923** She weds George Tuttle Brokaw in "the most important social event of the season." The marriage produces one daughter, Ann (1924). Brokaw's alcoholism leads to the couple's divorce in 1929.

1929 Financially secure but eager to pursue her dream of writing, she asks magazine publisher Condé Nast for a job while seated next to him at a dinner. Nast tells her to see the editor of *Vogue* the next day, recalling later: "I didn't think she was serious."

"[a] small-town girl who made good without the glass slipper — just work and push."

— VOGUE, 1945

The editor rebuffs her on the first visit, but is out of town, in Europe with Nast, on the second. Clare sits down at an empty desk and writes captions for three weeks; she is hired and soon finds her way to *Vanity Fair* where she becomes managing editor within two years.



Clare and Henry

1935 She marries Henry Luce, founder, publisher, and owner of *Time* and *Fortune* magazines (and eventually, *Life* magazine which she may have inspired) and becomes stepmother to his two sons.

1936 Her play, *The Women* (featuring an all-women cast) begins its 657-performance run on Broadway, earning her \$2 million.

1939 *The Women* becomes a Hollywood film starring Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Rosalind Russell, and Paulette Goddard.



1940-1941 Explaining that she “just had to find out whether this war is our business or not,” she travels to Europe and Asia. In the Philippines, she interviews General Douglas MacArthur. *Life* publishes her lengthy interview of MacArthur on December 8, 1941, the day following Pearl Harbor.

1942 She runs for Congress in Connecticut’s Fourth District, winning by 7,000 votes in a largely Democrat district.

1944 In January, her daughter, Ann Brokaw, is tragically killed in an automobile accident in Palo Alto, California.



1944 In November, she wins reelection to Congress. During her two terms in office, she is credited with 18 major initiatives, most championing human rights.

1953 President Dwight Eisenhower appoints her Ambassador to Italy.

1983 President Ronald Reagan awards her the *Presidential Medal of Freedom*, the highest civilian honor in America.



Clare receiving the Medal of Freedom from President Ronald Reagan

1987 Following a battle with cancer, she dies in Washington, DC at 84 years old.

1993 Inspired by her life and ideas, Michelle Easton founds the Clare Boothe Luce Center for Conservative Women in honor of the woman President Ronald Reagan called a “*persistent and effective advocate of freedom, both at home and abroad*” and *Time* magazine called “*the preeminent Renaissance woman of the century.*”

2012 Italian opera house *Teatro Caio Melisso Spazio Carla Fendi* honors her ambassadorship and decisive role in the restitution of Trieste to Italy with the exhibition “*Boothe Luce, una donna contro l'impero sovietico*” (“Boothe Luce, a woman against the Soviet Empire”).

2023 The Clare Boothe Luce Center for Conservative Women celebrates 30 years of educating and mentoring young women to empower them to live happier, freer lives and contribute to a stronger, freer America.



Clare meeting with President Dwight D. Eisenhower

women to empower them to live happier, freer lives and contribute to a stronger, freer America.

“I refuse the compliment that I think like a man, thought has no sex, one either thinks or one does not.”

— CLARE BOOTHE LUCE

★ HISTORIC REPORTER ★



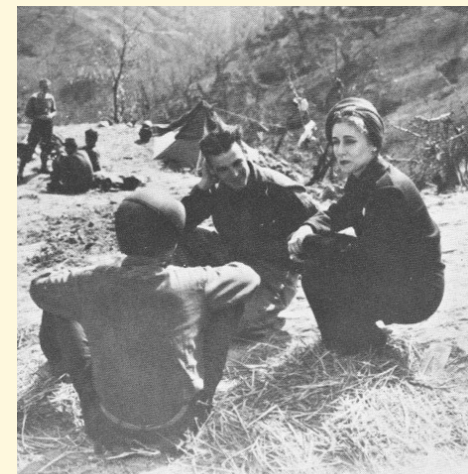
Clare with General George Patton

“There are no hopeless situations; there are only men who have grown hopeless about them.”

— CLARE BOOTHE LUCE



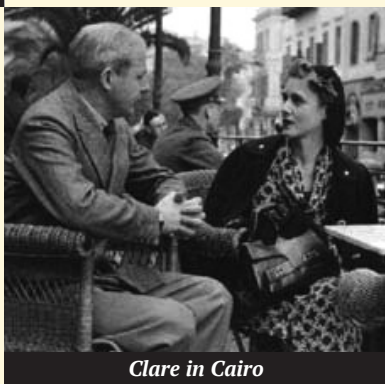
Clare with Jacques Philippe Leclerc



Clare with troops in Italy



General Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang welcome Clare

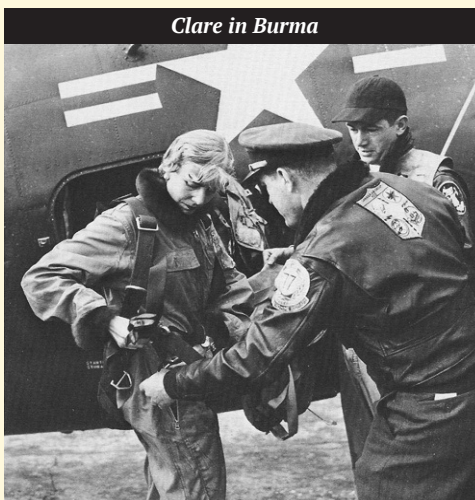


Clare in Cairo

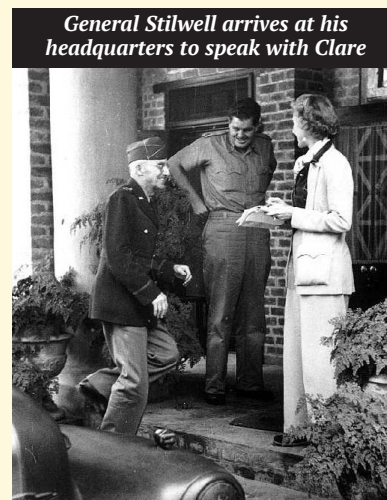
“Enemies may seek our destruction, but they also keep us on our toes and often help us figure out who we are and what we stand for.” — CLARE BOOTHE LUCE



Clare in Burma documenting the horrors of war



Clare in Burma

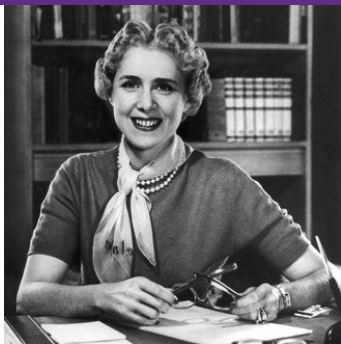


General Stilwell arrives at his headquarters to speak with Clare



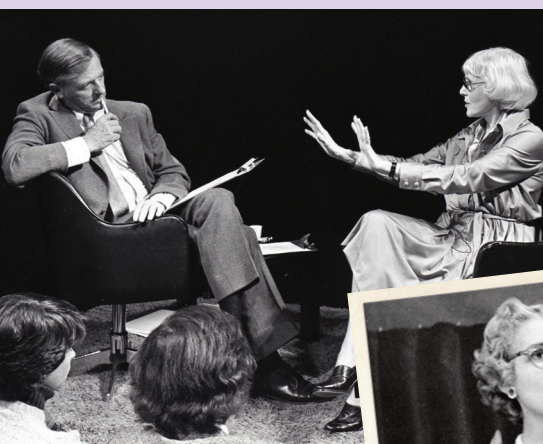
Clare with troops on the Western Front

★ **MODEL OF JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY** ★



Clare was a principled conservative who had a healthy respect for the natural exchange of ideas, both as a journalist reporting the news and as a public figure making the news. She had a genuine love for truth-seeking, debate, and the good efforts of

people of good will. As Italian ambassador, she urged her secretary, Leticia Baldrige, to send a note of thanks on her behalf whenever a journalist wrote a story about her, no matter how harsh.



“Show them I can take the sour with the sweet and the next time they write about me, they won’t be so nasty.”

— CLARE BOOTHE LUCE



“No good deed goes unpunished.”

— CLARE BOOTHE LUCE

★ A WOMAN IN GRIEF ★

Of all the stories about Clare and her remarkable life, the most poignant, and perhaps the one that best captures her inner-strength and courage, is the story of what occurred in January 1944, when her nineteen-year-old daughter, Ann, was tragically killed in an automobile collision near Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

Less than an hour away in nearby San Francisco, Clare was awakened by a hysterical secretary to learn the devastating news.

As she waited for her husband to fly out from the East Coast, the grieving mother remembered that at a party the night before she had seen Colonel Townsend, an Army officer whom she knew from the Burmese war trenches in 1942.

Biographer Stephen Shadegg recounts that following the news of Ann's death, Clare called Colonel Townsend, saying,

“I am in more trouble now, much more than we were in Burma. Will you come help?”

“The Colonel didn’t ask what kind of trouble. He just said he would be there in twenty minutes.

When he arrived Mrs. Luce told him what happened... For more than two hours Colonel Townsend and the bereaved mother walked the hills of San Francisco in silence. The physical exercise, the Colonel’s presence, all helped Clare over what she has described as the darkest hours of her life.”

Through the years, Clare never stopped grieving the loss of her beloved daughter. But with the help of Archbishop Fulton Sheen, she found renewed meaning in her life — and her grief.



The late Ann Clare Booth Luce.



“When President Eisenhower nominated Clare Boothe Luce to be ambassador to Italy two years ago, some persons doubted the wisdom of his choice. Never before had a woman been named or assigned to a first-class European power, and certainly not to one that was in trouble, where communism was growing. Well, two years have passed, and communism has become weaker, Italy is stronger, even the Trieste problem has been settled. In short, never underestimate the power of a woman.”



— AMERICAN JOURNALIST LARRY LESUEUR INTRODUCES GUEST CLARE BOOTHE LUCE ON THE TELEVISION PROGRAM *“LONGINES CHRONOSCOPE”*, 1955.

Clare’s intelligence, integrity, wit, and charm made her a natural mentor to the young women in her life, including her secretary in the Italian Embassy, Letita Baldrige. A motivated professional, Baldrige served as Jacqueline Kennedy’s White House chief of staff. She went on to advise successive First Ladies who eagerly sought her expertise in etiquette and fine entertaining.

Baldrige dedicated her book *Letitia Baldrige’s Complete Guide to a Great Social Life* to Clare:

“my mentor and role model for more than three decades, and who has probably accomplished more, lived at a faster pace, and had a greater social life than any other woman in history!”

— LETITIA BALDRIGE, CLARE’S SECRETARY IN THE ITALIAN EMBASSY

CLARE’S LEGACY

“She was sui generis, one of a kind, and unrepeatable. Clare Boothe Luce was a great American original.”

— WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

“I admire her for three things in particular. One, she is intelligent. Two, she seeks advice and takes it with an open mind—you can say exactly what you think to her. Then she makes up her own mind. And three — her sense of humor. As an old careerist, I could ask for no better boss.”

— ELBRIDGE DURBROW, FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER

“Enduring, staying on her feet to the end, seems to be part of her proposition, her wager with Fate.”

— WILFRID SHEED, CLARE BOOTHE LUCE BIOGRAPHER



★ A GRANDDAUGHTER REMEMBERS ★



Clare Luce

“Though decades have passed since her death, when I think of my grandmother, Clare Boothe Luce, what remains astoundingly vivid today is her strong sense of clarity and purpose.”

The decades have not dimmed her unforgettable voice.

My hope for young conservative women is that they, too, will find the strength and tenacity to confront life’s battles while retaining the courage of their convictions.”

— CLARE LUCE, CLARE’S NAMESAKE AND GRANDDAUGHTER; MEMBER OF LUCE CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Clare Boothe Luce and granddaughter, Clare Luce

★ PRESERVING HER LEGACY ★

“A novelist, playwright, politician, diplomat, and advisor to Presidents, Clare Booth Luce has served and enriched her country in many fields. Her brilliance of mind, gracious warmth and great fortitude have propelled her to exceptional heights of accomplishment. As a Congresswoman, Ambassador, and Member of the President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, Clare Booth Luce has been a persistent and effective advocate of freedom, both at home and abroad. She has earned the respect of people from all over the world, and the love of her fellow Americans.”

— PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN



Clare Boothe Luce

The Luce family has entrusted the Clare Boothe Luce Center for Conservative Women to be the steward of many of Clare’s personal items. Young women attending the Center’s programs develop a deeper appreciation for Clare’s life and ideas when they see her Presidential Medal of Freedom and other awards, original works of art, a signed Broadway Playbill of The Women, custom-made suits by Bergdorf Goodman, and issues of Life, Esquire, Saturday Evening Post, Sports Illustrated, Crisis (which named her “Woman of the Century”) and other magazines featuring her on the cover.



*“Courage
is the ladder
on which all other
virtues mount.”*

– CLARE BOOTHE LUCE



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