

Biography of West Virginia First Lady Gayle Conelly Manchin

Gayle Conelly grew up in Beckley, WV, the only child of Carl and Lucille Conelly. Active in her community, she graduated with high honors from Woodrow Wilson High School.

She attended West Virginia University, where she attained her Bachelor of Arts in Language Arts and Education and a Master of Arts in Reading. In 1999, she completed a second master's specialization in Educational Technology Leadership from Salem International University.

While at WVU, Gayle met and married Joe Manchin, III; upon graduation, they moved to Fairmont, WV, where they resided and worked for over thirty years. They have been married for 40 years and are the proud parents of Heather Manchin Bresch, Joseph Manchin IV, and Brooke Conelly Manchin. Now they are experiencing the wonders of being a Nana and Dadoo for their six beautiful grandchildren; Joey V, Kelsey, Madeline, Sophie, Chloe, and Jack.

As an educator, Gayle worked in Marion County Schools. She also served on the faculty of Fairmont State University and was the Director of the college's first Community Service Learning Program. In addition, she was actively involved in her children's activities, and community advocacy.

After moving to Charleston in 2001, Gayle became the West Virginia Director of the AmeriCorps Promise Fellow Program, which served twenty counties. Believing in the opportunities of connecting programs, Gayle, under the Office of Secretary of Education and the Arts, implemented the WV PASS (West Virginia Partnerships to Assure Student Success) initiative.

In addition to her current duties as West Virginia's First Lady, the Governor has appointed her to serve as a member of the State Board of Education and as a Commissioner on the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service. In addition, the Governor has also appointed her as the Chair of the Governor's Healthy Lifestyles Coalition, and the West Virginia Citizen's Council on Children and Families, and as a Co-Chair on the Governor's 21st Century Jobs Cabinet. She is as a partner on the WV Partnership to Promote Community Well Being Commission, serves as the Nominating Chair of The Education Alliance, is a past president of the Vandalia Rotary Club of Charleston, and a new member of the Black Diamond Girl Scout Council.