

# MOTHER'S DAY FOUNDER WAS QUITE A GAL

[Bill Donohue](#)

The founder of Mother's Day was one for the books. The day she founded she later sought to abolish, largely because she disapproved of the way families came to celebrate their mothers.

In 1914, President Woodrow Woodrow signed a bill that made the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. The person who successfully pushed for this special day was Anna Jarvis. She drew inspiration from her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, who thought it would be a good idea to have a national holiday that commemorated the sacrifices that mothers made for their children.

Anna was deeply conflicted. She hated the commercialism that capitalism generated, though she liked being bankrolled by capitalists. She certainly had no problem asking capitalists to fund her enterprise—she cozied up to John Wanamaker, founder of one of the nation's first department stores, and H.J. Heinz, the famous Pittsburgh entrepreneur. They laid out the cash she needed to fund her crusade to make Mother's Day a national holiday.

Anna, who had no children, was aghast at how a market economy celebrated Mother's Day. An ungrateful cad, she slammed Wanamaker and Heinz, blaming them for the way Americans honored their moms.

She ripped into children who bought Mother's Day cards, lecturing them for being "too lazy" to write their own. How hypocritical it was, she said, to give your mom a box of candy and "then eat most of it yourself." She hated FTD flowers so much that she literally sued Florist Telegraph Delivery. She

also bashed the Post Office for making a Mother's Day stamp. She even condemned Eleanor Roosevelt for using Mother's Day to help charitable causes.

If you are getting the impression that Anna had gone nuts, you're right (if you didn't get that impression, you're probably a socialist). In 1943, she started a petition drive hoping to collect signatures calling for the abolition of Mother's Day. Penniless, she did not succeed, and in 1948 she was committed to Philadelphia's Marshall Square Sanitarium.

The Catholic League hopes you give your mom a Hallmark Mother's Day card, a box of chocolates, and flowers. Just don't eat all the candy.