

O-Yes! First Lady's invite

KIM WILSON

THE First Lady in the front row — that's what Melbourne fashion chiefs want.

A VIP seat for Michelle Obama has been reserved at the L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival in March.

The newly crowned US queen of style will reportedly join her husband, President Barack Obama, on his official visit to Australia in late March.

Festival chairwoman Laura Anderson, who also hails from Chicago, hopes to entertain Mrs Obama at various LMFF events.

"Michelle's elegance, natural beauty and personal style fit beautifully with all that Melbourne has to offer," Mrs Anderson said.

"I look forward to introducing Michelle to the amazing depth and breadth of Australian design talent."

The White House is considering all invitations, but has yet to decide on a travel itinerary for the Obamas, who have proved to be avid tourists on official overseas visits.

Not since Jackie Kennedy has a First Lady's fashion sense had such a global impact.

Since her husband took office a year ago, Mrs Obama has made the cover of style bible *Vogue* and topped *Vanity Fair's* prestigious best-dressed list.

Invitations to the exclusive and highly sought after LMFF launch at Government House went out this week.

Confirmed guests include faces of the festival the Nervo Twins, Natalie Bassingthwaite, Kat Stewart, Erika Heynatz, Sibylla Deen, as well as international guests from Calvin Klein and Hermes Sellier.

The official LMFF program will be launched by Premier John Brumby in Federation Square on Wednesday.

The festival begins on March 14.



Style queen: Michelle Obama tops Melbourne Fashion Festival's guest list. Picture: AFP

Herman priest tells He was a good man

JAMES CAMPBELL,
SUE HEWITT, and
MARY PAPADAKIS

MURDERED millionaire Herman Rockefeller was a respected churchgoer whose fellow parishioners are devastated about his death and claims of a double life, according to his local priest.

The businessman — whose secret life is believed to have led to his death — had a respected, community-minded public face.

This week his grieving family, widow Vicky and two teenage children, Sarah and Herman, held a private ceremony at St John the Evangelist's Anglican church in Finch St, East Malvern — the street where the family lives.

The vicar of St John, the Reverend John Baldock, said Mr Rockefeller had been a good parishioner over many years and was active in the community.

It is understood Mr Rockefeller had served on St John's parish council for the best part of a decade.

This week Father Baldock said he had spent a lot of time comforting the Rockefeller family.

"It is a very difficult time for our community when someone who is loved dies," Father Baldock said.

"People loved Herman and they love Vicky. A lot of people have lost sleep."

Last Sunday's order of service from St John's asked the congregation to pray for the soul of the recently departed Herman Rockefeller and to remember his wife and children, as well as his parents in their prayers.

One St John's parishioner said Mr Rockefeller's death had rocked the tight-knit congregation.

"There is an enormous amount of sadness and a sense of betrayal," she said.

No funeral date has been an-



Churchgoer: Herman Rockefeller.

nounced for Mr Rockefeller, whose remains are still with the coroner, nor have any death notices appeared in any Melbourne newspapers.

But there has been an outpouring of grief and sympathy for the Rockefeller family on several internet sites.

This week an alleged swinger posted this on a Facebook condolence page:

"On behalf of the Doncaster Swingers Network I hereby offer heartfelt condolences to Herman's family and close friends," a man using the alias Braddles McGee said.

"Herman was known to us as a gentle, generous being who always put the pleasure of others first and he will be greatly missed by Melbourne's open love community. RIP Herman."

When contacted by the *Sunday Herald Sun* he demanded money and anonymity.

His posting was later removed and his account disabled.

Police claim Mr Rockefeller died after an alleged fight when he arrived on his own at a swinger's house in Hadfield.

Human remains believed to be those of Mr Rockefeller were discovered in a Glenroy backyard on Friday, January 29 and are the subject of a coronial inquiry.

Mario Schembri and Bernadette Denny are in custody charged with his murder.



'I have no doubt Mrs Rockefeller loved that man and that he, too, loved his family.'

ROBYN RILEY'S COLUMN, P23

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