
Fashion world bids farewell to designer Oscar de la Renta

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The tall Dominican-born de la Renta dressed New York socialites, Hollywood stars and American first ladies during a career that spanned five decades.

Young women in black dresses equipped with digital clipboard checked in impeccably dressed guests, including designers Valentino and Diane von Furstenberg, as they entered the Church of St Ignatius Loyola on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

Fans and photographers were kept behind police barricades that stretched a city block at the large, imposing church on Park Avenue.

He was an icon and a guru of fashion and a wonderful man who changed people's lives in fashion, Kim Wolfe, 44, said of de la Renta.

His couture and his design were really created for the sophisticated lady, not necessarily of the 21st century, but of a lady that once was.

De la Renta died at his home in Connecticut on Oct. 20 surrounded by his family, friends and more than a few dogs. As news of his death spread, Hollywood stars and former first ladies, whom he dressed, expressed their condolences.

Former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, who wore a plum-colored de la Renta gown to her daughter Chelsea's wedding in 2010 and a beaded gown for an Inaugural Ball, credited de la Renta's exquisite taste for elevating American fashion.

Nancy Regan praised him as a fashion legend and Barbara Bush said, We will always remember him as the man who made women look and feel beautiful.

De la Renta's designs were known for their detail, fabrics and embroideries. His classic creations ranged from fitted suits to feminine pastel and floral print dresses, to elaborate, flowing ball gowns that were favorites on the red carpet.

Actresses Sarah Jessica Parker, Amy Adams, Jennifer Garner, Tina Fey, Cameron Diaz and Oprah Winfrey chose his gowns for award ceremonies.

Most recently, de la Renta created the lace, off-the-shoulder wedding gown worn by London-based human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin for her September wedding to actor George Clooney in Venice, Italy.

De la Renta was also known for his philanthropy, particularly in the Dominican Republic, where he was born and had a home. In 1982 he established La Casa del Nino for underprivileged children there.

New York. The designer, de la Renta, a favourite of socialites and movie stars alike, has died. He was 82. (AP / Evan Agostini)

President Danilo Medina led the nation in mourning and praised the designer for changing the lives of thousands of children in the country.

My greatest strength is knowing who I am and where I come from - my island, the designer is quoted as saying.

Dominican Foreign Minister Andrés Navarro credited de la Renta for being a permanent ambassador of our country abroad and for raising the international profile of the Caribbean nation and attracting investors and tourism.
