

1/10/95  
WDC WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION

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PRESERVATION

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REMARKS OF HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
WNDC WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION  
January 10, 1995

Thank you so much. It has been such a pleasure for me to have all of you here and to have a chance to greet each of you individually because it is something that I care very much about that all of you have committed yourselves to this club and to the principles and to the party for which it stands. And I would like to thank Barbara for her leadership and for all of you who have led this club over the years. I was recently reading Lindy Boggs' wonderful book. And some of you may know Lindy was a president of this club. She wrote about one of the many times that Mrs. Roosevelt was scheduled to speak, and Mrs. Roosevelt spoke so many times at the club over the course of the years that she was First Lady, that when Lindy asked Edith Helms, who had been Mrs. Roosevelt's social secretary, to introduce her, Mrs. Helms said, "What is there left to say?" And so Lindy said she told her well, don't worry, I'm sure something will come to mind. And when the time came to introduce Mrs. Roosevelt, Edith Helms stood up and simply said, "She is here."

Well, I would like to say, "We are here" and we are going to continue to speak out, as so many of you have done for so many years, on behalf of the issues and concerns that join us together, that make us Democrats, that give us a view about what we think can and will be done for the betterment of our country in the future.

I also want to thank the club for the very nice reception that you had given me last year, and for the gift of the trees that several of your officers and members, representing all of you, came and we planted one day in the fall. And I hope that, not this Spring, certainly the following Spring, they will be in full bloom and all of you will be able to come and see them. I also hope that I will be able to come back to the club at some point and have a chance to make another foray into issues with all of you.

I was doing a radio interview this afternoon with a radio program in Philadelphia, and the person who was interviewing me asked me if I had ever thought of doing radio, and wouldn't it be great if I were the first First Lady to do a radio program. And I said, like everything else, that people have either congratulated or accused me for being first, I am not. And I went on to tell him and his listeners that Mrs. Roosevelt ~~had~~ had a radio program which was broadcast from the club. So I think that there are so many reasons for us to celebrate this club and its tradition, and also to remind all of us about the many, many members who have come before and the contributions they have made.

As you might guess, I have thought a lot about Mrs. Roosevelt in the last two years, and I have found great comfort in much of what she wrote and said about her time in the White House. I've also found some consolation in the fact that nearly every terrible thing that has been said about any First Lady has been said about other First Ladies. And Mrs. Roosevelt took the brunt. I have a button in my political button collection which says, "I don't like Eleanor either."

But what I most admire about Mrs. Roosevelt is the way she kept going, perservering day after day, on behalf of her beliefs about what she could do to make a contribution to our country. And she did things that, if they had been done in today's atmosphere, would, with the kind of 24 hour media saturation, would have been so extraordinary we would all still be shaking from their reverberations. But she was able, over her years of service, to always keep her eye on the goals that she believed were right, and how she intended to pursue them, which is, I think, good advice for all of us. And she encouraged women, which I greatly appreciate - women like all of us in this room of all ages, all backgrounds, different races, different ethnic traditions, and particularly young women - to value political action as a way of making life better for people. She said once, "It is not enough to wish, however earnestly, to bring these things about. You have to be involved." And it is the ideal of citizenship that she represented, and that all of you stand for because of your commitment to the political life of our democracy that I want to salute.

And I particularly want to thank those of you who volunteer at the White House. We could not open the doors without you. Those who are in the correspondence sections, those who answer the Comment Line, who fill in for staff all over the White House, we are eternally grateful, because literally this house, this office could not run without your help.

And I want to end with a few of my favorite quotes from Mrs. Roosevelt. One that I particularly like: "Friendship with ones self is all important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world." I think that's important because no matter what we do in our lives, staying true to ourselves and having a sense of what our own direction is, will in the end determine whether or not we have lived a life that satisfies our own measurements. And I think she knew that and reminded us of it.

This is another one I like: "I have spent years of my life in opposition and I rather like the role." Now I hope that we will not spend years in opposition, but there are very important responsibilities for those in opposition. I know that this club will be helping the Democratic party fulfill those responsibilities.

And finally, my last two: One of her most famous - "It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." I think that is one of her best pieces of advice to all of us, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. And the one that I keep on my desk: "If you put a woman in hot water she is a lot like a tea bag - the hotter the water the stronger she gets."

Thank you all!