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First Lady - Women's Emergency Committee 10/8/98 [1]

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Janice Kearney

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**First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Women's Emergency Committee
October 8, 1998
Little Rock, Arkansas**

Thank you very much. I am so pleased to be here on this glorious October afternoon for this important occasion, and to see so many of you in this audience who are my friends and people with whom I have worked on all kinds of issues here in Little Rock and in our state, and to be here to celebrate and acknowledge the accomplishments of so many women who came together at a time of crisis and made such a difference. It is an extraordinary opportunity for all of us to say thank you.

I just realized when I was listening to Jim Dailey that I was born in Chicago and now call Little Rock home, and they both have mayors named Dailey who are doing terrific jobs for their cities. And I am always pleased to be with Irene Samuel, who has been an inspiration to nearly every one of us in this audience and countless more for her conviction and her commitment and her just plain fun personality and good humor when she was nagging you about doing something that you knew you should do and never would give up -- but always with a smile and all the while getting the job done.

I am very pleased that Alma Williams could be here and Sander Vancour who could share his memories with us, and I am very grateful to Jim Shelly and to Southwestern Bell for their understanding of how important this is. I got a lump in my throat when the five presidents from our public high schools came up because I think that any member of the Emergency Women's Committee, today or in the past would have been proud to see those young men and women standing before us leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

So it is a tremendous honor for me to be here and to stand in the company of so many courageous women and to join you here at the site of that important first meeting. Now when one thinks about Mrs. Terry, it is impossible not to be filled with admiration for all that she did, all that she meant, all that she encouraged. And it is this place where she and Vivian Brewer and Velma Powell -- and so many of you and others who are no longer with us -- convened that very first meeting of the Women's Emergency Committee.

Since March when the membership roster of the WEC was made public, I have read and re-read the names -- many of which I recognized, many that I did not. But I was amazed at how many were familiar to me because during my years of living here in Little Rock, so many of the same names were part of important efforts that were ongoing to improve the quality of life in our city and our state. Names that

worked for the arts, names that continue to work for public education, names that were at the forefront of improving health care for people, names that took stands on behalf of our continuing efforts for civil rights and social justice. Names that didn't just end with the work that they did in the 50's and the early 60's but were still there living and vibrant in the recent past and present of Little Rock and Arkansas.

So even though the WEC was disbanded in 1963, the women who made up the WEC did not give up their struggles, their fights and their commitments. They didn't stop fighting for public education and they didn't stop fighting for justice. They didn't stop fighting for dignity and civil rights for all Americans. And as we have just seen as one example in Irene today, their fighting spirit has not stopped.

This list of 1,281 names is more than a membership roster, it is an honor roll. And for the first time, we are not only learning these women's names, we are learning their stories -- stories of their bravery in the face of bigotry, vigilance in the face of violence, and triumph in the face of terror.

In the struggle to open the schools the women of the WEC faced hate mail and harrassment, police surveillance, bomb threats and death threats. At best, WEC members were treated as a curiosity -- like the post Civil War southern suffragettes in the early part of our century -- in their white gloves and hats.

At worst, they were called race mixers and communists and epithets too awful to repeat. And yet, those women endured it all. They endured it because they believed what they were doing was right and important and that opening the schools was not in and of itself a significant act but that it symbolized the kind of society they wanted to be a part of and they contributed to build.

And so, with a quiet and solemn dignity, they put on those white gloves and hats and made their way to the Committee's office, usually here, but sometimes in another member's home. Some members had babies in their arms; others, small children tugging at their skirts. And in this unlikely setting, they built a powerful grassroots movement -- a coalition that helped defeat the segregationists on the Little Rock School Board and helped save the jobs of teachers who favored integration.

Even when the WEC didn't win a battle, as Velma Powell said, "We got attention." I particularly enjoy the story I was told of a popular radio call-in show that residents of Little Rock used to tune into after dinner. During the school crisis, the air waves were dominated by segregationists who ranted and raved and took over the program. But one night, the women of the WEC decided that they had heard enough. They called the program, all 65 of them all at once, tying up every line for the entire two-hour show.

And since they couldn't even mention the worked integration without being cut off from talking on the show, they talked about anything and everything else -- how to can peaches, how to plant gardenias, how to keep empty beer bottles off the highway -- anything to keep the segregationists off the air.

Even small triumphs like this made a powerful statement. The WEC proved that a group of embattled ladies with grit and determination could come together despite their differences and stand up for what was right even in the most difficult of times. White and black, women were instrumental for the struggle of civil rights here, throughout the South and throughout our country.

Their leadership may not have captured all the headlines, but it was leadership in the truest sense. And so many of those leaders are really still influencing us today. Pioneering women like these built a lasting model of direct, grassroots, political action. Their example energized women across the South, drawing record numbers of women into politics and new organizations that emulated the techniques of the WEC.

I read an old article by the distinguished journalist Roy Reed, in which he quoted an Arkansas State Representative who called these new women's groups, including the WEC and the ones the WEC spawned, the "worst ever to come before the legislature." Now that really was a high compliment because what it meant was that the women who showed up in their white gloves and their hats had become dogged and determined advocates and lobbyists -- a force to be reckoned with.

In a sense, these women came together as women have always done -- around kitchen tables, at the market, in gatherings like the ones held here in Mrs. Terry's home. Wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, few were household names but their voices in harmony made a powerful sound -- powerful enough to be heard and be heeded.

I have thought a lot about coming here. I have looked forward to it with great anticipation because in the last several months I have participated in conferences in three different parts of the world called Vital Voices. Vital Voices is an attempt to bring women together in countries, particularly new democracies, where women have not yet found their voice. And I have talked about how women in our country have stood up in very critical times in our past to make sure their voices have been heard.

So whether it was in Vienna, Austria a year ago where women from the former Soviet Union gathered because all of a sudden they wanted to know what did it mean to be a citizen of a democracy -- how did they make a difference -- or the Vital Voices Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland where for the first time Catholic and Protestant women came together in common cause to learn how they

could influence the peace process and help build a stable, secure peace in their land. And then, last Friday, in Montevideo, Uruguay, women from all over Latin America gathered because they were, for the first time, realizing that the years of oppression and authoritarian governments and terrorism and civil war were finally and thankfully and hopefully over forever. They too needed to think of ways they would make their contributions to building their country.

Well, every one of them could have taken lessons from the ladies of the WEC. If we could spare Irene, we could send her throughout the entire world, encouraging and inspiring women to rise up and make sure their voices are heard. Because that is really what is at the root of what this group did that was so remarkable.

They were able to find common ground in a crisis. They were able to put aside their own personal fears and come together -- often at great costs. They were able, if not to enlist their families, at least to quiet the concerns and to bear the losses such as the loss of business and the loss of patience and all that came with it. And there are women all over the world today who may not know specifically about the WEC, but know enough to realize that there have been other women who came before who took risks for democracy, who stood up for social justice, who laid claim to their children's future to build a better society together.

In part, opportunity and fairness was what the WEC was all about, especially opportunity through education. And if you look at the old documents that the WEC produced, there is a saying at the Arkansas History Commission that goes "to get the best job, your child needs the best schools. Let's have the best schools for the most children -- three public schools." That simple message drove the WEC forward and it is still an important message in our country today.

I learned a lesson when I was recently in Belfast, Ireland, when person after person came up to me and said that one of our biggest problems is that our children have never gone to school with each other. There are two separate systems of education -- one for Catholic children and one for Protestant children. And until there is a free, public school education system which will draw all children together, there is not much hope we will be able to change attitudes and create relationships as quickly as we need to.

And I couldn't help but think how important it has been for our country and in effect, what a singular accomplishment it has been that we have been committed to public schools -- free public schools open to all children. It is the best investment our country has ever made. It remains the best investment that our country should make.

Nothing better helps us bridge our divisions and bind together our nations than strengthening our public schools. That should be a priority for every community in

our nation. It is certainly a priority -- as you know so well -- of my husband, who has fought for better public schools here at home and throughout the nation for as many years as he has been in public service. And his commitment to excellent public education has led him to produce an agenda which deserves to be given serious attention.

In this Congress, even though there are a few days left, it is not too late for them to do something that is good for the children and people of America. School is almost out of session on Capitol Hill -- and like many parents we are glad to see it's nearly over -- but there is still time for Congress to step up to this responsibility and place politics and partisanship at the schoolhouse door and strengthen America's public schools to provide the kind of attention that children need by providing more teachers for lower classroom sizes, to modernize and repair our school buildings, to create higher standards that we can all work to achieve, and to provide after-school and summer programs.

The agenda may have been different when the WEC was working to open the schools but it is the same agenda at heart. How do we make sure that these five young, impressive Americans who represent the young people of not only this city, but this nation, are given a chance to reach the fullest that their God-given potential can give them through the kind of public education to which our children should be entitled.

So that is one of the lessons that is still with us today that the WEC has given us through the years. The second is the importance that they place on the basic duty of citizenship, namely to vote. They understood how important and critical it was that every citizen be enlisted to demonstrate that by that simple act of voting, they were once again committing themselves to a democratic way of life.

They urged people to vote. They had telephone polling. They did everything they could because they knew that the elected leadership, if any community, will make decisions that will affect the people. And that is something we have to remind ourselves of over and over again these days. It really does matter who sits on a school board, or in a mayor's office, or in the Oval Office, or in the halls of Congress. It really does matter.

So now that we are about three-and-a-half weeks from the election, in the spirit of the WEC, I would urge everyone to be sure that you not only vote, but to bring 5 or 10 more to vote to make sure that everyone understands what the WEC understood -- that this is a critical, I would argue, even sacred obligation for the right to live in this country and to enjoy our blessings together.

And finally, all of us should just think about the courageous examples of the women who started and filled the membership rosters of the WEC in times when

their commitment meant that they might be followed by a state police car or receive a death threat by telephone, or have their husband come home and with a shake of his head say he just lost a piece of business.

If we can remember their willingness to stand up and do what was right, if we can summon up their courage and determination, then when we face struggles and difficulties in our own time, in standing up for what is right and in standing up to be counted on the side of those who are willing to make sacrifices to improve the life of our community and our country, then that might be one of the lasting tributes we can give to all of them.

So here on this beautiful afternoon in front of this lovely home which has been turned into a magnificent museum, let us pledge once again not merely to honor the memory of the WEC by reading the names on the window or reading Sarah's book or by talking to the women who are here, but to do that and more.

We must recommit ourselves to public education, to make sure that everyone we can touch, reach and talk to understands how important it is to vote. And finally, to be inspired now and in the future by the example of these brave and courageous women who met here all those years ago and changed history but can continue to influence the present and the future as well.

Thank you all very much.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/
STEPHEN B. THORNTON

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hugs Irene Samuels, one of the leaders of the Women's Emergency Committee from 1958-1963, after Mrs. Clinton spoke Thursday at the group's 40th-anniversary reunion.

First lady cool in LR as vote taken in D.C.

BY DANNY SHAMBER
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Undaunted by the vote for a presidential impeachment inquiry, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton returned to Little Rock on Thursday to raise money for Democratic candidates and honor a group that worked to reopen the city's high schools after the 1957 desegregation crisis.

Throughout her rounds, she made no reference to the events in Washington surrounding the president's affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. But Thursday night, when 4th Congressional District candidate Judy Smith proclaimed that "like thousands of people that I have personally met with ... I believe enough is enough," the first lady smiled broadly and joined in the roar of applause. "No more, please, no more," Smith added.

Appearing unruffled by

See **FIRST LADY**, Page 13A

1st lady

Continued from Page 1A

events in Washington, the first lady opened her 24-hour visit by speaking to about 500 people at the 40th reunion of the Women's Emergency Committee.

When she praised President Clinton's work on public school education, she urged Congress to support her husband's policies.

She said his agenda deserved serious attention.

"Even though they only have a few days left, it is not too late for them to do something good for the children and the people of America," the first lady said, generating applause.

"School is almost out of session on Capitol Hill and, like many parents, we're glad to see it nearly over," she said, prompting laughter from the crowd. "But there is still time for Congress to step up to its responsibility, to leave politics and partisanship at the schoolhouse door and strengthen America's public schools."

The crowd greeted her warmly from the moment she stepped onto the podium. Wearing a light yellow pantsuit, she smiled continuously as she sat on stage, listening to other speakers and sometimes nodding at particular remarks.

When it was her turn to speak, the crowd rose, giving her a one-minute ovation.

Her speech at the Women's Emergency Committee reunion was part of a series of events recognizing the anti-segregation group's work in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The committee formed after the integration of Little Rock Central High School. Little Rock's high schools were closed in the 1958-59 academic year when popular sentiment favored closing schools over racial integration.

Mrs. Clinton praised the committee, which she described as courageous and determined in its fight to reopen the schools.

She said that when she saw the 281 committee members' names when they were released in March or the first time, she recognized many of them as leaders in the arts, health care and education when she was Arkansas' first lady.

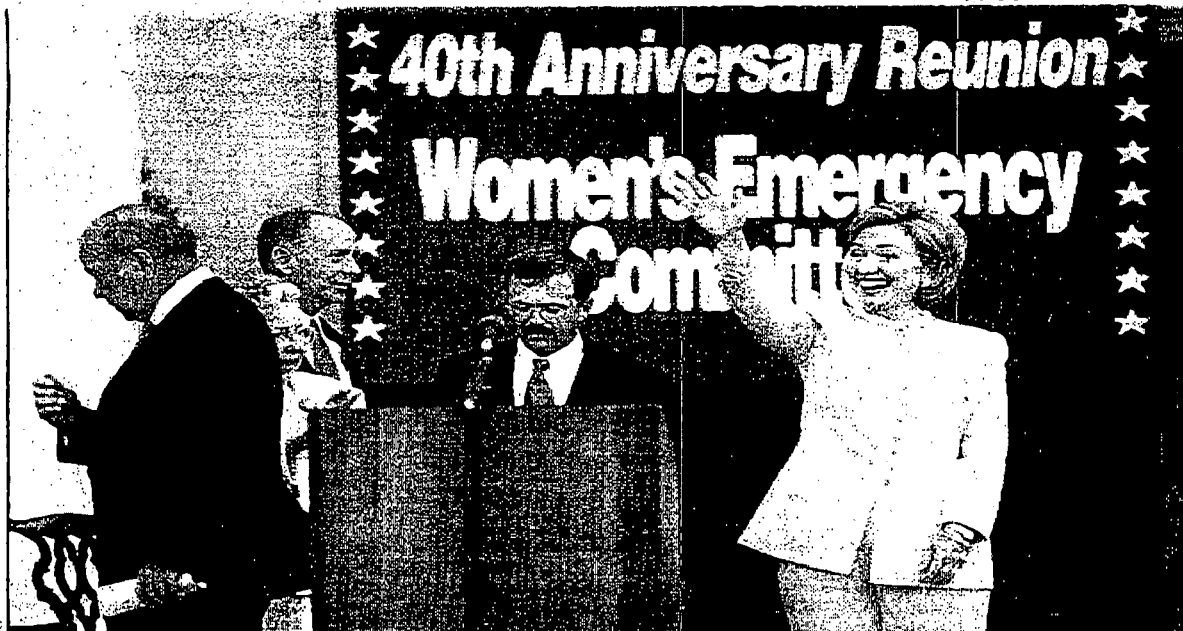
Shaking hands in the crowd afterward, she greeted some people by name. Those in the crowd who knew her before she became first lady said she did not appear troubled by events in Washington.

"She seems as strong and confident as ever," U.S. District Judge Henry Woods said. Mrs. Clinton was the attorney for the judge's advisory committee when he handled the Pulaski County school desegregation case.

"She seemed to me like her usual self: poised, confident. You know, she seems as determined as the Women's Emergency Committee was," he said.

Stephen Engstrom, a Little Rock lawyer, said she "seems fired up. I told her I wish I could team up with her on a trial. She seemed so full of energy and so strong."

Elizabeth Eckford and Hazel Massery showed up together to hear Mrs. Clinton speak. Eckford was one of the nine black students who integrated Central High in 1957. Massery was one of the white students who joined a crowd pursuing Eckford as she tried to enter the school alone. On Thursday, they described each other as friends just getting together for another outing.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/STEPHEN B. THORNTON

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton waves to the crowd Thursday as speakers (from left) Sander Vanocour of television's History Channel, former Women's Emergency Committee leader Irene Samuels, Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey,

and Southwestern Bell President Jim Shelley prepare to take their seats outside the Decorative Arts Museum for the commemoration of the Women's Emergency Committee's 40th anniversary.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/KAREN VAN DONGE

First lady Hillary Clinton waves to the crowd as she is cheered by Arkansas Education Association President Linda Pondexter before speaking Thursday night in Little Rock at a rally for Senate candidate Blanche Lincoln.

"I think it's an honor to have a national figure like Mrs. Clinton recognize the work of the Women's Emergency Committee," Eckford said. "It's difficult today for people to recognize how brave and daring they were. The committee changed the role of women in society, and Mrs. Clinton is filling that role today."

People in the crowd had mixed reactions to the House's action Thursday. Some disliked the prospect of impeachment hearings. Others thought the focus ought to be limited to former White House aide Monica Lewinsky, while some thought a wider scope was needed. No one was unhappy about the first lady's visit.

"I think she's a brave woman," said Alfred Hampton of Little Rock, who supported a limited impeachment hearing. "She's sticking by her man, and she has a lot of heart, and she's not letting the situation get the best of her."

"As a matter of fact, I think it's very noble of her to come to Little Rock to honor the Women's Emer-

gency Committee on, of all days, the day when Congress seeks impeachment hearings."

Thursday night, Mrs. Clinton appeared at a joint fund-raiser for Smith and gubernatorial candidate Bill Bristow and at the Arkansas Cancer Research Center's annual gala, as well as a rally for Senate candidate Blanche Lincoln.

At the Cancer Research Center gathering, Glen Hooks, executive director of the state Democratic Party, said of the House vote for an impeachment inquiry that he was "disappointed they left it as open-ended as they did."

"There's no deadline, no limited scope. It shows the Republican leadership is about partisanship rather than progress," he said.

Sharon Priest, the Democrat seeking re-election as secretary of state, said the House vote wasn't unexpected, "but people are fed up and they are sick of it."

"Like Judy Smith said, enough is enough," Priest said.

Pat Youngdahl of Little Rock, a psychologist at Arkansas Chil-

dren's Hospital, saw Mrs. Clinton at the Women's Emergency Committee 40th reunion and at the Bristow-Smith fund-raiser.

"She looks wonderful," Youngdahl said. "She is very gracious about visiting and talking to many or most of the people who had worked with her on different projects over the years. They were thrilled to see her."

At the event for Lincoln, Tanya Fuller said the Washington scandal could not have been further from her mind Thursday night.

"To be honest with you, I'm so tired of what's going on," said Fuller, whose son, Ryan, 10, participated in a reading presentation at the event with other College Station Elementary School students. "I came in with an open mind."

"I'm standing behind [the first lady] because education is one of my biggest concerns right now," Fuller said.

The first lady appeared briefly at the Cancer Research Center event at the Arkansas Excelsior Hotel, where she addressed a crowd of about 1,000 for five minutes between standing ovations.

She said the center is a leader in its field. Her husband signed legislation creating it, she said, and she's proud of the progress center officials have made. She mentioned that her mother-in-law, Virginia Kelley, who died of cancer, received "superb compassion and care" in Arkansas.

The first lady said she hopes for a better partnership in the future between the federal government and cancer institutes. She said she'd like to see more clinical trials to improve cancer treatment.

She and Dr. Harry Ward, head of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, gave speeches before the event's headliner, singer Kenny Rogers, performed.

The first lady has one event scheduled for today before returning to Washington. She is to speak on children's health and development issues in the first Anne Hickman lecture at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock.

Information for this article was also contributed by Noel Oman and Rachel O'Neal of the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.



BY JEFF MITCHELL—REUTERS

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hugs Irene Samuel in Little Rock during ceremonies marking anniversary of women's group founded during the school desegregation crisis. First lady was cheered by supporters at three events.

The Washington Post
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1998

FINAL

Despite President's Troubles, First Lady Stays on Message

In Familiar, Supportive Little Rock, Throngs Embrace Her

By LOIS ROMANO
Washington Post Staff Writer

LITTLE ROCK, Oct. 8—On perhaps the most trying day of her adult life, Hillary Rodham Clinton returned to the security of a place where few judge her and most embrace her unconditionally.

Just hours after the House voted today to launch an open-ended impeachment investigation of her husband, the first lady was hugged and cheered by supporters at three overflowing events here in the city she called home for nearly 20 years.

Clinton ignored reporters' shouted questions about the historic vote in Washington and in her separate speeches she never addressed the scandal that has imperiled her husband's presidency and overshadowed her own dreams and achievements. Her spokeswoman Marsha Berry said the first lady would let stand President Clinton's comment today that the situation was now "in the hands of Congress and the people of this country, ultimately in the hands of God."

During her first visit back here since Bill Clinton admitted in August to an improper relationship with a former White House intern, she effusively praised her "husband, who has fought for better public schools . . . for as many years as he has been in public service."

And she took a swipe at Congress, which is scheduled to adjourn this weekend. "Even though they only have a few days left, it's not too late for them to do something good for the children and people of America," she told her first audience at a celebration of the Women's Emergency Committee (WEC), which four decades ago fought to open Little Rock public schools, closed by then-Gov. Orval Faubus to block integration.

"School is almost out on Capitol Hill, and like many parents we are glad to see it's nearly over," she said to knowing laughs. "There is still time for Congress to step up to its responsibilities, to leave partisanship at the schoolhouse door and strengthen America's public schools."

Clinton appeared at several other Little Rock events, including a fund-raiser for Bill Bristow, the Democratic challenger for governor, and Judy Smith, a congressional candidate, as well as at a rally for Blanche Lincoln, the front-runner for a Senate seat.

At the fund-raiser, she again made what was clearly intended to be a remark jabbing at those investigating the president. "I really hope that . . . we're able to put

progress over partisanship, we're able to put unity over division, we're able to get about the business of continuing to lift people up, not tear people down," she said to a rousing ovation.

It's hard to find audiences more receptive and sympathetic to Clinton than the stalwart supporters and longtime friends in the state where Bill Clinton was elected governor five times. At every stop, the first lady was greeted with prolonged cheering and mobbed by well-wishers. Wearing a bright, sunflower-yellow pantsuit, Clinton put forth a demeanor of business-as-usual.

Outside the white mansion where the WEC used to meet, several hundred women, men and children packed the lawn to hear Clinton. She worked the velvet rope line for 30 minutes afterward, asking after families and old friends. No one raised her Washington troubles.

"She's been in our home for 20 years and she'll be welcomed for the next 50," said Dana Durst, after shaking the first lady's hand.

Eloise Raymond, who showed up with a contingent from a Hillary Clinton Fan Club—and sporting a button advertising her membership—drove 30 miles today to see the first lady. "This day no different from any other day," Raymond said after having an opportunity to chat with Clinton. "Every day has got to be hard for her. I just hope being here encourages her to push on."

"Hillary holds a special place in the hearts of Arkansas women," said Nan Snow, who described herself as a longtime Clinton supporter. "She gave us a voice, she gave us leadership."

The first lady has remained publicly silent on the investigation since the president acknowledged in August that he had an improper relationship with Monica S. Lewinsky. But in recent weeks, she had been quietly urging Democrats to stick with her husband on today's vote while assuring them that if they did not, there would be no political recriminations as next month's midterm elections near.

At all her stops today, she stressed the importance of the elections and urged people to get out and vote. Clinton also attended a cancer benefit tonight, which was not open to the news media, and was planning to spend the night with her mother, Dorothy Rodham, who lives here. On Friday, she is scheduled to visit Arkansas Children's Hospital.

The Washington Post
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1998

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LITTLE ROCK

WE KNOW IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE THE STATE OF ARKANSAS CAN LIVE DOWN THE SHAME AND DISGRACE WITH WHICH IT IS NOW VIEWED BY THE ENTIRE WORLD. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE TO LEARN THAT THERE IS ONE GROUP HERE DEDICATED TO THE PRINCIPLE OF GOOD PUBLIC EDUCATION WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL. THIS GROUP SAYS TO ALL THE WORLD THERE ARE MANY OF US HERE WHO CARE ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SITUATION IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES. I AM PROUD AND HAPPY TO BE A MEMBER OF THE WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE TO OPEN OUR SCHOOLS.

OUR AIMS ARE: TO REOPEN OUR FOUR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS; TO RETAIN OUR STAFFS OF GOOD TEACHERS; AND TO REGAIN FULL ACCREDITATION BY THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.

MEETING MONTHLY IN THE GRACIOUS ANTEBELLUM MANSION OF ONE OF OUR FOUNDERS, MRS. DAVID D. TERRY, WE HAVE GROWN TO INCLUDE MORE THAN 850 MEMEERS, PLUS UNCOUNTED PERSONS WHO SYMPATHIZE ENOUGH TO CONTRIBUTE MONEY EVEN THOUGH THEY DARE NOT BECOME ACTIVE MEMBERS. WE HAVE AN OFFICE AND AN EFFICIENT WORKING ORGANIZATION. KNOWING THAT OURS IS A TASK OF EDUCATION, WE HAVE SENT OUT HUNDREDS OF LETTERS - AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COMMITTEE- URGING SUPPORT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS. WE HAVE MAILED THOUSANDS OF INFORMATION LEAFLETS URGING THE REOPENING OF OUR SCHOOLS, AND WE HAVE PRESENTED RADIO, TELEVISION, AND NEWSPAPER MATERIAL, AS WELL AS SPONSORING MEETINGS AND FURNISHING SPEAKERS. WE WANT OUR CHILDREN, AND INDEED OUR NATION, TO BE SPARED THE COST OF RESOLVING ANY SOCIAL CONFLICT THAT CAN AND SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN THE JUDICIAL ATMOSPHERE OF OUR COURTS OF LAW.

I WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT I AM ONE OF LITTLE ROCK'S CITIZENS WHO IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THIS PROBLEM.

Christina '58

LETTER FROM LITTLE ROCK

"No news from Little Rock" was the title of an editorial in the New York Times in September, 1960. This was the BEST NEWS members of the Women's Emergency Committee could want. Our schools were open again with no disturbances.

Our membership is now over 2,000 and we are still growing.

Mrs. Byron House, Jr. is our new Chairman. She is a former Board Member of the League of Women Voters, Vice-President of the AAUW, on the Board of the Arkansas Medical Center Auxiliary and the mother of four children. Thanks to Mrs. Joe R. Brewer who as our first Chairman inspired all of us to work untiringly and unselfishly.

Who are the WEC? The results of a survey show we are a group deserving serious consideration. We are long-time residents of the South. The average member is between 37 and 50 with two children in elementary school. Our family incomes range from \$8,500 to over \$15,000 and our husbands are in business management or the professions. Most of us have some college education and many have more than four years college. 89% of the married members have children and 50% of the children are in public schools, 10% are in college and 19% are past college age. 10% were due to attend the closed high schools in 1958-59. 21% have pre-school children. 82% of the women responding had worked before marriage in occupations ranging from modeling to banking. 23% still work. Many planned to leave the state unless the school situation was settled.

We know we need Legislators who will stand up courageously for the education of all the children of Arkansas. This summer we elected ~~two representatives and reelected one senator~~ who promised to support public education. Now we are working toward the reelection of one of our School Board members.

~~The WEC began working against~~ the proposed school-closing Amendment 52 over a year ago. We had 55 study groups in Little Rock alone for our members and each member was given the responsibility of taking the message to others over the state. We had a Speaker's Bureau which filled many requests from clubs and civic groups. We mailed thousands of pieces of literature warning the people of the dangers of this amendment. On November 8 the Amendment was defeated 3 to 1 in spite of a telecast by the Governor urging the people to vote FOR the Amendment. PEOPLE OF ARKANSAS PROVED THEY WANT NO MORE TAMPERING WITH THEIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

We sent a telegram to the New Orleans Save Our Schools Committee assuring them of our support. We told them that "even after the unequivocal defeat of Amendment 52 the people were told by politicians that it was defeated because they didn't understand it, but they understood it alright--that's why they defeated it. In Arkansas some of those who do the most talking about state's rights show the least concern about local rights."

Mrs. House was interviewed for a film documentary by a New Orleans TV station.

We still entertain many foreign visitors and we are glad to show them peaceful Little Rock.

~~We will continue to work toward~~ a better education for all the children of Arkansas!

THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION (GACE)*

believes . . .

"The public school system of the State is the cornerstone of our social, economic, and political structure and should, therefore, be the concern of all citizens."

"There is a direct relationship between the success of Arkansas' program of industrial development and the promptness and adequacy of the solution to our educational problems."

and agrees with the U. S. Chamber of Commerce that . . .

"GOOD SCHOOLS ARE GOOD BUSINESS"



IS
THIS
THE
WAY
TO
BUILD?

* A non-political study group of 58 business and school leaders throughout Arkansas. Little Rock members: Virgil Blossom, J. R. Booker, Claude Carpenter Jr., LeRoy Cristophe, A.W. Ford, Mrs. Charles R. Henry, Lewis Johnson, Mrs. Frances Neal, Hugh B. Patterson Jr., H. R. Pyle, Forrest Rozzell, Joshua K. Shepherd, Jack Stephens, B.G. Williams, Mrs. Edgar F. Dixon.

Craw

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this as a Christian Mother, who is as much interested in her children's teachers, education, and welfare as any Mother in Little Rock. I will have a fifteen year old son in his first year of High School next year. I am in favor of "Free Public Schools," but only on a segregated basis. We will never have any peaceful schools otherwise. I have seen what has happened to our city buses--the same thing will happen to our schools. Do the Christian People of Little Rock want this? The character, ideals, and habits of our children begin in our homes.

Little Rock has been hurt, so have our children, but integrating our public schools is not the solution to our worries and problems. I'm in favor of opening our schools (segregated) and let the ones who favor integration go to Dunbar or Horace Mann. They have as good schools as Central.

I hope that you will post this on your bulletin board, and that each Mother who is serving on the "Women's Emergency Committee" will take time out, read it, and give it careful thought. I regret very much to see Arkansas, and especially Little Rock, continuing to be hurt.

Little Rock Must Have Public Schools!

The Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools is a non-partisan group for the preservation of public education. Extremists are willing to destroy Little Rock's school system. We believe that our free public schools must be preserved. Our membership of over 1,200 white Arkansas women believe in public education. Add your support now!

WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE to OPEN OUR SCHOOLS

NOT affiliated with any other group.
NOT for integration, NOT for segregation.
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION.

I believe in the preservation of free public education and respect for law and order.

But keep the races separated. Their next step is (marriage) I'll give my money to private school until this is licked. no negro-white marriage for me.

Signature

Address

Mail with contribution to

Women's Emergency Committee
P. O. Box 122, Pulaski Heights Station
Little Rock, Arkansas

You say Your Committee's Members 1200
well I am surprised that there are that
many dupes in Arkansas. However it don't
matter. You are not for anything any way.

Remember Governor Faubus was voted one
of the top 10 most admired men in the world.
This was because he took a stand.
Not hint very few people have any respect for
a person who has not the courage to take a
stand if they believe it Right.

McMATH, LEATHERMAN & WOODS

ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW

SUITE 417, NATIONAL OLD LINE BUILDING

TELEPHONE FR 4-8293

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

SIDNEY S. McMATH
LELAND F. LEATHERMAN
HENRY WOODS

December 3, 1959

JAMES E. YOUNGDAHL

Mrs. Vivian Brewer, Chairman
Women's Emergency Committee
5709 Kavanaugh (Upstairs)
Little Rock, Arkansas

Dear Mrs. Brewer:

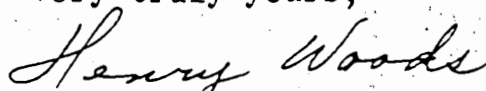
I want to express my admiration to you and your wonderful organization for the great job you did in the school election last Tuesday. In previous elections, although your group has carried the major part of the load, you have had some help. In this election you cheerfully assumed the entire burden and won a decisive victory with negligible assistance from other quarters.

A few people like myself came by on one or two occasions and looked wise, but the successful candidacy of Messrs. Tucker and Mackey is due solely to the efforts of your organization. I continue to be amazed at the executive ability and organizational talents of you, Irene Samuel, and your board members and faithful workers. Although the election does show some shift in sentiment in this community, the figures are somewhat deceptive. The final figures show that your group was successful in getting our supporters out to the polls, whereas the other side had no comparable organization. Apathy is always the greatest obstacle in a political campaign. I have never seen a more apathetic electorate; that your organization was able to turn out - almost 9,000 votes in the face of such apathy is a little short of miraculous.

Your organization for reporting the vote was the best ever perfected in this county. With the exception of one box, the vote was tabulated by 8 o'clock. The vote was completely tabulated before the Gazette had returns from a single box.

I hope that this community recognizes the great performance of the Women's Emergency Committee both in this campaign and in the others that have gone before.

Very truly yours,



Henry Woods

hw/jj

EVERETT TUCKER, JR.
115 WEST SIXTH STREET
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
December 4, 1959

My dear Irene:

I have conveyed my thanks to Vivian Brewer, in her capacity as President of the W.E.C., for all the splendid work accomplished by this organization in the recent election as well as in the one last May, but I wanted to add a personal word of thanks to you for all that you have done. I do not believe that the schools would be operating in Little Rock today had it not been for the foresight and determination of you ladies and it is perfectly obvious to me that we who withstood the recall election last Spring would not now be in office without your dedicated work in our behalf.

I wish that it was possible for me to write each one of you a personal note of thanks but in lieu thereof, I would appreciate it if you would pass along my appreciation to the membership and particularly to those who, like yourself, devoted so much time and effort to the cause.

Don't go into hiding now; we may be needing your help again somewhere down the line.

Sincerely yours,

Everett

ET:h

Mrs. John M. Samuel
2911 North University
Little Rock, Arkansas

N.Y. Times
5/27/59



Associated Press Wirephoto

VICTORY CHEERS: Three moderate members of the Little Rock, Ark., school board, who survived a recall vote, are hoisted to the shoulders of supporters in their headquarters. They are, from left, Everett Tucker Jr., Russell H. Matson Jr. and Ted Lamb. Three other members of board, all backed by Gov. Orval Faubus, were recalled by voters.

supporters was that of the Women's Emergency Committee for Our Public Schools.

Heavy Negro Vote

Another important factor, these observers noted was the heavy participation of the Negro community in the recall election. Only a handful of Negroes voted in the school board election last Dec. 6, which the three moderates won after having been denounced by Mr. Faubus.

A study of the returns showed that in one predominant Negro ward STOP's margin of support was nine to one. Mrs. Bates, Arkansas head

of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said that Negroes had been encouraged by the revolt of the white moderates.

"I'm really happy about the way people have spoken out," she said. "We've had people working in this election that had never taken part before."

"Many [Negro] people that I've talked to actually see hope for the first time since Governor Faubus closed the schools," she asserted.

The returns also held surprises for the segregationist coalition of the Central High School Mothers League and the

Capital Citizens Council. This group was organized under the Committee to Retain Our Segregated Schools (CROSS).

One precinct that voted heavily against reopening the schools on a desegregated basis in a referendum last September reported only a narrow edge this time for CROSS.

Purge Is Cited

The apparent reason was that the closing of the high schools had affected only a limited number of families. But the attempted purge of forty-four teachers and principals had a much more widespread effect.

because it reached into most of the elementary and junior high schools as well.

The pro-Faubus faction on the board announced the dismissals May 5 after the three moderates had walked out in protest. The three segregationists whose recall was demanded in petitions filed by STOP, are Ed I. McKinley, the president of the board who was elected without opposition last December; Ben D. Rowland Sr., secretary, and Robert W. Laster.

Complete, unofficial returns showed the following vote for and against their removal:

	For.	Against.
McKinley	13,340	11,860
Rowland	13,694	11,527
Laster	13,996	11,135

The three moderates are Everett Tucker Jr., board vice

Little Rock

because it reached into most of president Russell H. Mason's
the elementary and junior high and "Ted Lash" **TIME**
schools as well. That were created as a result

The pro-Eubank faction on the board announced the results of petitions filed by CROSS, on May 5 after the three moderates had walked out in an unsuiting way.

	For	Against
Those whose recall was demanded in petitions filed by STOP	12,081	13,327
Ed L. McNulty, the president	12,320	12,971
Laurel	12,513	12,944

Mr. Tucker said today that he and the other moderates had been elected last December as

Complete," and official returns showed the following vote for and against their removal:

	For	Against	
McKinley	11,710	11,860	Some degree of desegregation.
Rowland	12,604	11,927	As far as the purged teach-
Harlan	12,996	11,136	ers were concerned, he con-

The three moderates are asked that they "had never [Everett] taken it [hard] any been tried."

DEFEAT BUOYS

Little Rock
as 3 Seg:
Ousted :

By (1.3)

$$S_{\text{total}} = 100$$

TITLE :

An angry reaction against a purge has affected the school. The students are angry, and the teachers are angry.

2. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 3. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 4. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 5. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 6. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 7. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 8. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 9. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.
 10. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1997, 36: 103-111.

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Art. Denis
9-7-62

Women's World Today

WEC Honors Executive Secretary

The Women's Emergency Committee honored its executive secretary, Mrs. John Samuel, at their third anniversary meeting yesterday held in the home of Mrs. D. D. Terry. Mrs. Terry presented Mrs. Samuel with a gift, corsage, and a certificate of recognition for her thousands of hours of volunteer work in the office during the past three years. Mrs. Samuel coordinates office workers and volunteer activity at home. She works in school elections, legislative sessions, and bond elections.

Mrs. Samuel was honored with a coffee after the showing of a film "A Question of Chairs," the history of the 300 years of public education. Officers of the Parent-Teachers Associations and civic clubs attended the film.

New officers elected were Mrs. Byron House Jr., chairman; Mrs. D. D. Terry, vice chairman; Mrs. James L. Jackson, second vice chairman; Mrs. Robert Lindsey, third vice chairman; Mrs. Henry Woods, recording secretary; Miss Ada May Smith, treasurer; Mrs. Felix Arnold, parliamentarian, and Mrs. John Samuel, executive secretary.

The group made plans for participation in the December school board election, for continued legislative activity and reports, and to continue the daily office as an action and information center.



MRS. HOUSE, MRS. SAMUEL
WEC president serves honoree



Capitol Center
303 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3593

(501) 376-6251
FAX: (501) 376-4241

For additional information, contact:

NEWS RELEASE

Pat House
(501) 374-2956

Irene Samuel
(501) 663-9700

Mayor Jim Dailey
(501) 371-4510

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AFTER 40 YEARS OF ANONYMITY, WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE RELEASES MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

LITTLE ROCK, AR (March 12, 1998) -- The membership roster of the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC), which was formed in 1958 and continued to 1963, was released today at a news conference. Prior to today's announcement, a committee of WEC members compiled the list from organizational records. The list, which had never been publicly released, contains the names of people who supported the WEC by paying at least \$1.00.

The WEC was organized by a group of women led by the late Adolphine Fletcher Terry, who was 76 years old at the time. The WEC had its first meeting on September 16, 1958, at Mrs. Terry's home (now the Decorative Arts Museum) at 7th and Rock Streets, with 58 women in attendance. Its initial purpose was to get the Little Rock Public Schools reopened. The public schools had been closed for the 1958-59 school year by Governor Orval Faubus following the 1957 integration crisis at Little Rock Central High School.

(MORE)

NEWS RELEASE - Women's Emergency Committee
March 12, 1998
Page Two of Three

The roster is being released because all living members, their families and the families of deceased members are being invited to the WEC's 40th anniversary reunion September 16th at the Terry Mansion.

Last year Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey announced plans for the WEC reunion and unveiled a plaque in the dining room of the Terry Mansion. The executive committee of the WEC met there every Wednesday morning for almost five years.

The list contains the names of 1,281 people, although by the time the WEC disbanded in 1963, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 people had been affiliated with the group.

WEC members Pat House and Irene Samuel said the membership list was confidential because at the time many of the women feared for family safety and that their husbands would lose their jobs.

"The threats were real," Samuel said. "The political, economic and social pressure was intense. There were those who attempted to harass us and intimidate us, but we just kept on going."

"Because of this pressure, there were people who anonymously helped and supported the WEC, but never would allow their names to be recorded, even in our internal records," House said. "It is also possible that we may have inadvertently missed some names on this membership list. We hope people will review it, let us know if there are additions and help us contact members and their families."

(MORE)

NEWS RELEASE - Women's Emergency Committee
March 12, 1998
Page Three of Three

"With the 1997 publication of Sara Murphy's book Breaking the Silence, the 1997 WEC documentary video by Sandra Hubbard, the 40th anniversary of the 1957 Central High crisis and the City of Little Rock hosting the upcoming WEC reunion, there is a great renewal of interest in the WEC," House said. "Some people wanted to know all about us in 1958, but for very different reasons. It is amazing how many attitudes have changed."

"The members of the Women's Emergency Committee stood up at a time in history when it was very unpopular, and in some cases even dangerous to do so," Dailey said. "These women were strong and courageous, and their efforts need to be recognized. I also want the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and other family members of these remarkable women to know that 40 years later we are paying a well-deserved but long overdue tribute."

"In addition to leading the efforts to get the schools reopened for the 1959-60 school year, the WEC was instrumental in the successful STOP campaign and helped form the Panel of American Women in 1963, an interracial, interfaith group fighting prejudice," Dailey said.

Samuel is coordinating the planning for the September 16th reunion. More information about the WEC is available in the archives of the Arkansas History Commission, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the Faubus papers at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Recommended additions to the list can be made by calling (501) 374-1957.



Capitol Center
303 West Capitol Avenue
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3593

(501) 376-6251
FAX: (501) 376-4241

For additional information, contact:

Skip Rutherford
(501) 975-8371

NEWS RELEASE

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(MORE)

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March 12, 1998
Page Two of Three

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(MORE)

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City of Little Rock

Jim Dailey
Mayor

City Hall, Room 203
500 W. Markham
Little Rock, AR 72201-1427
(501) 371-4516
FAX (501) 371-4498

August 17, 1998

Dear members of the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC) and families, families of deceased members, and special guests:

As many of you may know, the City of Little Rock is planning a 40th year reunion honoring the members and families of the WEC. WEC members were instrumental in reopening the Little Rock public schools after they had been closed for the 1958-59 school year following the integration of Little Rock Central High School. From 1958-1963, the WEC met to battle the forces of hate, injustice and intolerance.

Earlier this year, a committee of WEC members released its membership list for the first time. The names were published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and attracted national and international media attention.

Although the recognition is long overdue, the City of Little Rock is planning two special events to honor the WEC members, their families and the families of deceased members.

On September 16 at 10 a.m.--exactly 40 years to the time and date of the first WEC meeting at the home of Adolphine Fletcher Terry--there will be a short ceremony at Mount Holly Cemetery on Broadway in downtown Little Rock. At that time, on behalf of the people of Little Rock, I will recognize Mrs. Terry's leadership and place a wreath on her grave. I have asked members of the Terry family to join me as we pay special tribute to a very courageous lady. You and your families are invited to attend. This does not require an RSVP.

At 4 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, there will be a WEC 40th anniversary reunion ceremony on the grounds of the Terry Mansion (now the Decorative Arts Museum) at 7th and Rock. WEC member Irene Samuel is chairing this reunion.

The First Lady of the United States, Hillary Rodham Clinton, will be the guest speaker. She will be joined by noted television journalist Sander Vanocur, who covered the 1957 Central High integration crisis, as well as other dignitaries.

August 17, 1998

Page Two

With the generous support of Southwestern Bell and its Arkansas President Jim Shelley, the names of 1,281 WEC members are being inscribed on the glass walls of the Adolphine Fletcher Terry Conservatory in the Decorative Arts Museum. The conservatory is adjacent to the dining room where the WEC board members met on Wednesday mornings. This unique project will be completed before the October 8 reunion so you and others can see it.

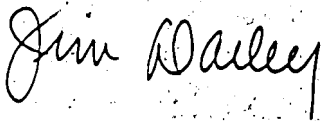
We hope you and your families will make plans now to attend the October 8 gathering. The program will begin at 4 p.m. and it will be followed by a reception on the grounds. We expect the program and reception to last no later than 6 p.m. There will be reserved seating for the WEC members, their families and special guests, but you should plan to arrive early because of security requirements and parking. Parking will not be provided, although there are several nearby locations.

It is important that you RSVP by October 1. Please provide your name, as well as those who will be in your group, and an address and a phone number where we may reach you if more information is needed. Please RSVP in writing to the WEC 40th Anniversary Reunion, P.O. Box 82, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203. If you do not RSVP, we can't guarantee reserved seating. The RSVP must be in writing.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Laura Miller at the Central High Visitor Center, 501-374-1957.

I'm looking forward to seeing you and to personally saying thank you. What the WEC did from 1958 to 1963 was historic and remarkable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Dailey".

Jim Dailey
Mayor

Skip Rutherford
(501) 975-8371

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON TO KEYNOTE
WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
40TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

LITTLE ROCK, AR (August 19, 1998)--Hillary Rodham Clinton will return to Little Rock October 8 as the keynote speaker for the 40th anniversary reunion of the Women's Emergency Committee to Open our Schools (WEC). The event will be open to the public.

Established in 1958, the WEC led the efforts to open the Little Rock public high schools which had closed for the 1958-59 year following the integration of Little Rock Central High School in 1957. The WEC remained active until 1963.

Initially kept secret to avoid retaliation by segregationists, the WEC members' identities remained unknown for 40 years. In March of this year a committee of WEC members publicly released the roster containing 1,281 names for the first time. The list was released so all living members, their families and the families of deceased members could participate in the October 8 reunion which will be hosted by the City of Little Rock.

Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey said Mrs. Clinton's speech would take place at 4 p.m. on October 8 at the Decorative Arts Museum in downtown Little Rock. The Museum was the home of the late Adolphine Fletcher Terry, who at age 76, founded and organized the WEC in 1958. The weekly WEC board meetings were held in Mrs. Terry's dining room.

"We're honored that the First Lady will be coming home to help salute these remarkable women and their families," Dailey said.

"This recognition of the WEC is well deserved," he continued, "but it's also long overdue. These women were very courageous and the more we learn about them, the more we appreciate them."

WEC member Irene Samuel is coordinating plans for the reunion. WEC members and their families who have been identified are being contacted by letter this week, but Dailey said those having questions or needing more information should call Laura Miller at the Central High Visitor Center, (501) 374-1957. He said specifics about the October 8th program would be announced later.

MEDIA ADVISORY

To: _____

From: Skip Rutherford
Phone (501) 975-8371 Fax (501) 975-6045

Date: September 2, 1998

For your planning purposes, listed below are events currently scheduled for the Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools (WEC) 40th anniversary reunion and the 41st anniversary of the 1957 Central High Integration Crisis:

Wednesday, September 16, 10 a.m., Mt. Holly Cemetery, Broadway at 12th Street.

On behalf of the City of Little Rock, Mayor Jim Dailey will pay tribute to the late Adolphine Fletcher Terry, founder of the WEC. The WEC met for the first time at 10 a.m. on September 16, 1958, at Mrs. Terry's home (now the Decorative Arts Museum.) At the Mt. Holly ceremony, Mayor Dailey will speak and place a wreath on Mrs. Terry's grave. WEC members, family members and families of deceased members have been invited. Members of Mrs. Terry's family will attend.

Wednesday, September 16, 2 p.m., Central Arkansas Library, 100 Rock Street.

Opening of commemorative exhibit. "The Men Have Failed. . . It's Time to Call Out the Women: The Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools, 1958-1963," was created by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Public History Program and was underwritten by a UALR Community University Partnership Grant.

Monday, September 21, 10 a.m., Little Rock Central High School, Roosevelt Thompson Auditorium. Senator Dale Bumpers will speak to the Central High student body in commemoration of the 41st anniversary of the 1957 crisis.

Friday, September 25, 10 a.m., Central High Visitor Center, 14th and Park.

Commemorative news conference marking the 41st anniversary date of the Little Rock Nine entering Little Rock Central High School. Remarks by Central High Student Body President Clarke Tucker.

Saturday, September 26, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Central High Visitor Center, 14th and Park.

Fundraising reception benefiting the Visitor Center and honoring the entire Lloyd and Rachel Myers family. Special tribute to Central graduates: Deborah Myers Mathis, first African-American editor of the Tiger Newspaper; Sandra Myers Hill, first African-American homecoming queen; and Lloyd Myers, first African-American student body president.

Thursday, October 8, 4 p.m., Decorative Arts Museum, 7th and Rock Streets (formerly the Terry Mansion.) 40th anniversary reunion of the WEC. Keynote speaker: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Draft 10/07/98 7:30pm
Jeff Shesol

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT 40th REUNION OF WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
October 8, 1998

Acknowledgments: Mayor Jim Dailey; Alma Williams; Sander Vanocur; Irene Samuel; former Sen. Pryor; former Gov. McMath; the family of Adolphine Fletcher Terry; the student body presidents from the 5 Little Rock public high schools

It is a tremendous honor to stand in the company of so many brave women, and to join you here at the site of their historic first meeting -- the home of Adolphine Fletcher Terry, "the First Lady of Little Rock." This is the place where it all began, where Mrs. Terry, Vivion Brewer, and Velma Powell convened that meeting of the Women's Emergency Committee four decades ago. I am thrilled to see that so many of you have made the journey back here, and that you've brought your families and friends.

Since March, when the membership roster of the WEC was made public, I've been reading and re-reading the names. I've been amazed at how many of them are familiar to me, from my 20 years here in Little Rock, and how many of those names have faces and memories attached. I have worked with many of you, over the years, on a multitude of issues. One thing is clear: when the WEC disbanded in 1963, these women didn't give up the fight. They didn't stop fighting for public education. They didn't stop fighting for justice. They didn't stop fighting for dignity and civil rights for all Americans. And as we have seen today in the fighting spirit of Irene Samuel, they haven't stopped yet.

This list of 1,281 is more than a membership roster; it is an honor roll. And for the first time, we're learning far more than these women's names; we're hearing their stories -- stories of bravery in the face of bigotry, vigilance in the face of violence, triumph in the face of terror. In the struggle for open schools, the women of the WEC faced hate mail, harassment, police surveillance, bomb threats and death threats. At best, WEC members were treated as a "curiosity," like postwar, Southern Suffragettes in white gloves and hats. At worst, they were called "race-mixers," "Communists," and epithets too awful to repeat.

And yet the members of the WEC endured it all -- proudly and willingly -- not just to open the schools, but to open them to everyone, white and black. And so, with a quiet and solemn dignity, they put on those white gloves and hats and made their way to the Committee's office, located in a member's home. Some members had babies in their arms; others, small children tugging at their skirts. And in this unlikely setting, they built a powerful grassroots movement -- a moderate coalition that dealt defeat to the segregationists on the Little Rock school board and helped save the jobs of teachers who favored integration.

Even when the WEC didn't win a battle, as Velma Powell said, "we got attention." I particularly enjoy the story of a popular radio call-in show that residents of Little Rock used to tune into after dinner. During the schools crisis, the airwaves were dominated by segregationists, who ranted and raved and just took over the program. One evening, though, the women of the WEC decided they had heard enough. They called the program themselves -- 65 of them, all at once, tying up the phone lines for the entire two-hour show. And since they couldn't talk about integration without getting cut off by the station, they talked about anything and everything else -- how to can peaches, how to plant gardenias, how to keep empty beer bottles off the highways -- anything to keep the segregationists off the air.

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Draft 10/07/98 7:30pm
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Thank you very much.

we can create world in which
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+ let us follow your ex, I know we will.
all Amers. w/ courage & w/ fortitude by...

As I have always come together

Few were household names, but they saw progress in their communities

heard these I in Ireland, where... I left

30 yrs

in Africa where homeless squatters,
mostly I, pooled resources +
built more than 100 homes +
community ctr -- paved roads,
left
squatters
behind I
had seen gr.
before - I America,

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

EMBATTLED LADIES OF L.R. Vivian Brewer

- Believed people are more alike than diff. (8)
"hatred is insanity"
- Hoped for, at best, 25 ♀ at 1st mtg. (9/16/58); got 58
- Succeeded in face of ^{death threats} bomb threats, hate mail,
surveillance, harassment, social + econ.
retaliation
- Members in + out of offices w/ kids tagging on skirts,
^{babies in arms}
juggling: pol. activism, secrecy, motherhood

Draft 10/07/98 5:30pm
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Thank you very much.

education →
this

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Remarks at Vital Voices Conference
Belfast, Northern Ireland
September 2, 1998

Thank you. Thank you very much, Fiona, for that introduction and even more for adding your vital voice to this conference. I'm sure if you need a note to be excused from school there's about a thousand of us that would sign it. I want to thank Sue Tibballs and Rosemary Farrendon and Inez McCormick, not only for what they have said here this afternoon, but for their commitment and dedication to the issues that bring all of us here to Belfast.

Lord Mayor and Minister McFaul; Assembly Members; Mrs. Trimble; Ambassador Lader; Consul General Fort; and from Dublin, Minister Wallace and Ambassador Kennedy-Smith; and conference participants and distinguished guests.

It is a great honor and a personal delight for me to be back in Belfast. I feel embraced by, and greeted by the sounds of so many women's vital voices. From the reports I have received while I was in Russia, and the ones I just heard, this conference has already succeeded in bringing people together and enabling them to share ideas, and plot together to make the hoped-for peace a reality. Like all successes, this one, of course, is the product of many hands.

I want to thank everyone associated with the planning and implementation. I particularly want to thank Theresa Law who has moderated this afternoon's session for her hard work. I want to thank Secretary of State Mo Mowlam, who brought to this task vision, dedication, and, according to my sources at Hillsborough Castle, her skills as a party host and dancer par excellence.

I also want to thank the new First Minister of the Assembly David Trimble and the Deputy First Minister Seamus Mallon. Not only for sponsoring and speaking at this conference on Monday, but for their leadership in making sure that the seeds of peace, once planted, can grow. I was pleased to learn that the first reception the Ministers held together was at Stormont in honor of the women delegates from this conference. And to Lord Mayor, the Belfast City Council and the entire city of Belfast, thank you for being such wonderful hosts.

As I arrived here a few minutes ago, I thought about how the River Lagan, which once carried people away from these shores, now brings them back to find the rebirth of Belfast symbolized by this stunning Waterfront. I have been privileged in a small way to witness this re-birth starting with my husband's visit in November of 1995, and my return here last October speaking at the University of Ulster and speaking here to a conference of young people. I have seen in the faces of men and women and boys and girls, a new openness, a new commitment, a new awareness of the road that has been traveled and the road that lies ahead.

I know also that the songs of U2 and the other great musicians have filled the Waterfront in recent months, celebrating the transition that is occurring. But I also believe that from workshops to speeches to quiet conversations, nothing can compare to the powerful voices heard

here over the last few days. Voices from every corner of Northern Ireland, the United States, England, Scotland, and Wales. From every tradition. From every sector of society. Every age. Women and men. All blending into a powerful chorus calling for women to become full participants in a secure and democratic Northern Ireland. A Northern Ireland that people have hoped for, lived for, died for, and yes, finally voted for. Tomorrow, my husband will come here to the Waterfront to address your new Assembly, and to congratulate the citizens of Northern Ireland for this hard-won peace that is yours.

The last few months have shown what people here have always known; the road to peace will never be easy. But the world has also seen how no fires, bombs or terrorists will ever turn you back. When my husband and I go to Omagh tomorrow, we will pay tribute to those who were murdered by the enemies of peace. They were mostly women and children. They were Catholic and Protestant, Union and Nationalist, young and old. They were people simply living their lives, working at a drapery store, hanging out with friends, buying school uniforms for their children.

The terrorists targeted the people of Northern Ireland and in response it was the people, all the people, who bravely stood side by side to say: hatred and violence will no longer have a place here. We have chosen ballots, not bombs; democracy, not division. We have resolved to live in peace and we will never go back. We will only move forward. And as you do, please know that America will stand with you.

How appropriate it is that this conference takes place the first week of school--not only because it's a time for new friends and new beginnings. But also because, ultimately, our children are the reason we are here. For 30 years parents dropped their children off for school - tucked in their shorts, kissed them goodbye, and dreamed of a time they could play outside free from violence. Dreamed of a time when their children's opportunities and destinies would never again be limited by their place of worship or political party or by whether they're a boy or a girl. Today, there is real hope in this dream, once expressed through poetry and protest, it will finally be a reality for children in Northern Ireland.

None of this would have been possible if it were not for the courage and strength of generations of women. Though they may have worshiped separately on Sundays, seven days a week, they all said a silent prayer for their husbands to return safely home. Seven days a week, they lived in fear that the unspeakable would happen, they would be forced to bury their own child. And yet, seven days a week, they carried on with hope and prayer that the future would be brighter, free of troubles and heartbreak.

Wives. Mothers. Sisters. Daughters. Few were household names. But, having seen their lives and communities torn apart by violence, women came together as women have always done--around kitchen tables, at the market, in gatherings like this. It was women whose whispers of "enough" became a torrent of voices that could no longer be ignored. If we listen carefully, their voices still echo through this room and lift up ours today.

If we listen, we can hear the voices of women who withstood jeers and threats, prejudice and

violence to make themselves heard in a political world once reserved primarily for men. We can hear the voices of women in Craigavon, who, instead of burrowing into their sorrow...used the power of the pen to heal by writing and sharing their poetry, short stories, essays, and plays. In one poem, Madge Steele writes about finding common ground:

Weave the threads of real friendship with the colors of your life,
Use the pattern of Peace and leave out the strife,
Thread the friends that are young along with the old,
And you'll find on your loom a fabric of Gold.

If we listen, we can hear the voices of those who helped weave this fabric of gold, grassroots activists like the late Joyce McCarten, who literally wove communities together through the Troubles. Three years ago, when I met Joyce at Ye Olde Lamplighter on Lower Ormeau Road, around a small wooden table we sipped tea and talked about what had brought these women together. How they realized that history and religion were keeping them apart even when they all wanted the same things: good jobs and good schools for their children. Streets you could walk down safely. Security and prosperity you could count on. A future you could believe in.

Hardly a radical agenda. But for this, Joyce was called a "trouble-maker." Well, she had another name for herself, and when she met me she proudly announced that she called herself a "Family Feminist" because saving families was the goal of all she did. I have met many family feminists around the world. In South Africa, Bosnia, Kazakhstan, China, Nicaragua, Brazil, Pakistan, and India. Places that are riven with strife, by disagreement, by conflict caused by racial, religious, and tribal differences. Yet, in the midst of even the worst of times, there are women like these who stand up and say: stop for a minute please, think about what is really important for us and our children.

I met such women at the Vital Voices Conference in Austria, inspired by Ambassador Swanee Hunt who is here with us today. I met them at the United Nations Conference in Beijing where I remembered clearly the banners that were created by women from every part of the world. They spread those banners across the Great Wall. Woven into them were the dreams of religions, and talked in different languages. But they spoke the same mother tongue--the language of freedom and hope.

And they sent a clear message. Economic progress depends on women's progress. Democratic progress depends on women's progress. Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights. And this conference is part of an ongoing glowing initiative that is making these points over and over again and in the process of transforming women's lives and societies.

What a better time to recommit ourselves to these basic truths than in this year of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We're not talking about paying lip service to the rights written down on a piece of paper and filed away. Rather, we're talking about how we treat each other at home and work, at church and school and in political assemblies: Are we valued? Do we have the food, health care, education, shelter, the income we need to survive and flourish? Do we have the opportunities to help us reach our God-given

potentials?

Now many of the women here in Northern Ireland and throughout the world with whom I have met know nothing of this Universal Declaration of Rights. But they know in their hearts and souls, that in spite of all they are told by culture and tradition, they are endowed with God-given rights, as surely as they were born into a human family. And the reason we want those rights is not merely to make a statement, or to be part of a political movement, but because we want to help create a better world, a world in which we can walk safely and we can live peacefully together with those who are like us and are unlike us, because we want our dignity and the dignity of all human beings respected.

In Beijing, I was particularly moved by the banner created by women of this island. On it, was a picture of a red-haired woman standing on top of the world. And since that day in 1995, it's amazing how far she has climbed in Northern Ireland alone.

Who would have thought the majority of women from both traditions would step forward and vote "yes" on a Peace Agreement? Who would have thought that when the first Assembly convenes, its seats will be filled with fourteen women? And who would have thought that the Agreement would demand a society that is truly inclusive? Not just all religions and political parties. But all women and men alike.

As my good friend, Secretary of State Albright likes to say, advancing the cause of women is not just the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do for any society. It was the smart thing for women to clear the path for reconciliation which brought us to this day. And it is the smart thing for women to play a central role in the reconstruction that will usher in a Northern Ireland that fulfills the promise of democracy, prosperity, and yes, peace, for all its citizens. Because as you well know, the Peace Agreement was the beginning, not the end.

What you have been doing here is thinking through in practical ways what must be done to fulfill the promise of peace. You know better than I, it will take far more discussions, conferences and reports. The hopes for peace will have to be translated into the hard work of practical action and political compromise, not only in the Assembly, but in every corner of society. So the real challenge of this conference starts as we leave. How will each of us work to fulfill the promise of peace? That, of course, will be up to the men and women of Northern Ireland to decide. But, based on what we know about the conditions that promote peace and prosperity, we, I think, can agree on basic goals: All people must have access to the tools of opportunity-good education, quality health care. Good jobs, loan, and credit. The kinds of opportunities that will give responsible people of whatever backgrounds the chance to move forward into the 21st century with confidence.

If we are to fulfill the promise of peace, we must translate into practical action what these goals mean. How do we, for example, have an education system that serves the needs of young people moving in a very different world, dominated by a global economy? How do we make available the kinds of credit that small business people need to build a thriving economy from the ground up in the most depressed area in Northern Ireland? How do we make sure that, loans and

microcredit financing are available? That the businesses, the government and particularly the banks here will meet the needs of people anxious to demonstrate that they can build economic opportunities for themselves?

If the promise of peace is to be fulfilled, then all people must be safe from violence. And in particular, all women must be safe from violence, whether it happens in their homes or on the streets. Domestic violence which breathes the conditions of violence and aggressiveness setting one person against another must be seen for what it is: a crime, not a family matter. If the promise of peace is to be fulfilled, then all women and men must feel free to make their voices heard through the ballot box and the soap box. There are many goals and you have discussed them all here at this conference.

Surely, these goals require a guarantee of equal opportunity and democracy and that is what you have chosen. But, as our country has learned, democracy is hard work. It is a never-ending struggle. You never get it right, there is no perfect democracy, and its success ultimately depends not just on laws and institutions, but on attitudes and values. On getting along with people with whom you have profound differences. On the lessons we taught children as they are tucked into bed at night.

If you just think about women and girls, what are some of those lessons we want women and girls here and throughout the world to be learning? We teach our girls that we value them, not for what they look like, but for what they think, feel, do and dream. Will our businesses do more to help women get child care and other tools they need to successfully balance work and family so that no women ever have to make the choice between the job they need to put food on the table and the time they must give to the children they love? When a woman speaks up in the home, or the community, or the Assembly, will she be listened to as carefully and respectfully as if she were a man? And, as women, will we finally respect each other's choices? Will we admit that there is no model for women today that is one size fits all? That we can choose full time work or full-time motherhood and home-making, or like most women, doing both at certain parts of our lives? And will we support the choices that each of us makes?

As you struggle both with issues unique in Northern Ireland and with ones experienced by women everywhere, I want you to know that the American government, the American people, and the larger worldwide community want to help you succeed.

What women have said over the last few days is they want the tools to lift up their voices and the lives of their families. And in this room are partners who want to help them do just that. We already heard from two, The Body Shop and the Ford Motor Company.

I want to applaud the more than \$2 million in partnerships committed to the outcomes of this conference. They come from all sectors of society and they are dedicated to diverse areas like political leadership and media training, mentoring and most importantly economic development. This is just the beginning.

We leave here today with a commitment from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Northern

Ireland Employment and Training Agency to improve women's access to jobs, child care, and training. We leave here with a commitment from the Institute of Directors to help women in middle management get the mentoring and training they need to succeed in European and world markets.

We leave here with commitments from corporations ranging from Xerox to MCI and from America Online to Marriott, which for example, will provide internships for young people in the tourism industry. And I have to say, as I flew from Moscow today, and was coming down to land over the landscape of Northern Ireland, I thought to myself, this is one of the most beautiful places of God's earth. A place that many people will want to come to visit and see for themselves. We leave here with commitments from the President and Secretary of State of the United States that our government will be vigorously engaged in turning the conference's partnership into results.

And we are encouraged to learn that our Northern Ireland partners are establishing a follow-up mechanism to carry this all forward.

As we leave here, let us pledge to each other that this is only the beginning. That, as the Peace Agreement is implemented, the voices we raised will never fade away. Instead, they will spread into every community, and as Inez reminded us they will be joined by many others who are not in this hall today.

Because, regardless of whether a man or a woman voted yes or no to the peace agreement now in a democracy, every single citizen has a role to play in fulfilling the promise of peace. It will take businesses and non-governmental organizations. Churches of every tradition inspiring us to use our faith as a source of strength and unity. It will take men of all ages, because this struggle can never and will never be won without them. It will take all of you here, the women of Northern Ireland speaking out whenever injustices arise, to point out opportunities to face up to challenges and to speak for those who are still voiceless.

It will take young people like Fiona. Just a month ago, I had the opportunity to meet Fiona and other young women and men who had come to Washington with Project Children and the Children's Friendship Project. Some of them are here today. One, Vicky Moore, interned in my office and stood in the Forum elections for her constituency.

Another, Janette Rooney stayed in our nation's capital for six weeks, learning about leadership, community service, and how to build the bridges of understanding between diverse communities. But on the day before Janette returned to her home in County Tyrone, the Omagh bomb went off. Several of her fellow students turned on CNN and saw their own friends being taken away to the hospital. One of Janette's best friends was killed.

When the director of the Children's Friendship Project called Janette at home a few days later to extend her condolences, Janette's mother mentioned how her daughter had just received an invitation to this Vital Voices Conference. How, during this time of suffering and unspeakable loss, this conference gave Janette something to look forward to. And how proud her mother was

that her daughter was part of the solution...part of the new generation...part of the future of Northern Ireland. For that is what you are helping to create.

Tomorrow, I will visit along with the Lord Mayor and others, one of the beautiful green spaces in Belfast. It is the kind of place my mother or father would want their children to be able to play freely. There's a new partnership being formed between an American partnership named KaBOOM! and PlayBoard, a Northern Ireland organization devoted to creating safe environments for children to play. They hope to create such an environment somewhere in Belfast.

And what they build won't be some adult's vision of what sparks a child's imagination. The children themselves will design this space. They will be the architects of their own environment, in a way that is a metaphor for what's happening in Northern Ireland, isn't it? All of you are now the architects of your new environment. You are ultimately those who will determine whether the children of Northern Ireland can play like children should-without respect to religion or politics, without stereotyping or name calling, without fear or violence. That is for me the ultimate dream I see in my mind's eye, as I land here in your airport, as I travel the streets, as I look into the faces of the people standing on the curbs waving at my car. I believe that will happen, and when it does we will think back to this conference and we will know that women's voices played a vital role in fulfilling this promise of peace for all citizen's of Northern Ireland-for men and women, boys and girls.

May God bless you in this important work and the future you build together.

Thank you very much

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
Remarks at John Eaton Elementary School
"Ireland Remarks Only"
Washington, D.C.
September 8, 1998

begin Ireland remarks

...And we just returned from Northern Ireland, and it was a stirring and very hopeful trip for my husband and me, to see what is happening as the people there move toward real peace. It too, is not an easy road to travel. But one of the things that struck me so forcefully, is that most of us, whether it is working toward peace, or working for better education, knows what must be done - it is just a question of whether we can put aside our differences to overcome the obstacles and get about the business of doing it. That is what our challenge is here today. Others face different challenges that are equally daunting in their eyes. But we can do this, and the district deserves no less. Thank you very much.

end Ireland remarks

Draft 10/07/98 9:30am

FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS AT 40th REUNION OF WOMEN'S EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS
October 8, 1998

Acknowledgments: Mayor Jim Dailey; Alma Williams; Sander Vanocur; Irene Samuel; former Sen. Pryor; former Gov. McMath; the family of Adolphine Fletcher Terry; the student body presidents from the 5 Little Rock public high schools

It is a tremendous honor to stand in the company of so many brave women, and to join you here at the site of their historic first meeting -- the home of Adolphine Fletcher Terry, "the First Lady of Little Rock." This is the place where it all began, four decades ago. I am thrilled to see that so many of you have made the journey back here, and that you've brought your families and friends.

Since March, when the membership roster of the Women's Emergency Committee was made public, I've been reading and re-reading the names. I've been amazed at how many of them are familiar to me, from my 20 years here in Little Rock, and how many of those names have faces and memories attached. I have worked with many of you, over the years, on a multitude of issues. One thing is clear: when the WEC disbanded in 1963, these women didn't give up the fight. They didn't stop fighting for public education. They didn't stop fighting for justice. They didn't stop fighting for dignity and civil rights for all Americans. And as we have seen today in the fighting spirit of Irene Samuel, they haven't stopped yet.

This list of 1,281 is more than a membership roster; it is an honor roll. And for the first time, we're learning far more than these women's names; we're hearing their stories -- stories of bravery in the face of bigotry, vigilance in the face of violence, triumph in the face of terror. In the struggle for open schools, the women of the WEC faced hate mail, harrassment, police surveillance, bomb threats and death threats. At best, WEC members were treated as a "curiosity," like postwar, Southern Suffragettes in white gloves and hats. At worst, they were called "race-mixers," "Communists," and epithets too awful to repeat.

And yet the members of the WEC endured it all -- proudly and willingly -- not just to open the schools, but to open them to everyone, white and black. And so, with a quiet and solemn dignity, they put on those white gloves and hats and made their way to the Committee's office, located in a member's home. Some members had babies in their arms; others, small children tugging at their skirts. And in this unlikely setting, they built a powerful grassroots movement -- a moderate coalition that dealt defeat to the segregationists on the Little Rock school board and helped save the jobs of teachers who favored integration.

The WEC didn't win every battle. Even so, as Velma Powell said, "we got attention." And that, in itself, could be a victory, as one story shows. Forty years ago, residents of Little Rock used to tune in their radios after dinner to a popular call-in show. The airwaves were

dominated by segregationists, who ranted and raved and just took over the program. One evening, though, the women of the WEC decided they had heard enough. They called the program themselves -- 65 of them, all at once, tying up the phone lines for the entire two-hour show. And since they couldn't talk about integration without getting cut off by the station, they talked about anything and everything else -- how to can peaches, how to plant gardenias, how to keep empty beer bottles off the highways -- anything to keep the segregationists off the air.

Even small triumphs like this one made a powerful statement. The WEC proved that a group of "Embattled Ladies" with grit and determination could come together, despite their differences, and stand up for what was right -- even during the most difficult of times. The WEC also built a lasting model of direct, grassroots political action. Their example energized women in Arkansas, drawing record numbers into politics and into new organizations that emulated the techniques of the WEC. When one state representative called these new women's groups "the worst ever to come before the legislature," that was a high compliment indeed. It meant that women had become dogged and determined lobbyists, a force to be reckoned with.

In the manuscript collection at the Arkansas History Commission, there is a WEC flyer from the height of the schools crisis. It says: "To get the best job, your child needs the best schools. Let's have the best schools for the most children -- free public schools." That simple message was at the heart of everything the WEC accomplished. It is one of their most important legacies, and a vision that my husband and I have worked to fulfill since he became President six years ago.

Public schools, after all, are the best investment we can make in our children, our nation, our future. As the WEC flyer made clear 40 years ago, nothing expands economic opportunity more than strengthening our public schools. Nothing will help us bridge our divisions and bind together our nation than strengthening our public schools. Nothing better affirms our bedrock belief that every child -- regardless of race, ethnicity, or income -- deserves the chance to share in America's promise by gaining a quality education. That is why this Administration is working to strengthen America's public schools: calling for smaller classes and 100,000 new teachers to fill them; for modernized, 21st Century schools, with every classroom connected to the Internet; for after-school and summer school programs to help students rise to higher academic standards.

Top-rate public schools are a top priority of the American people, and I hope they will be a top priority of this Congress in its final days and weeks before the election. Eight months ago, this administration sent Congress an education agenda that School is almost out of session on Capitol Hill, but there is still time for Congress to leave politics at the schoolhouse door and strengthen America's public schools.

Again, I urge all of you to follow the example set by the Women's Emergency Committee, and let your elected representatives know how important this issue is to you and your families. The best way to register that opinion is to vote this November. Your vote is as important to your children's quality of life as any other investment you make in their future. In a

few weeks, you will have the opportunity to register your vote, and I know you will make the most of it. And -- like the women of the WEC -- bring a friend to the polls. Bring all your friends.

[Conclusion: Belfast to Bosnia]

TAYLOR BRANCH

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

heart + soul + work + sweat &
backbone of mvt. men were spokespeople
esp. of bus boycott (incl. Rosa Parks)
their idea - in montgomery
org. response - all 9 of plaintiffs were ♀
[Rosa Parks Dorothy
Jane Nash + Septima Clark
citizenship sch.
- illiterate → learn math
by farm
reading - P.O.
- teach others
↓ Selma
voting rights
her idea
Voices of Hebrew prophets
harnessed to sensibilities of ♀
(let justice roll down
like waters)
Fanny
Lou Hamer
- make most
of citizenship
rights.
- make family
reach out of nation
Women's
Pol. Council?
123, 129, 132
prot. at AL state - the
cared about ed. leaders
w/o visible leadership
roles
but leaders in true
sense
line from these ♀ to Burma?
tribal violence into democracy
pol sagacity + courage

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

program

Draft to Janis

Deborah Mathis

- USA Today columnist (?) in Ak Gazette — strong supporter
- mother was member (?)

Daisy Bates (+ husband L.C. Bates)

- people think of her role in integrating CHS
- one of HRC's role models
 - stood up during hard times
- acknowledge her (she's in a home)
- newspaper had to close (Ak State Press)
- head of NAACP; JFH Admin.;
return to Ak
- ↓
pivotal
role as
only Af-Am
paper in Ak

Media covered — suffered — but lives on line
for seeming to perpetuate

Role that ♀ groups always played
Am in Ak? Who's active now?

Revised final 10/1/98 11:30 am
Paul Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON EDUCATION
EAST ROOM, WHITE HOUSE
October 1, 1998**

Acknowledgments: Sec. Riley; Sens. Daschle & Kennedy; Rep. Bonior; teacher Kathryn Scruggs, DC school super. Arlene Ackerman; AFT and NEA friends.

Yesterday, it was my privilege to announce to the American people that our nation has triumphed over an enormous challenge: The red ink of federal budget deficits has been replaced by the black ink of surplus. We have brought order to the fiscal house. Now, we must bring order to the schoolhouse. The same focus, the same energy, the same bipartisan determination that we used to eliminate the deficit must now be used to elevate our public schools. For the sake of our children, we must choose progress over partisanship.

Think of the challenges we have overcome in just the last six years when we put politics aside and focused on the issues that matter. We came together across party lines to pass historic crime, welfare, and budget measures that gave the citizens of this country the tools they needed to face these problems. The results speak for themselves: Rising wages and the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years...the lowest crime rate in 25 years...the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years...the lowest African American poverty rate since statistics have been kept; the lowest inflation in 32 years...and budget surpluses as far as the eye can see.

Now, the moment is right to put partisanship aside once again, for one day, in the name of our children. We must devote one day between now and the end of this congressional session to strengthening America's public schools. One day to debate and vote on a plan to provide America's public schools with the tools they need: 100,000 well-qualified new teachers to reduce class size....after school and summer school programs to help students meet higher academic standards...and modernized schools for the 21st century.

In recent days Congress has chosen progress over partisanship by passing a higher education bill that includes my initiatives on higher education. These initiatives will help millions of Americans receive the college education they need to compete in the global economy. We are blessed with the finest system of higher education in the world and I applaud Congress and Con. William Goodling for making it even better.

But our nation also needs and deserves the finest K-through-12 educational system in the world. Nothing we can do will more profoundly expand the circle of opportunity than strengthening our public schools. Nothing we can do will more directly enhance our economic competitiveness than strengthening our public schools. Nothing we can do will more assuredly bridge the divisions among our people and bind this nation together than strengthening our

public schools. Yet no issue has suffered more from misplaced priorities and partisan pursuits than our public schools.

Eight months ago I sent Congress an education agenda that I believe can dramatically improve public schools in America. It is an agenda that demands accountability from everyone involved in public schools--students, parents, teachers, administrators. It is an agenda that says to students, we expect you to meet high standards of discipline and academic achievement, but we will give you the help you need to meet those standards. It is an agenda that is, or should be, bipartisan in its appeal.

It is not too late to act. There is still time before the end of the legislative session for Congress to spend one day and cast one vote on a plan that would transform public education by doing three things.

First, the plan would help school districts hire 100,000 new teachers to reduce class sizes in the early grades--goals Sen. Patty Murray and Cong. Bill Clay have been fighting for. Small classes are one of the first things parents look for in a school, and the latest research shows that they are wise to do so.

Children who receive the individual attention they need in the early grades show permanent academic gains. Every child in America deserves a chance to make those gains, and in one day Congress can vote to make that happen.

Second, the plan would help build or modernize 5000 schools around the country--goals Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun and Cong. Charlie Rangel have been fighting for. The need is great. In fast-growing school districts kids are taught in trailers euphemistically known as "learning cottages." In older districts, children sit in magnificent old schools where chunks of plaster fall on their desks. That's wrong. We cannot ask students to show self-respect when their schools don't show self-respect.

Our plan will also help connect every school to the Internet by the year 2000 and train teachers to use the Internet. Every child in America deserves a school as modern as the world we live in, and in one day Congress can vote to make that happen.

Third, the plan would help students meet higher standards with after school and summer school programs and other targeted investments--investments Sen. Barbara Boxer and Cong. Nita Lowey have been fighting for.

I have seen the benefits of such investments with my own eyes. Last week I visited a school in Chicago where students no longer advance to the next grade unless they can pass tests to demonstrate that they have learned what they were supposed to learn. Students who have trouble passing those tests are offered academically-enriched summer school and after school programs, with three hot meals a day for students who need it. The result: test scores in Chicago

are up three years in a row.

Every school district in America can do what Chicago has done, and in one day Congress can vote to make that happen. Yet for partisan reasons, Congress has not even found time to send me an appropriations bill that invests in education. They must not go home until they do, and I know Sen. Tom Harkin and Cong. David Obey will insist they do.

Let me be clear: The men and women with me here today are ready to act now to strengthen our public schools. All they need is one day. One day to affirm the bedrock American value that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity, or income, deserves the chance share the bounty of this country's prosperity by gaining a first-class education.

One day to put in place a plan that will insure the future of that prosperity in a world economy driven by knowledge. One day to put aside partisanship and do the work that the American people elected us to do.

Thank you and God bless you.