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By Carl Anthony

INTRODUCTION OF MRS. CLINTON

She refused to talk to the press, said she was only the wife of the President, protected her only child, their daughter, from public exposure. And advised him to drop the atomic bomb. Her name was Bess Truman.

She always used her maiden name, refused to wear a wedding ring, worked full-time, managed the family's investments and declared that a day would come in America when husbands and wives would both work--and there would be no shame in a wife being the breadwinner. Who? Florence Kling Harding.

She believed that women should be provided with as thorough an education as men--were discriminated against by state and federal law--and would eventually organize to demand equality. More partisan than her husband, the *other* political party parodied her as *Mrs. President*. That was 197 years ago. It was Abigail Adams.

She made no apologies for advising her President on Cabinet appointments and dismissals. And when scandal threatened to engulf the Presidency, she worked behind-the-scenes to go public with everything--and move on. Remember Nancy Reagan?

She was appointed by the president to head an official task force, testified before Congress--and it took three long years of constant battles--but Rosalynn Carter saw her Mental Health Systems Act become law. Congress finally passed Ellen Wilson's Alley Dwelling Act--but only on the day she died. Sarah Polk, sought out for her own views by House and Senate leaders kept her office in the President's executive suite. Earning the highest level of education for a First Lady at that time, Lucy Hayes was hailed as a symbol of the new woman.

All of which proves one thing: intelligent and active First Ladies--besides Eleanor Roosevelt--are part of as rich and ancient an American tradition as July 4th. The current First Lady is not Eleanor Roosevelt incarnate or Abigail Adams or anyone else. She is--like all before--a distinct individual. She is Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Today it is swifter and slicker to sell something by labeling people with one characteristic, then forever typecast them in that caricature. If some other facet of who they really are emerges, but doesn't conform to that cliché, it is usually ignored. Everyone of us can be categorized by labels--race, religion, gender, income, education,

age, political affiliation, hair color--but everyone demands the right not to be reduced to a label. It is the unique combination of everyone's list of labels that shapes them as a distinct individual.

Hillary Clinton has many labels: "Midwestern, born after World War II, college-educated, traditional Methodist, wife and mother, lawyer, public interest advocate, hostess and cookie-baker, only daughter, eldest child, blonde." And it takes less effort to reduce her, uncomplicated, by one or another label--but never all of them at the same time. In most cases, the exploitation of her as a symbol--by syncophants and hatemongers alike--not only distorts but obliterates who she is as a full person.

While she's followed precedents set by her predecessors, there truly has never before been a President's Spouse with Mrs. Clinton's background and experiences.

She is the first of First Ladies born in that new generation who did not know Franklin Roosevelt as president. Remember: the gap between her and youngest of her predecessors at the time of the Clinton Inaugural--Jacqueline Onassis--was 17 years.

She was born in Illinois in 1947, daughter of a conservative Republican self-employed businessman, raised in a home where the names Roosevelt and Kennedy were not beloved--as she recalls in this month's *American Heritage*. Her father's influence on her was strong, and in high school in 1964, she was a Goldwater Girl, supporting the conservative presidential candidate who ran against LBJ. Although she did change political parties, it was the beginning of her political activism. (SLIDE #1)

Religion also influenced her. Raised to believe that her social responsibility lay not only within her family circle but the larger family--her community--she was guided by her Methodist youth counselor to help the disadvantaged--from inner-city Chicago children or those of Mexican migrant workers. As part of her youth group she heard Martin Luther King speak. His 1968 assassination, said a friend of Hillary's "more than anything, firmed her resolve to do her utmost to stop injustice." (SLIDE #2)

She excelled not only in school, but was active in student government, coming of age at a time when young women were encouraged to pursue the more available choices to them. She graduated from Wellesley in 1968 as valedictorian, delivering a speech which landed her in *Life* magazine. At the age of 18 years old, Miss Rodham was a public figure in her own right. (SLIDE #3)

The first First Lady to have also earned a graduate degree, she attended Yale Law School, where she met her future husband. After marrying Bill Clinton and moving to Arkansas she taught law at the state university. As he pursued a political career, she not only played the traditional role of political wife in his campaigns for Attorney-General and later Governor, but pursued her professional career in law. (SLIDE #4) As the Governor's wife, from 1979 to 1981 and then again from 1983 to 1993, she assumed multiple tasks--chair of the Education Standards Committee, a founder of the Arkansas Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, chair of the Children's Defense Fund, full-time hostess in the traditional role of Arkansas First Lady and--as of 1980, mother to Chelsea Victoria. (SLIDE #5)

Her years as First Lady of Arkansas served her well when she became First Lady of the United States in 1993 and chose to continue playing a variety of public roles. Within three weeks of the Inaugural, President Clinton asked her to head his Health Care Task Force to draft health care reform in the tradition of Rosalynn Carter, Lady Bird Johnson and Eleanor Roosevelt. The First Lady became a familiar sight on Capitol Hill. (SLIDE #6) and while improvement of the situation did n't immediately emerge from Congress, Hillary Clinton inaugurated the first full national dialogue on the complex problem in American history. And she continues-- like Lou Hoover, Edith Wilson, Mary Lincoln, among others--to serve as an informal sounding board to her husband. (SLIDE #7) Hillary Clinton has continued the public traditional role begun by Dolley Madison--from christening ships to cutting ribbons to greeting groups in the White House, to travelling with the President, to planning menus, entertainment and all social events. (SLIDE #8) And--like Edith Roosevelt and Lucretia Garfield--she has fiercely guarded time for her teenage daughter in the White House--and sought to protect her from the media's glare. (SLIDE #9)

Two of the many labels that can be applied to the First Lady are illustrated in tonight's film clips. The first shows her opening Congressional testimony on health care, the second, her press remarks on planning the recent state dinner for Nelson Mandela. (FILM CLIPS)

Advocate, advisor, hostess, mother? She can be described by any label to serve any purpose. Perhaps the wisdom of her predecessor is best remembered. After trying to define herself as a social liberal but fiscal conservative, Barbara Bush finally declared, "Labels are for soupcans., not for people." Permit her to speak for herself. Join me in welcoming First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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