

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH GLORIA STEINEM

SUBJECT: STILL TO COME: THE UNFINISHED AND THE UNIMAGINED

MODERATOR: ANGELA GREILING KEANE, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

LOCATION: NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BALLROOM, WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME: 12:30 P.M. EDT

DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2013

(C) COPYRIGHT 2008, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, 529 14TH STREET, WASHINGTON, DC - 20045, USA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ANY REPRODUCTION, REDISTRIBUTION OR RETRANSMISSION IS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED.

UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION, REDISTRIBUTION OR RETRANSMISSION CONSTITUTES A MISAPPROPRIATION UNDER APPLICABLE UNFAIR COMPETITION LAW, AND THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB RESERVES THE RIGHT TO PURSUE ALL REMEDIES AVAILABLE TO IT IN RESPECT TO SUCH MISAPPROPRIATION.

FOR INFORMATION ON BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB, PLEASE CALL 202-662-7505.

ANGELA GREILING KEANE: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Angela Greiling Keane. I'm a reporter for Bloomberg News and the 106th president of the National Press Club. (Applause) We are the world's leading professional organization for journalists committed to our profession's future through our programming with events such as this while fostering a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at www.press.org. To donate to programs offered to the public through our National Press Club Journalism Institute, please visit Press.org/institute.

On behalf of our members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speaker today and those of you in the audience. Our head table includes guests of our speaker as well as working journalists who are Club members. And if you hear applause in our audience, I'd note that members of the general public are also attending, so it's not necessarily evidence of a lack of journalistic objectivity. (Laughter)

I'd also like to welcome our C-SPAN and Public Radio audiences. You can follow the action today on Twitter today using the hashtag NPCLunch. After our guest's speech concludes, we'll have a question and answer period. I will ask as many questions as time permits. Now it's time to introduce our head table guests. I'd ask each of you to stand briefly as your name is announced.

From your right, Richard Strauss, CEO, Strauss Media Strategies, and former White House radio director; Barbara Cochran, head of the National Press Club Journalism Institute and the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Journalism at the

University of Missouri; Yolanda Caraway, CEO of the Caraway Group and former Deputy Chair of the Democratic National Committee; Kathy Spillar, Executive Vice President of the Feminist Majority Foundation, and executive editor of *Ms. Magazine*; Jamila Bey, host of Sex, Politics and Religion Hour radio show, and a blogger for the *Washington Post* blog, She The People; Ellie Smeal, President of the Feminist Majority Foundation and publisher of *Ms. Magazine*; Alison Fitzgerald, finance and investigative reporter at the Center for Public Integrity and Chairwoman of the National Press Club Speakers Committee.

Skipping over our speaker for just a moment, Nyree Wright, Senior Vice President of MSL Group and the Speakers Committee member who organized today's lunch, thank you for that; Beverly Guy-Shefftal, Ph.D. from Spelman College and the founding director of the Women's Research and Resource Center, and the Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women Studies; Nikki Schwab, associate editor of Washington Whispers at *U.S. News and World Report*; Jennifer Sargent, a freelance magazine writer and former Chairwoman of the National Press Club Board of Governors; and Deborah Silimeo, Executive Vice President of Hager Sharp Inc. (Applause)

It's not often that one person can define an era. Our guest today had already made it as a high powered woman in a man's world when she discovered that world was far too narrow to accommodate her. Gloria Steinem is the face of the feminist movement and was dubbed "the leading icon of American feminism" by Joelle Attinger in *Time* magazine. She solidified her feminist legacy by co-founding *Ms. Magazine* in 1972. More than 40 years later, she is still a consulting editor to the magazine now published by the Feminist Majority Foundation.

Ms. Steinem celebrated the magazine's 40th anniversary right here at the National Press Club last year. She said then it was the right place to do it since she was also the first woman to appear as a National Press Club luncheon speaker after women were finally admitted to the club's membership in 1971. (Applause) She received a man's tie as a thank you. (Laughter)

She's in town this week to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama. (Applause) Ms. Steinem is a granddaughter of a suffragist and worked as a journalist in the 1960s after living here in Washington during high school and heading to Smith College, from which she graduated Phi Beta Kappa. After college, she spent two years in India on a Chester Bowles fellowship where she wrote for Indian publications and was influenced by Gandhi and activism. In 1968, she helped found *New York Magazine* where she was a political columnist and wrote feature articles.

As a young journalist, she also wrote for publications including *Esquire* and once hired on for a stunt as a Playboy bunny for an essay that was later made into a TV movie starring Kirstie Alley. She's helped found the Women's Action Alliance, the National Women's Political Caucus, and most recently the Women's Media Center. (Applause) Along the way, Ms. Steinem's been criticized as a threat to male privilege and even

knocked by fellow feminists when she wrote a self help book, and by some when she got married.

Today, she's a documentary producer, an author, as well as a regular on the speaking circuit and says the fight for equal rights for women is hardly won. Not only here in the U.S., but especially in developing countries. Today, she'll talk to us about big things left undone in a speech titled, "Still to come: the unfinished and the unimagined." Please help me give a warm National Press Club welcome to writer, author, lecturer, editor, feminist, Gloria Steinem. (Applause)

MS. STEINEM: First, I have to say what an incredible collection of talent and great hearts and great minds there are in this room. You have to promise me to meet each other. It drives an organizer crazy to see people who may not know each other. And as you have already heard, I get a big sense of history when I come back here including my own history. And I can just say that as the first woman speaker, I remember so clearly my knees knocking and my voice quaking and losing all my saliva. Does that happen to you when you get-- each tooth gets a little angora sweater because I was so aware of the responsibility. However, when they gave me a tie, I felt completely free to say outrageous things.

And since then, it's so great that we've had, what, 11 female presidents of this illustrious institution we had to picket to get into in the first place, and so many great women have joined great men in speaking here. And we did gather last year to celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Ms. Magazine* thanks to the Feminist Majority. And I just want to say a deep thank you to the Feminist Majority and to Ellie Smeal and to Kathy Spillar for carrying this forward.

And we have here the great-- you've heard we've got the great Beverly Guy-Shefftal, right, who's a great troublemaker. And Johnnetta Cole, educator and now-- what's your proper title at the Museum of African Art?

JOHNETTA COLE: Director.

MS. STEINEM: Director? Okay. (Laughter) And Alison Bernstein, who insists on calling herself Bernstein even though it makes me Steinem, who is a great educator and a great international activist. And there are just so many of you here. I just want to tantalize you to make sure you look around and see three or four people you don't know and you introduce yourself.

And it is a celebration of my inclusion among 15 people I greatly admire who are being presented with the Medal of Freedom by President Obama. There's no president in history from whose hand I would be more honored to receive this medal. And, it gives me a chance to say here, I'm especially grateful for this lunch. Because actually, when we get the medal, we can't talk. (Laughter) I'm grateful to have the opportunity to say here that I would be crazy if I didn't understand that this was a medal for the entire women's movement. (Applause) It belongs to Shirley Chisholm and Bella Abzug and Patsy Mink.

In the future, it would be great for Robin Morgan, Susan Brown Levine-- I'm just lobbying a little bit here-- Joanne Edgar, Barbara Smith, Gloria Anzaldua. And so many more. And it has already honored Rosa Parks and Rachel Carson and Dorothy Hyde and Delores Huerta and my dear friend, chief of the Cherokee Nation, Wilma Mankiller, who I accompanied when she received her medal.

Now, of course, it's with all of that illustrious company I get uppity. I can remember that Dick Cheney received-- as did Henry Hyde, whose self-named amendment has hurt uncounted numbers of women, especially low income women, for the last 37 years and we're still counting, right? But, the power of this honor may be even more evident in the withholding than in the giving.

I was reminded by Ellen Chesler, biographer of Margaret Sanger, that President Lyndon Johnson, even as he signed the first federal and international family planning act into law, refused to bestow the Medal of Freedom on Sanger; he feared reprisal from the Catholic Church. Ellen told me that when she looked at Sanger's private history papers at Smith College, I'm proud to say the biggest archive of women's history, she found a poignant little handwritten note from Sanger asking that her body be buried here next to her husband, but that her heart be removed to Japan, the only country in the world that had ever bestowed a public honor on her.

So, I hope this is retroactive in honoring the work of Margaret Sanger. I hope she would celebrate this recognition, that reproductive freedom is a human right, at least as crucial as freedom of speech, and that no government should dictate whether or when we have children. (Applause) Whether we are male or female, the power of the state must stop at our skins.

She also might say that the backlash against reproductive freedom by a right wing extremist minority, especially in state legislatures they now unfairly control by redistricting, is proof of panic of their misogynist, racist and immigrant-fearing efforts to keep this country from becoming, as it is about to be, no longer a majority European American nation. It is becoming one that looks more like the world and better understands the world. So Sanger might say, as I do, that there is no president for the United States who is more responsible for understanding that representative freedom is a basic human right than President Obama.

However, there may be a movement problem with me as a recipient because of my age. I'm trying to absorb the fact that I'll be 80 next year. (Laughter) I plan to reach at least 100, but I am really worried-- I mean a little worried about mortality-- but I'm also worried that my age contributes to the current form of obstructionism, all the people who say that movements are over and use ridiculous terms like post-racist and post-feminist. Excuse me? Right.

I can testify personally that the very same people who were saying 40 years ago that feminism was unnatural and unnecessary are now saying, "Well, it used to be necessary, but it's not anymore." Just to name one parallel to show how ridiculous this is,

if it took more than a century for abolitionists and suffragists to gain legal and social identity as human beings for all women and men of color, now that we need legal and social equality and no power based on race or sex or ethnicity or class or sexuality, that's likely to take at least a century, too, don't you think? And we're only 40 years into it. Also, as original cultures say, as Wilma Mankiller always said, it takes four generations to heal one act of violence. So, truly, we are just beginning.

So, I would like to contribute a few examples of the adventures before us. And unlike David Letterman, I'm not going to try to put them in any kind of order because each one is crucial. And anyway, they're all just reminders for people in this room.

One; women's issues aren't separate from economic issues or vice versa. Paying women equally for comparable work done by men would be the biggest economic stimulus this country could possibly have. The Institute for Women's Policy Research tells us that paying women of all races equally to white men would put \$200 billion more into the economy every year and would be way more effective than propping up banks and Wall Street because this money would get spent, not put into Swiss bank accounts. It would create jobs and help the poorest kids who are those who depend on a mother's income.

But do we hear economic stimulus and equal pay in the same sentence? No, I don't think so. And after we do that, we also need to value care giving work, care giving work, which is a third of the productive work in this nation at replacement value and make that sum tax deductible if we pay taxes, and tax refundable if we don't. We could do that.

Two, a woman's ability to decide whether and when to have a child is not a social issue. It is a human right. It is the biggest indicator of whether she is educated or not, can work outside the home or not, is healthy or not and how long she lives. This country has the highest rate of unplanned pregnancies, teenage pregnancies and medically complicated births in the developed world. It also has the least sex education which allows web pornography to pretend to be sex education. Though its truth is present in the world; porne means female slaves. Erotica, eros, means love, mutual pleasure and free choice. We've shown as a movement that rape is not sex, it's violence. We haven't yet been successful in showing that pornography is very far from erotica.

Three, well three relates to two and one because women with children are less likely to get hired or paid well while men with children are more likely to get hired or paid well. This is just the tip of the iceberg; nothing else is going to work in a deep sense until men raise children as much as women do. Deep, right?

Children will keep on libeling men by thinking they can't be loving and nurturing, and they can just as well as women. And libeling women by thinking they have to be loving and nurturing. This is huge. Read *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* by Dorothy Dinnerstein, a book long before its time. I think we're finally ready for her.

Four, the U.S. is the only modern democracy without some national system of childcare and now the average cost of childcare has surpassed the average cost of a college education.

Five, we're also the only advanced country that indentures our college students by saddling them with debt at the exact time they should be free to explore. And women pay the same tuition as men and get paid at least a million dollars less over their lifetimes to repay those loans. Which reminds me; much has been made of the fact that women outnumber men on college campuses. However, many are just trying to get out of the pink collar ghetto and into the white collar ghetto. Meanwhile, men in blue collar union jobs are earning more than the average college-educated woman. So no wonder men are choosing not to run up all that college debt.

Six, the digital divide is a pretty good proxy for power. For instance, more than 80 percent of internet users are in industrialized countries, and the fewest on any continent are in Africa. It tells us something here at home, too. Though men and women are only about 2 percent apart in computer user, 67 percent of white non-Hispanic households use the internet, while only 45 percent of black households have access. It is about power and it is serious and it is polarizing. So let's hear it for the librarians who are the only ones I know of systematically fighting to democratize computer use.

Seven, while we're celebrating marriage equality victories, right, let's not forget that 51 percent of us in the United States say "homosexuality should be accepted by society." That was the question in the public opinion poll. But 69 percent of people in Canada do. Are we not comparable at least to Canada? And 83 percent, 83 percent, of people in Germany do. On campuses, students still ask me why the same groups oppose, say, lesbians and birth control. (Laughter) I think many of us don't yet understand that the same groups oppose all forms of sexual expression that cannot end in conception. Sometimes, I fear that our opposition understands our shared interests better than we do.

Nine, do enough people understand that racism and sexism are intertwined and can only be uprooted together? Think about it. To maintain racial differences in the long run, you have to control reproduction, which means controlling the bodies of women. Those of the so-called superior group are often restricted, and those of the so-called inferior group are often exploited, but both suffer. This is true for sex and caste in India just as it is true for sex and race here. It is a universal, global truth that these two things can only be uprooted together. And still, I think our common adversaries sometimes know our common interests better than we do.

And ten, and here's a final shocker, just for anybody who says it's post anything, right? Violence against females in the world has reached such a peak due to some preference which produces some surplus in daughter deficit to such practices as SGM and sex trafficking to sexualize violence in war zones to child marriage and pregnancy, which is the biggest cause of teenage female deaths in the world. That for what may be the first time in human history, females are no longer half the human race. On this spaceship Earth, there are now 101.3 men per 100 women.

So, before we think of causes as distant, of that cause as distant, let me also remind you that even by FBI statistics, if you add up all the women in the United States who have been murdered by their husbands or boyfriends since 9/11 and then you add up all the Americans killed in 9/11 and in Iraq and in Afghanistan, and you combine all those numbers, more women have been killed by their husbands and boyfriends since 9/11 than all of those Americans who were murdered in 9/11 and Afghanistan and in Iraq.

We pay a lot of attention to foreign terrorism, but what about domestic terrorism? What about crimes in our houses, schools and movie theaters that are 99 percent committed by white, non-poor men with nothing to gain from their crimes, nothing to gain from their crimes, but who are addicted to what they got born into. They did not invent it, but they became addicted to the violence of masculinity and control. Those crimes, I think, we might refer to as supremacy crimes, which is their motive, and really think about the why of it and the cost of the falsely created ideas of gender.

But, here's the good news. Thanks to a landmark book I've been talking about to some of you for a year, at least, called *Sex and World Peace* by Valerie Hudson and other scholars, we now can prove with 100 countries that the biggest indicator of whether a country is violent within itself or will use military violence against another country, the biggest cause is not poverty or lack of natural resources or religion or even degree of democracy; it's violence against females. It is that that is experienced first and that that normalizes all other subject/object dominated/dominator conquering superior/inferior relationships.

And in my list, I haven't included everything you know. I mean, the Equal Rights Amendment? It still would be nice if we had the constitution, don't you think? CEDAW? (Applause) The fact that three-quarters of all immigrants now fighting a great battle in this town are women and children. I mean, you know all of those things. But those are ten I just picked arbitrarily, so I dare anybody to say that this revolution is over because now, we are onto the ways of denormalizing violence and dominance. We're understanding that we'll never have democratic countries unless we have democratic families. We're understanding that the idea of conquering nature in women is the problem, not the solution. We're returning to the original and natural paradigm of 95 percent of human history, which was the circle, not the pyramid, not the hierarchy.

As Bella Abzug would say, our movement came from a period of dependence, we were dependent, so we naturally had to get up there and become independent and self identified, and now we're ready for a declaration of interdependence, of interdependence, among our movements and with each other. We are discovering that we in this room, and everywhere else, and we in nature and we human beings are linked. We are not ranked.

So, moving forward if we just do it every day, is not rocket science and it's actually fun and it's infinitely interesting. Just for one simple example, those of us who are used to power need to listen as much as we talk. And those with less power may need to learn to talk as much as we listen, right? But in both cases, it's all about balance and

understanding that the end doesn't justify the means; the means are the ends. The means become the ends.

So, if we want, at the end of our revolution, not that there is an end, but in our imaginable future progress, if we want to have dancing and friendship and laughter and work we love in the future, we have to be sure to have some dancing and friendship and work that we love and laughter along the way. This is the small and the big of it. And we've just begun. (Applause)

MS. GREILING KEANE: Thank you. We're here at the National Press Club, so we'll start with a media question. How do you think the representation of women in the media has changed since you first got involved in the industry, and where do we still need to go?

MS. STEINEM: How long do we have?

MS. GREILING KEANE: We have a while.

MS. STEINEM: Well, it has changed. Because there are smart, competent journalists and all kinds of specialists on television that we didn't see before. I remember that the-- just to show you how bad it was, there was only one woman who did the weather and she was rising from her bed in a satin nightgown saying, "Well, it's going to be stormy tomorrow." You can't make this stuff up.

So we have progressed, but obviously women are still something like 15 years younger in order to be on camera, so just as you get experience, you're gone. And there are fewer and we're more diverse than we were, but not diverse enough. And think how important it is, think how important it is. I mean, who would have thought that a little girl named Oprah in the south would have looked at Barbara Walters and thought, "I can do that." You know, we need to see people who look like us.

So I would say we have token victories. We've realized the problem, and as the Women's Media Center always points out, part of it is not on camera, but a big part is who's making the decision about what story gets covered and that's more like 3 percent women who are in the clout positions. So I would say we've made symbolic victories, we know what's wrong, but we're not even halfway there.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Given how far we have to go, does calling attention to the disparities, both of women in the media as well as women sources, create change? And if not, how do you create change?

MS. STEINEM: No, it does create change because consciousness, as we all know, in every social change and revolution on earth, consciousness comes first, the understanding of what's wrong and what could be. And we, and I know other people here, the Women's Media Center, have SheSource so that there's endless lists of experts if you want to find somebody who is an expert in aeronautics who's a female human being. We

need those sources, we need to not just accuse the media, but help the media find other folks. And we ourselves need to do it. You know sometimes I think that men get up in the morning-- I mean, not the men here who are exempt from everything I say-- but get up in the morning and look in the mirror and say, "I see a public intellectual." But, women don't usually do that.

So we need to go to each other and say, "Hey, you're an authority on this," and then get training at the Women's Media Center, or somewhere, so you're comfortable on camera. I can tell you from calling people up to get on camera, it is harder to get women to do it because of our self image and because, of course, we think we have to do our hair and all those guys have a blue suit hanging in the closet and just put it on and go racing off. So there are both internal and external barriers.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Is it incumbent on journalists to seek out more women sources, or is it incumbent on women to empower themselves to be sources?

MS. STEINEM: You know, it's so interesting that anything that is only two choices is wrong. Have you ever noticed that? I think it comes from falsely dividing human nature into masculine and feminine and then everything is-- so, of course, we need both, we need both. But it gets to be ridiculous when you survey all the people who are writing about reproductive issues and 80 percent of them are guys without the organs they're writing about. So, this is not something-- you're not supposed to say the O word here?

So, the answer is that both are responsible. But I think that when we are looking at a story that arguably has more female experience or more experience from a particular racial or ethnic group, sexuality, we ought to understand that at least half of our sources, at least half of our sources, ought to have that kind of experience.

MS. GREILING KEANE: This questioner says she, maybe he, but probably she, saw you speak at the University of Utah in 1975. The questioner asks if you could go back and tell yourself to chill out about one issue, what would it be? And what one issue would you tell yourself to get more fired up about?

MS. STEINEM: Ah.

AUDIENCE: Hi.

MS. STEINEM: Hi. (Laughter) Well, I think that the issues that I should have been more chilled out about had to do with self criticism and it's still a problem, I think, for a lot of us because I walk around after I've spoken, I'm sure in Utah, thinking, you know, "and another thing," or, "I should have done." So I wish I didn't do that so much. To what I should have been more in an uproar about is monotheism and religion. Religion is too often politics you're not supposed to talk about. Spirituality is democratic and in each of us, it's a different story. But institutionalized monotheistic religion, if God looks like the ruling class, the ruling class is God, let's face it.

So, we have refrained from speaking about it in spite of all the history of, say, colonialism, where they were very clear, the Bible and the gun, that's how we're going to conquer. That's what conquered-- you have to take away people's feeling that there is something sacred within themselves, that there's authority within themselves and get them to submit to other authority. And not only for reward in this lifetime, but for life after death? Excuse me? Unprovable, so very usable. (Laughter)

No, I am much madder about that and wish I had talked about it there because I do remember that at the universities in Utah there was an enormously high rate of suicide because of the strictness about sexual expression, and so on. And still, I probably in my memory, maybe you can tell me, but I don't think I was saying this at the time.

MS. GREILING KEANE: What keeps you going? What keeps the fire burning, and have you ever wanted to just hang it up, and why didn't you?

MS. STEINEM: Well where would I hang it? (Laughter) No, first of all, people say to me, "Well, aren't you interested in something other than feminism?" And I always try to think if there's anything that wouldn't be transformed by looking at it as if everybody mattered, and so far I haven't been able to find anything. And also, it's so interesting, you know. It's like a big aha. You figure out what could be and it's just constantly, constantly interesting.

As to what keeps me going, it's you. I mean, it's our friends. We're communal animals, we cannot do it by ourselves. And I'm so lucky that because of the magazine and the movement and many other groups, I have a community. So, when I am feeling crazy and alone, I have people to turn to. And we cannot, we cannot, keep going without that.

Actually, sometimes people ask me what one thing would you like for the movement? And I always think a global AA, that's what I would like so that wherever we went, any place in the world, by a river, in the school basement, wherever, we would know that we could find a group that however different shared values and was free and leaderless and sat in a circle and talked, spoke their own stories and listened to each other stories and figured out that we are not crazy, the system is crazy, basically, and supported each other.

MS. GREILING KEANE: As you reflect back on the women's movement so far, what would you define as the seminal moment?

MS. STEINEM: Well, it would be an ovarian moment. (Laughter and Applause) I think each of us has a different one, probably. Each of us had a first, or maybe several, memorable ahas, "Oh, that's why." I was a journalist, worked freelancing in New York and even after we started *New York Magazine* I was the girl writer and the other guys, and they were very nice guys, Jimmy Breslin and Tom Wolfe, all these nice guys, would say to me, "You write like a man." And I would say, "Oh, thank you." And it wasn't until-- the experiences in my case, maybe yours, too, had to pile up before I saw the

pattern and then I had an epiphany which was related to my own experience, which maybe is true for each of us, which is that I covered a speak out about abortion and I realized that I had not told the truth about having an abortion myself at 22 and why not? And why? If one in three American women, approximately, has needed an abortion at some time in their life, why not? What was secret about it, you know?

And then as soon as I started to speak about it, then other-- I discovered it was often part of other people's experience, or their family's experience. I remember sitting in a taxi in Boston with Flo Kennedy, the great Flo Kennedy, and Flo had written a book called *Abortion Rap*, which was totally about this and we were talking about her book. And the old Irish woman taxi driver, very rare, probably, as a taxi driver, turned around to us and she said, "Honey, if men could get pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament." And that's where that came from. I didn't make that up. So, it's that experience, I think, of telling our own stories, of truth telling.

MS. GREILING KEANE: A couple of questioners ask whether 40 years after *Roe v. Wade* we are moving backwards rather than forwards on women's right to choose. One questioner asks what do you think about the fact that women in your home city of Toledo can no longer obtain an abortion without driving over an hour?

MS. STEINEM: Yes, we are moving backward, not in public opinion. You know, if you look at properly phrased who should make this decision, the government or the individual, overwhelming majority say it shouldn't be the government, it should be the individual and the physician. So, we're not moving backward in public opinion, but we are moving backward in-- as we can see, the anti-choice forces have not been too successful in Washington, so they've moved to state legislatures. Though they murdered abortion doctors and firebombed clinics. That has proven not to be as successful as what they're doing now, which is getting state legislatures to make impossible to fulfill rules for local clinics.

And the only way we can change this is to pay attention to our state legislatures. I believe that President Clinton just said this last week. If we don't want a divided Washington, then we have to vote as much in off year elections and for our state legislatures as we do in presidential elections. Because as long as some, many, state legislatures can-- they're in control of the insurance companies, the people who build prisons and then put people in them who don't deserve to be in prison. And then they redistrict in order to make that control permanent, which is why the House of Representatives is as it is and the Senate is not. You can redistrict a whole state, you can only--

So, our response has to be organizing and knowing who our state-- most Americans don't know who their state legislators are and that's why they are able to-- an anti-choice, right wing minority, is able to do this state by state. And it is very much about a backlash against the changes in this country. They're very clear, white women are not having enough children, they say to me, you know? And it's why the issues all go together.

So, the anti-immigration, anti-birth control, anti-abortion, and so on. So we have to take back our state legislatures.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Citing the example of working moms versus stay at home moms, a questioner asks what are your thoughts on the way women treat each other?

MS. STEINEM: Well, if we were ever asked a question that included men, we might give a better answer. I mean, do we ever ask men, "Can you have it all?" We need work patterns that allow everybody to work and also have a life and have kids if they want to, men too. The whole idea of stay at home moms and moms who-- the language is bananas. Women who work at home work harder than any other class of worker in the United States, longer hours, no pay. (Applause) So let's just never again say women who don't work, it's women who work at home or who also work at-- and let's always ask all those questions of men, too. It's just divisive, this can you have it all. I mean, not everybody even wants it all. And if you have to do it all, you can't have it all, obviously, whether you're a man or a woman.

MS. GREILING KEANE: You recently commented on Miley Cyrus's recent hypersexual public appearance. Can you expand on the issue of women using their sexuality to get ahead?

MS. STEINEM: Well, if you have a game in which-- okay, I believe that the Miss America contest, if you count up all the contests in each state and the national contest-- is still the single biggest source of scholarship money for women in the United States. This is crazy. But, if a handsomeness contest was the biggest source of scholarship money for guys, you can bet they would be there, you know?

So we play the game by the rules that exist, but we need to change the rules, obviously. So it's not that we aren't responsible for our actions, we are. If feminism stands for anything, it's that we are responsible for our actions. But we also need to look at the context. As Wilma always said, context is everything, and what choices are there? So if that's the way-- the game that exists, that's the game people will play.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Miley included or excluded, what is your message for today's young women?

MS. STEINEM: Well, my big serious message is don't listen to me. (Laughter) Listen to yourself. That's the whole idea. And the best thing I can do for young women, I think, is listen to them because you don't know you have something to say until somebody listens to you. And each of us has authority and unique talents inside us. So, people sometimes, often, ask me at this age, who am I passing the torch to? And I always say, first of all, I'm not giving up my torch, thank you very much. But, also, I'm using my torch to light other people's torches because the idea that there's one torch passer is part of the bonkers hierarchical idea and if we each have a torch, there's a lot more light.

So, lighting a young woman's torch often means listening to her and supporting what it is she wants to do, encouraging her.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Do kids today know enough about the feminist movement? And let's include boys in those kids. Should they know more, or is it a victory that it doesn't occur to many kids today that things may not be equal for girls?

MS. STEINEM: Well, it would be nice if they learned history, don't you think? If they don't learn the history of the women's movement, the civil rights movement-- I mean, you can seek it out now, that's a step forward. You can find those areas of study. But, the textbooks of Texas are a pretty good example of eliminating the history of social justice movements because, heaven forbid, we learn how it was done before, we might learn it again, do it again. So, again, I think it's the context that we need to look at rather than blaming the individual.

However, having said that, if you gave me a choice between knowing history and getting mad about the present, I would say get mad about the present. Even if you don't know history, just keep going. I didn't walk around saying thank you for the vote, I don't know about you. I got mad because of what was happening to me. And I don't think gratitude ever radicalized anybody. So, I hope I don't have to choose between knowing history and looking at unfairness in the present. But if I had to choose, I would choose getting mad about the present.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Is there any effort in the groups you're involved with to include more of the women's rights history in school curriculum?

MS. STEINEM: Is there any what?

MS. GREILING KEANE: Any effort to include more about women's rights history in school curriculums?

MS. STEINEM: Yes, absolutely. The feminist press was a pioneer, for instance, in integrating women's history into textbooks and creating those textbooks and there are a lot of schools, a lot of devoted teachers, a lot of school systems, a lot of educators, probably, in this audience who are trying to do this. But the average textbook is still pretty slender and you still-- you know, it's the politics of studying history. You still learn more about Europe than about Africa, in general. It is profoundly, profoundly political, the way we study history. And now we have pioneers and reformers and at least we know there is such a thing as women's history.

The most cheerful thing that happens to me is on campus when I'm complaining about my education where it was like one sentence that said women were given the vote in 19-- right? Somebody will stand up and say, "Well, why didn't you take women's studies if it's so great?" So, it is getting better but it's still not the norm.

MS. GREILING KEANE: You touched on caregivers a couple of times. This questioner asks women who are raising and supporting families often get the least spoils in terms of political capital in the U.S. What must happen so that women and the children they're raising are able to make gains politically?

MS. STEINEM: Well, it has to be said that the voting booth is the one place on earth where the single mom and the corporate executive are equal, where the very richest and very poorest are equal. So it does have to do with knowing what the issues are on our school boards or in our state legislatures and getting ourselves out there however difficult that may be. And it usually in my experience comes back to groups. Do you have a group with shared experience with whom you can talk and discover that it's not fair and that if you do X and Y and you start this particular campaign in your neighborhood or campaign for your school board, you need, I think, to have that shared experience.

And I, traveling around the country all the time as I do, I see mainly women's groups, sometimes men are part of it, too. But they have been together for 10 years, 20 years, 25 years. They're alternate families. They have seen each other through unequal education of their kids, through single motherhood, through divorce. I mean, we need these kinds of alternate families.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Questioner says women now make up 60 percent of college goers. Should this surpassing males be celebrated or is it a problem?

MS. STEINEM: Well, as I was saying--

MS. GREILING KEANE: Two questions, two choices.

MS. STEINEM: No, it's not necessarily a problem, but I think we ought to be able to look at all the alternatives. Maybe we're frustrated programmers and if we learn to code, we wouldn't have to go to college in quite the same way. I think we're still a bit a prisoner of the idea that a women should be able to go to work in nice clothing and clean and so on and shouldn't be under the sink fixing the plumbing that would make them three times more money.

So it's not that it's wrong, it's just that college has been so over-sold, so over-sold as a life changing mechanism. And especially when you end up in such huge debt. I just think people need to be able to look at a wider range of alternatives.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Questioner says for those of us wishing to earn a world class feminist education without life crushing debt, would you please share some resources?

MS. STEINEM: How long do we have? Actually, maybe we should do this as a group exercise. Everybody should pop up-- I've already given you *Sex and World Peace* by Valerie Hudson as a great resource, right? There's *Dark at the End of the Street* which

is a great retelling of the civil rights movement with more women's stories added. Let's tell our favorite books. Julie?

JULIE: The "Makers."

MS. STEINEM: Well, "Makers," oh yes, thank you, "Makers, yes. "Makers," a three hour television special on PBS now is also a website with about 200 interviews which is a huge, wonderful resource; a very, very important present and historical resource. What other favorite books do we have here, or favorite television--

AUDIENCE: *Words of Fire*.

MS. STEINEM: Pardon? *Words of Fire*, absolutely. *Words of Fire*, we happen to have the fiery people right here. Great, yes. Very, very important.

AUDIENCE: Stephanie Coontz's *The Way We Never Were*.

MS. STEINEM: Stephanie Coontz's *The Way We Never Were*. And I mentioned Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* earlier which was, I think, from the '70s or '80s, but really shows the degree to which the changeover to societies in which men were separated from children and didn't develop those parts of their humanity that come from raising children was part of creating the kind of hierarchy we're dealing with now. That women leave the home and leave childrearing and develop the rest of themselves, but not enough men enter child rearing in the home and develop the rest of themselves.

AUDIENCE: Belle Hook's *Feminism is for Everybody*.

MS. STEINEM: Yes, Belle Hook's *Feminism is for Everybody*. Yes, the great Belle Hooks. Yes?

AUDIENCE: *Ms. in the Classroom, Ms. Magazine in the Classroom*.

MS. STEINEM: Yes, *Ms. Magazine in the Classroom*, hello. What's wrong with us that we're not saying--? *Ms.* is in classrooms and a very important resource and it also is in women's prisons and a very important resource.

AUDIENCE: *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan.

MS. STEINEM: Betty Friedan, right, absolutely. A class is, obviously, especially for women who are in a traditional role.

AUDIENCE: The organization. It's like I'm in the Junior League, and that's fine. But I'd like to meet more likeminded women. I'd like to be involved in looking at what organizations, what kind of community building things that you guys all see or Rumsfeld.

MS. STEINEM: Well, just tell us where you live and we'll find you an organization. There's no shortage. And the Junior League also has become much more an agent of social change than it ever was when I was growing up.

MS. GREILING KEANE: I'm going to cut in for one more political question before we wrap it up.

MS. STEINEM: Wait, wait, Wilma Mankiller, we have to say that yes, Wilma Mankiller wrote a wonderful, wonderful book in which she interviewed about 15 women from Indian country and-- you know, thank you, Alison for saying that, because what you glimpse, as you do in various works by women from Indian country, is a crucial fact that we big time are not learning, even in women's history, which is that the suffrage movement, like the underground railway and so many things, was mainly a function of Indian country. And native women had, we would say, equal power, but they didn't see-- I mean, they got to be called a petticoat government, the Cherokee, for instance, because female elders had to sign the treaties or they weren't legal. Women controlled their own fertility. And the native women referred to European women as those who die in childbirth. They were appalled at these women who had come from the worst stage of patriarchy and couldn't decide when to have children and couldn't have them under their own conditions.

So, we're walking around on a history we don't know and there are many brave women in Indian country who are trying to bring it back. And there's a friend named Sally Roesche Wagner whose work you should look up as well, who has written a book called *Everything We Want Once Was Here*. And that's not only true of native cultures in this country, but also of the Khwe and the San in South Africa who will take you-- or in southern Africa, who will take you out into the desert with a digging stick and show you what they used for contraceptives and abortive agents and headaches and migraine headaches and so on. It's true of the Dalits of India, it's true of the original cultures of 95 percent of human history. So don't let anybody tell you that it's human nature that we live this way, no. It once was different and it still could be.

And the native women are very funny about it now because you have to have a sense of humor, given what they've gone through. What did Columbus call it? Primitive. Equal women. (Laughter)

MS. GREILING KEANE: We are almost out of time, we have one more question. Before that, just a couple of housekeeping matters. First of all, I'd like to remind you about our upcoming speakers. On December 3rd, we have the Honorable Juan Manuel Santos, the President of Colombia. On December 16th, Dan Akerson, the Chairman and CEO of General Motors. On December 19th, Ricky Skaggs, Grammy winner and bluegrass legend. And on January 15th, Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund.

And, before the last question, I'm very pleased to present our guest with the, for a long time now, traditional National Press Club coffee mug. I don't know when we abandoned the ties, but I'm pleased to give you a mug.

MS. STEINEM: Thank you. (Applause)

MS. GREILING KEANE: And, the last question: what did you do with that tie?

MS. STEINEM: I haven't the faintest idea, and I don't care. But wait a minute, I just have one more book that I-- there is a wonderful, small, well written, well researched, wonderful book called *Exterminate All the Brutes* which is a line from *Heart of Darkness*, actually, by Sven Lindqvist, who is luckily Swedish with that name. And it's about the invention of racism. It is a brilliant, brilliant book. Exactly why it was that Europeans having become overpopulated because they suppressed women and made women have babies and so on, he doesn't quite say that part as he should, but anyway, then in order to take over other people's land, invented the idea that those people were inferior. And it's a brilliant, brilliant, brilliant book.

And, you know, let's keep this going. Don't you love all this? So at your table, keep doing it. Keep handing around ideas.

MS. GREILING KEANE: Thank you, thank you for coming today. Thank you also. (Applause) Thank you to our National Press Club staff including our Journalism Institute and Broadcast Center for helping organize today's event. Finally, here's a reminder. You can find more information about the National Press Club online at www.press.org. Thank you, we are adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

END