

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the Vice President
(Austin, Texas)

REMARKS OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
AT THE
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE
LBJ MEMORIAL LIBRARY
(Austin, Texas)

AT 9:07 P.M. CST

Lady Bird, Mrs. Carpenter, "Cactus" Pryor, ladies:

Believe me, I haven't got that kind of a schedule. This is the most important thing I have got on my schedule.

I would like to say that I just stepped out of the Vice Presidency to get here. I don't want to stretch anything. But I am thrilled to be here and I am thrilled to be here first because Lady Bird asked me and I have a tremendous respect and admiration for her. And to me what she has done in her life personifies the very best of the things you are discussing here in the way of the role of women in public life. She was not elected to a public office as an individual. But she played a role in public life in the beautification of America that most elective officials would be envious were they able to achieve it.

I am thrilled to be here with her and with all of you and particularly in this building because I was a great admirer of her husband who made a major contribution to this country and there was no man who was more devoted to this great land and its people and who had a greater, more deeper sense of patriotism and love of America and of the American people and freedom.

As for Mrs. Carpenter -- well, you all know her. She has got to be the biggest operator that I know. When she gets going on something, I just say yes without even finding out what it was because I know I will end up with her on it whatever it is. That has nothing to do with party of course.

So I am thrilled to be here with you, Liz, and I wish I could have heard what "Cactus" has said already and I will hear some of his comments later.

I have to say that to give you in a sense my credentials, I started working for the first Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby. I was her Under Secretary. So that I know what women in public life can do and have done and are doing.

I would just like to say that the only amendment I might have made was to instead of Conference on Women in Public Life I would have called it "More Women in Public Life," as being essential to our country and its well being.

Working for Mrs. Hobby I had the opportunity to sense her awareness, her devotion to people, her sensitivity to all facets of the problems and her extraordinary counsel and advice to General Eisenhower in the wide range of fields which were elevated the field of human concern--to the highest level, which was the Cabinet,

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by the President and the Congress at that time.

Of course I have to say as one of those who goes over the list that Texas has been a leader among States in women in all walks of public life and played a major role in pioneering and demonstrating the capacities which we all know existed there, but which some of my group have not fully recognized if I may say the truth -- and I have to say, very frankly, that I think it is really because men have been afraid of women. I shouldn't say that, but I really think that is the truth. Maybe some of us still are and maybe they have good reason to be for that matter because they are afraid of competition and the best competition.

I was very fortunate. Governor Briscoe was on the plane. And I had the privilege of being Governor of another one of the 50 States for a period of years and had the privilege of working with a group of women in key positions in our State.

For instance, Ersa Poston was the President of the Civil Service Commission which had about 144,000 employees at that time. They were respected, admired and loved by all even though there was some skepticism when I first appointed them.

Our Secretary of State was Caroline Simon. She was followed by Carmin De Sapio, which gave quite an interesting contrast. So she lived in New York at that time and he was head of Tammany Hall and had been the previous Secretary of State under a previous administration.

Then we have a State University in New York as you do here with 72 campuses and 235,000 full-time students and Beth Moore was Chairman of the Board of the State University. Her brother was Henry Luce. She is one of the ablest women I know.

I would like to say that her leadership of a State University in New York has been one of the factors in bringing it to its present position of preeminence in the field of higher education.

Or the Office of the Aging, Marcelle Levy; or Solicitor General, Ruth Tock, and I would like to say that all of these people were appointed not because they were women, but because they were the outstanding candidates available to give leadership to have the kind of inspirational qualities that are essential in government if we are going to get the best from our people and if we are going to do the best job for our people.

So that to be here with you who are dedicated to the discussion of this very subject is a source of infinite satisfaction to me.

We had a women's unit in the Governor's Office and the head of that unit, I had the pleasure of seeing as I came in. And I would just like to say that she did an extraordinary job for me.

I also -- I guess it is well known -- supported both Federal and State equal rights amendments. Some of us have taken these things for granted for a long time and I think now the Nation as a whole is maturing to recognize that half of the great talent of this free land has been badly neglected and we have lost a great deal and that now we hope that we will make up for that lost time.

The Nation can't afford to waste the talent we have wasted. I think this is especially important in the field of elective office. I understand that the Governor of Connecticut is coming down tomorrow, Governor Grasso, to talk with you. I would just like to say I had the pleasure of sitting next to her at dinner.

I have not known her, but her perception, strength, courage is exemplary in that position of Governor of the neighbor State.

So for me this is a great pleasure and a great honor and I know that you have been discussing and that there have been quite a few important articles written about the possibilities of women candidates for President of the United States.

I would just like to say in ending, don't overlook the Vice Presidency. I know the situation. There is a spot available.

END

(AT 9:15 P.M. CST)