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## Van Nuys Rally Speech

Geraldine Ferraro

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Mary Maddy  
Howard Brown  
Tom Bule

VAN NUYS, CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 2, 1984

THANK YOU, LAURA, FOR THAT VERY KIND AND UNIQUE INTRODUCTION.

IN THE COURSE OF THIS CAMPAIGN, MANY PEOPLE HAVE PAID ME COMPLIMENTS. BUT THE HIGHEST PRAISE I HAVE RECEIVED COMES FROM MY FAMILY. I COULD NOT HAVE RUN THIS RACE WITHOUT THE LOVE AND SUPPORT OF MY THREE CHILDREN AND MY HUSBAND. AND I WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO THEM.

FOUR DAYS FROM NOW, WE HOLD AN ELECTION THAT WILL DECIDE OUR FUTURE NOT ONLY FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, BUT FOR THE REST OF THIS CENTURY AND BEYOND. //

IN FOUR DAYS, WE WILL DECIDE WHETHER THIS NATION WILL HONOR ITS COMMITMENT TO THE ELDERLY, OUR OWN PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS.

WE WILL DECIDE WHAT KIND OF SUPREME COURT WILL INTERPRET OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

WE WILL DECIDE WHETHER OUR CHILDREN WILL BREATHE CLEAN AIR AND PLAY IN BACKYARDS FREE FROM POISONS.

IN FOUR DAYS, IN PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION IN OUR LIFETIMES, WE WILL DECIDE WHETHER WE WILL FINALLY STEP OUT OF THE SHADOW OF NUCLEAR FEAR.

IN FOUR DAYS, WE WILL DECIDE ALL THESE THINGS AND MORE. I ASK YOU TO PULL THE LEVER FOR PEACE. VOTE FOR FREEDOM. VOTE FOR OUR PARENTS AND OUR CHILDREN. STAND UP IN THIS FIGHT OF THE CENTURY, AND VOTE FOR A BETTER FUTURE WITH WALTER MONDALE.

ONE PART OF THAT BETTER FUTURE WILL BE JUSTICE FOR WOMEN. AND THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY.

I AM SURE WE'RE GOING TO WIN THIS ELECTION. EVEN MORE IMPORTANT, I AM CONFIDENT THAT WALTER MONDALE AND I WILL FAITHFULLY SERVE ALL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE -- BECAUSE WHEN I TAKE MY OATH OF OFFICE, I WON'T BE UP THERE ALL BY MYSELF. STANDING RIGHT BESIDE ME, I WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT, THE ENCOURAGEMENT, AND THE WISDOM OF WOMEN ALL OVER AMERICA.

THAT HISTORIC MOMENT WILL BE A VICTORY FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO FOUGHT THE BATTLES OF THE PAST TO ENSURE THE OPPORTUNITIES OF TODAY.

FROM ABIGAIL ADAMS TO THE WOMEN OF SENECA FALLS, THIS MOMENT IS A TRIUMPH FOR ALL THOSE WHO STOOD UP FOR THE CAUSE OF EQUALITY THROUGH THE YEARS.

FROM HARRIET TUBMAN AND THE ABOLITIONISTS OF THE UNDERGROUND  
RAILROAD TO THE SUFFRAGISTS, THIS CAMPAIGN PROVES WHAT SUSAN B.  
ANTHONY ALWAYS KNEW: BECAUSE OUR CAUSE IS JUST, WE CANNOT FAIL.

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT THAT CAUSE IS.

THE ISSUE IS NOT ONLY EQUALITY. IT'S ALSO CHOICE.

I DON'T WANT ANYONE, ESPECIALLY NOT RONALD REAGAN, TO MAKE  
MY MOST IMPORTANT, PERSONAL CHOICES. I WANT TO MAKE THOSE  
CHOICES FOR MYSELF. THAT'S WHY I WANT WALTER MONDALE TO PICK THE  
NEXT SUPREME COURT, NOT JERRY FALWELL.

AND I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO MAKE THE OTHER IMPORTANT CHOICES  
IN MY LIFE. LOOK THROUGH THE AGES OF HISTORY, AND WHATEVER WOMEN  
WERE DOING, TOO OFTEN IT WAS NOT THEIR CHOICE TO DO IT.

IN SOME PERIODS, WOMEN STAYED AT HOME, NOT BECAUSE THEY  
WANTED TO, BUT BECAUSE THAT WAS WHERE THEY WERE TOLD THEY  
BELONGED. //

IN OTHER TIMES, THEY WORKED IN FACTORIES AND FIELDS, NOT  
BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO, BUT BECAUSE PROFESSIONS WERE NOT OPEN TO  
THEM.

NOW, WITH THE DAWN OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, THERE'S SOME  
CONFUSION ABOUT WOMEN'S PROPER ROLES IN SOCIETY. LET ME CLEAR UP  
THAT CONFUSION. WHAT WE'RE SAYING IS, THERE IS NO SINGLE PROPER  
ROLE FOR AMERICAN WOMEN. WE CAN DO ANYTHING. //

WE CAN WIN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALS AND COACH OUR DAUGHTERS'  
SOCCER TEAMS.

WE CAN WALK IN SPACE AND HELP OUR CHILDREN TAKE THEIR FIRST  
STEPS.

WE CAN NEGOTIATE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND MANAGE FAMILY BUDGETS.

WE CAN BE CORPORATE EXECUTIVES AND ALSO WIVES AND MOTHERS.

WE CAN BE DOCTORS AND ALSO BAKE COOKIES WITH OUR  
SIX-YEAR-OLD FUTURE SCIENTISTS.

THE CHOICES ARE UNLIMITED. WE CAN BE ALL THESE THINGS, BUT  
WE DON'T HAVE TO BE ANY OF THEM. //

WE DON'T HAVE TO BE SUPERWOMEN. FOR THE FIRST 14 YEARS OF  
MY MARRIED LIFE, I WORKED AT HOME AS A MOTHER AND WIFE. THAT WAS  
A FINE PROFESSION. THEN I DECIDED TO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME, AND  
THAT WAS ALSO THE RIGHT DECISION FOR ME. NOT EVERY WOMAN WOULD  
AGREE WITH THE DECISIONS I HAVE MADE. BUT THE POINT IS, YOU CAN  
MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS.

WOMEN CAN TAKE PRIDE IN WHATEVER THEY DO, WHETHER THEY WORK  
IN THE HOME OR IN A FACTORY OR IN AN OFFICE. OR IF THEY DON'T  
LIKE ANY OF THE OPTIONS ON EARTH, THEY CAN GO TO WORK IN OUTER  
SPACE, AND TAKE PRIDE IN THAT, TOO. //

THE POINT IS, THE TYRANNY OF EXPECTATIONS HAS ENDED. AND WE  
CAN BE WHATEVER WE WANT TO BE. //

AND WHATEVER THAT CHOICE IS, WE WANT TO BE JUDGED BY THE  
QUALITY OF OUR PRODUCTS. WE AREN'T WOMEN DOING MEN'S JOBS. //  
WE'RE WOMEN DOING WORK. //

WHEN I STARTED MY CAMPAIGN WALTER MONDALE SAID: "GERRY,  
JUST BE YOURSELF." HE HAS NEVER ASKED ME TO CHANGE MY STYLE. //  
AND, THANK GOODNESS, HE DIDN'T ASK ME TO BE LIKE GEORGE BUSH. //

IT'S A NEW WORLD FOR AMERICAN WOMEN. AND IT TOOK HARD WORK  
TO GET HERE.

WHEN WE GO TO THE POLLS NEXT TUESDAY, REMEMBER THAT ELEANOR  
ROOSEVELT WAS 36 BEFORE SHE WAS ALLOWED TO CAST HER FIRST VOTE. //  
WHAT A WASTE. SHE SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN BARRED FROM CHOOSING  
PUBLIC OFFICIALS. SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN ONE. //

WHEN YOU COLLECT YOUR NEXT -- OR YOUR FIRST -- PAYCHECK, //  
REMEMBER THAT ONLY TWENTY YEARS AGO EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK WAS  
NOT EVEN THE LAW OF THE LAND. //

WHEN WE CHEER OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS JOAN BENOIT AND VALERIE BRISCOE HOOKS, REMEMBER THAT 12 YEARS AGO, THERE WAS NO LAW GUARANTEEING WOMEN'S RIGHT TO COMPETE.

AND WHEN YOU BUY A CAR OR THE NEXT TIME YOU USE A CREDIT CARD, REMEMBER THAT ONLY 10 YEARS AGO, YOU WERE NOT ENTITLED TO CREDIT IN YOUR OWN NAME.

MY OWN LIFE HAS BEEN SHAPED BY THIS PROGRESS. WHEN I WAS ABOUT TO GO TO COLLEGE, MY UNCLE -- WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS -- SAID TO MY MOTHER: "DON'T BOTHER, ANTONETTA, SHE'S PRETTY, SHE'LL GET MARRIED."

THEN WHEN I APPLIED TO LAW SCHOOL, A UNIVERSITY OFFICIAL ASKED IF I WAS SERIOUS BECAUSE, AFTER ALL, I WAS TAKING A MAN'S PLACE.

HOW I'D LIKE TO SEE HIS FACE TODAY -- I KNOW HE'D BE PROUD OF ME. HE WOULD ALSO KNOW THAT THIS COUNTRY HAS CHANGED. AND WE'RE BETTER FOR IT.

BUT IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS, / THOSE WHO NEVER ACCEPTED THAT  
PROGRESS HAVE COME TO POWER. / THEY DISPUTE OUR RIGHT TO EQUAL  
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY / AND RIDICULE OUR QUEST FOR COMPARABLE  
PAY. / THEY WEAKEN SUPPORT FOR OUR FAMILIES WHILE PROFESSING TO  
STRENGTHEN THEM. / THEY HAVE CONDEMNED MILLIONS TO POVERTY. / THEY  
WOULD INTRUDE IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES. / AND THEY HAVE REVERSED  
FORTY YEARS OF REPUBLICAN SUPPORT FOR THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT. //

I SAY: WE ALREADY MADE OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
IN THIS COUNTRY. AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO GO BACK ON IT. / WE'VE  
CHOSEN THE PATH TO EQUALITY. / DON'T LET THEM TURN US AROUND. //

WE CANNOT GO BACKWARDS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH MORE  
TO BE DONE. / <sup>Congressman</sup> IN HEARINGS I CO-CHAIRLED TWO YEARS AGO, WE LEARNED  
THAT TREE TRIMMERS IN DENVER WERE PAID MORE THAN EMERGENCY ROOM  
NURSES, / AND DOG POUND ATTENDANTS WERE PAID MORE THAN CHILD CARE  
WORKERS. / NOW, I'M NOT RUNNING DOWN ANY WORKER, / BUT THE FACT IS,  
WOMEN ARE PAID LESS BECAUSE THEY ARE WOMEN. AND THAT'S WRONG.

AND I BELIEVE MOST MEN AGREE. / I'M NOT SPEAKING JUST TO  
WOMEN. / YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A WOMAN TO BE OFFENDED BY  
DISCRIMINATION. MOST MEN ARE TOO. / YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE POOR TO  
HATE POVERTY. / YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE BLACK, HISPANIC, OR ASIAN TO  
LOATHE BIGOTRY. / EVERY AMERICAN SHOULD, AND MOST AMERICANS DO.



EVERY FATHER IS DIMINISHED WHEN HIS DAUGHTER IS DENIED A  
FAIR CHANCE. / EVERY SON IS A VICTIM WHEN HIS MOTHER IS DENIED  
FAIR PAY. / AND WHEN WE LOWER BARRIERS, OPEN DOORS, AND FREE WOMEN  
TO REACH WHEREVER THEIR DREAMS WILL TAKE THEM / - OUR TALENTS ARE  
MULTIPLIED, / AND OUR COUNTRY IS STRONGER. /

THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS SAY, WOMEN'S ISSUES ARE AMERICA'S  
ISSUES. / AND AS AMERICAN WOMEN, / THE ISSUE WE CARE MOST ABOUT IS  
PEACE. TODAY THERE ARE TWO OVERRIDING OBSTACLES TO PRESERVING  
THE PEACE. FIRST, WE MUST STOP THIS INSANE ARMS RACE. / AND  
SECOND, WE NEED A PRESIDENT WHO KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING. //

LIKE EVERY MOTHER, I DID NOT RAISE MY SON OR DAUGHTER TO DIE  
IN AN UNDECLARED WAR, AGAINST AN UNNAMED ENEMY, FOR AN UNCERTAIN  
CAUSE.

THESE ARE THE CONCERNS WE HAVE AS WOMEN. / AND THIS ELECTION  
IS OUR CROSSROADS. / IN THIS CONTEST, / WE'RE DOING MORE THAN  
CHANGING ADMINISTRATIONS. / WE'RE CHOOSING BETWEEN JUSTICE AND  
INJUSTICE FOR AMERICAN WOMEN. / WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE, PICK A  
LEADER WHO WILL FIGHT BY OUR SIDE.

THAT'S THE KIND OF LEADER FRITZ MONDALE WILL BE. / YOU KNOW  
WHERE HE'S GOING BECAUSE YOU'VE SEEN WHERE HE'S BEEN. / NAME A  
DECENT CAUSE IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS AND HE WAS THERE, LEADING  
THE FIGHT. / HE WAS THE AUTHOR OF THE FAIR HOUSING ACT OF 1968. /  
HE WROTE THE LANDMARK CHILD CARE ACT IN THE EARLY 1970'S. / HE  
STOOD UP FOR MIGRANT WORKERS. / HE LED THE FIGHT FOR LEGAL  
SERVICES FOR THE POOR. /

SO WHEN WALTER MONDALE SAYS, / 'THE CAUSE OF AMERICA'S WOMEN  
IS THE CAUSE OF AMERICA ITSELF, / AND IT IS MY CAUSE AS WELL' / -- HE  
MEANS IT. / HE'S PROVED IT. / HE'S WITH US. //

AND DON'T FORGET, WHEN HE ASKED ME TO BE HIS RUNNING MATE,  
HE DID MORE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN A SINGLE DAY THAN RONALD  
REAGAN HAS DONE IN FOUR LONG YEARS.

THE FIGHT HE HAS WAGED IN HIS PUBLIC LIFE, / EVERY AMERICAN  
CAN ALSO WAGE IN HIS OR HER OWN PRIVATE LIFE. / THE FIGHT FOR  
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY NEVER ENDS. //

WHEN YOU MOVE AHEAD IN YOUR LIVES, / YOU MUST HAVE THE COURAGE  
TO SPEAK UP AGAINST DISCRIMINATION. /

WHEN YOU ARE FIGHTING TO REACH THE TOP, / YOU MUST HAVE THE  
COMMITMENT TO HELP OTHERS STARTING AT THE BOTTOM.

I THINK YOU WILL, AND LET ME TELL YOU WHY.

SINCE I WAS NOMINATED, WHAT I HAVE SEEN AND HEARD AS I TRAVEL ACROSS AMERICA MOVES ME DEEPLY.

WHEN I HAVE SEEN THE PROUD FACES OF FATHERS HOLDING THEIR DAUGHTERS HIGH ABOVE THE CROWD, I KNOW THEY HAVE BEGUN TO DREAM THE SAME DREAM FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS THAT THEY HAVE FOR THEIR SONS.

WHEN I SEE WAITRESSES WHO HAVE NEVER BEFORE CONTRIBUTED TO A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, GIVE \$65, WHICH THEY CAN'T REALLY AFFORD, TO MONDALE-FERRARO, I KNOW THAT PEOPLE HAVE FOUND NEW HOPE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE.

AN 80-YEAR-OLD WOMAN CAME UP TO ME NOT LONG AGO AND SAID, "I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THIS DAY."

A FEW DAYS LATER, AFTER I TOLD THAT STORY AT A FUNDRAISER IN ST. PAUL, AN ELDERLY WOMAN WITH A WALKER MOTIONED ME OVER, AND SAID, "DO YOU KNOW THAT STORY ABOUT THE 80-YEAR-OLD WOMAN? WELL, I'M 91, AND I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LIVE TO SEE THIS DAY EITHER."

A YOUNG MOTHER OF TWINS WROTE ME A LETTER WHEN SHE HEARD THE NEWS THAT I WAS CHOSEN TO BE THE NOMINEE. / I'D LIKE TO READ PART OF IT TO YOU. / HERE'S WHAT SHE WROTE: / "I RAN INTO THE BEDROOM TO SEE IF THEY WERE STILL AWAKE SO I COULD TELL THEM. / THEY ARE FOUR YEARS OLD AND TOOK THE NEWS CASUALLY, SINCE THEY DON'T KNOW YET THAT THIS IS AN HISTORIC FIRST. IT MEANS MORE TO ME THAN I CAN EVER EXPRESS THAT THE CHILDHOOD LESSONS THEY LEARN WILL INCLUDE YOUR NAME." //

WHAT THESE PEOPLE ARE TELLING ME IS THAT MY CANDIDACY IS NOT JUST FOR ME. / IT'S FOR EVERYONE. / IT'S NOT JUST A SYMBOL: / IT'S A BREAKTHROUGH. / IT'S NOT JUST A STATEMENT: / IT'S A BOND BETWEEN WOMEN ALL OVER AMERICA. //

AND I THINK IT'S EVEN MORE THAN THAT. / IT'S ABOUT OPPORTUNITY. / IT'S ABOUT <sup>a little</sup> ~~THE~~ YOUNG BLACK GIRL I MET AT A CLEVELAND DAY CARE CENTER. / I SAID TO HER, / "GUESS WHAT. / SOMEDAY YOU CAN BE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES." //

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? / NOW SHE CAN. //

ABOVE ALL, MY CANDIDACY SAYS, / AMERICA BELIEVES IN EQUALITY, / AND THE TIME FOR EQUALITY IS NOW. //

WE'RE GOING TO WIN THIS ELECTION, / AND WITH THAT VICTORY,  
WE'RE GOING TO PROVE THAT AMERICANS ARE NOT A SELFISH PEOPLE. / WE  
ARE A FAIR PEOPLE. / WE CHERISH OPPORTUNITY. / WE'RE GOING TO PROVE  
THAT THIS COUNTRY BELONGS TO ALL OF US. /

AND WE'RE GOING TO PROVE ONE MORE THING: / THE POLLS ARE  
WRONG. //

SOME PEOPLE SAY THIS ELECTION CANNOT BE WON. / I SAY, FOR THE  
CAUSE OF JUSTICE, / IT MUST BE WON. / WITH YOUR HARD WORK, IT CAN BE  
WON. / AND ON NEXT TUESDAY, / I SAY IT WILL BE WON. //

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

-- END --