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Women for Mondale/Ferraro Rally Speech: Version One

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WOMEN FOR MONDALE/FERRARO RALLY
HUNTER COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

September 24, 1984

I love New York. In fact, I can’t think of anywhere I’d rather be than New York...well, maybe, one place...the steps of the U.S. Capitol...on January 21, 1985.

Are we going to win this election? Are we going to send Ronald Reagan riding off into the sunset? You bet we are.

I’m thrilled to be at Hunter College tonight. And I want to say thanks to the people who brought us together...City Council President, Carol Bellamy...Bella Abzug, whom we all owe so much to, and all the members of the Board of Women for Mondale/Ferraro...Annette Hernandez, President of the Hunter College Democratic Club...and my close friend Donna Shalala. Long before Fritz Mondale and I began this campaign, Donna was there to help us.

Could women vote for a man who thinks our greatest contribution was getting the caveman to stand up straight?

Could you vote for an Administration that has pushed millions of women and children into poverty?
Could you vote for an Administration that has slashed student loans?

This morning, I had the honor to present some awards to a few of this nation's finest women athletes. It was an impressive gathering, and I was filled with pride to personally recognize their achievements.

But the most striking thing about our meeting was not the women at the podium -- but the high school athletes in the audience. It wasn't until Martina and Joan and I really looked at their faces that we saw the true measure of this nation's future. In the faces of those students we saw the hope of America.

I want those girls to grow up in an America where unequal treatment won't block their talent. Mr. Reagan congratulates female athletes, and at the same time sides with those who would discriminate against women in federally-funded programs. I, too, congratulate our athletes. But I don't want to just pat women on the back after they've crossed the finish line. I want to help them get to the starting blocks by outlawing discrimination across this nation.
When young people want to go to college, this Administration eliminates education assistance for children of survivors on Social Security. I say that if we want a competitive economy and a just society, we should make it easier, not harder, for young people to learn.

When women lose their spouses, they shouldn't also lose their incomes and their dignity. That's one of the reasons I wrote the Pension Reform Bill. And I'm glad Mr. Reagan had the sense to sign my bill into law -- even if he didn't invite me to the signing ceremony.

And when they go to work, I want them to get comparable pay. This Administration says it stands for equal pay for equal work. That's the law: they better stand for it. But Reagan's platform opposes pay comparability. It supports the gold standard for the economy and the double standard for women.

I say: we as a people should put our money where our mouth is. We all say we're for equal treatment. So let's go the next step and treat men and women as equals.
And when they grow old, I want them to feel truly secure. This Administration tried to take two and a quarter million elderly women off the Social Security minimum benefit. But we wouldn't let them. Of course, these Reagan deficits must come down -- but you don't do it by threatening older women living on $122 a month.

When I came to Washington in 1979, I was the first woman sent to Congress by the Borough of Queens. But I didn't come to Washington to represent the women of America. And tonight, I'm not just speaking to women.

You don't have to be female 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 educated to hate illiteracy. You don't have to be black to loathe bigotry. And you don't have to serve in the armed forces to love peace.

That issue -- the issue of peace -- unites all of us in this room.
Today in Central America we're militarizing a conflict that should be solved by peaceful means, and Americanizing a conflict that is primarily local. I say let's end the covert war in Nicaragua. I don't know how many of you have sons between the ages of 18 and 22. I do. My son John would be proud to defend this country. And I'd be proud, though worried, to have them do so.

I support a strong defense. A President must know where to use force, and when, but he must also know when not to use it. I say: let's understand the world before we arm it. And let's send in the diplomats before we send in the marines.

Above all, let's stop the nuclear arms race.

I want a President who calls on the Soviet leadership on his first day in office, not on the first day of his re-election campaign.

I want a President who will do everything possible to negotiate a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze.

Fritz Mondale will be that President. He will be a President who cares about women's issues because they are human issues. He will be a President who rolls up his sleeves, gets down to work, and shows us what a leader really is.
And I will be that kind of a leader, too. Because this candidacy is not just a symbol: it's a breakthrough. It's not just a statement: it's a bond between women all over America.

In St. Paul last week, a 91-year-old woman came up to me, hugged me and said: "I never thought it'd live to see this day."

When a 39-year-old mother of twins heard that I had been chosen our party's nominee, she rushed into her children's bedroom to see if they were still awake. Her four-year-olds took the news casually since -- and I quote -- "they don't know yet that this is an historic first. It means more to me," that woman wrote, "than I can ever express that the childhood lessons they learn will include your name." End quote.

And when six-year-old Jennifer Ingallinera heard of my selection, she sent our campaign some money. "I will send more soon," she promised. "Someday, I will be Vice President, too."

I can't tell you how much these letters means to me. I feel a tremendous responsibility to all Americans. I know it's time to preserve our children's future. I know that it's time to make our country not only proud, but just and fair again.
I want to be Vice President. With your help, I will realize that dream. But I also want to honor the trust people have placed in me. I want to prove that if we can do this, we can do anything.

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