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FEMINISM, FEMININITY, AND ARKANSAS FIRST LADIES: HILLARY RODHAM
CLINTON AND JANET MCCAIN HUCKABEE

By

SPENCER HURLBUT

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of
Arkansas Tech University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS in HISTORY
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Abstract

Through the 1970s and into the 2000s, Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee served as first ladies. Their husbands were elected and ran campaigns for Arkansas Governor and President of the United States. While the two men were the elected officials that constituents cast their votes for on election day, Hillary and Janet were beside the men playing a tremendous role in securing or discouraging votes. Third wave feminism ran rampant throughout these two decades and resulted in higher numbers of women in the workforce, later years of marriage, less children, and greater awareness of sexual harassment and sex discrimination. Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee served alongside their husbands on opposing ends of the political spectrum— Clinton, a registered Democrat and Huckabee, a registered Republican. The Clinton's and Huckabee's served as state leaders not only during a contested political party struggle, but during the height of what is referred to as "third-wave" feminism. Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee's presentation of feminism and femininity affected their husbands' public approval and dissent among Arkansan and later Americans at large. Each woman's response to the public scrutiny they received while serving as first ladies was also consequential. This thesis examines how the feminism and femininity of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee influenced their husbands' political campaigns, shaped their own political ambitions and responded to public scrutiny.

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The last person I want to acknowledge is my grandfather, Lewis Collins. He dedicated his life to public service as Chief of Police in Russellville, Arkansas throughout the 1960s. He aided in the formation of an ambulance system from Saint Mary's Hospital. He met and fixed Martin Luther King Jr.'s car when he broke down in Russellville. My grandfather was a self-identified yellow-dog Democrat who religiously watched the news. He would yell at the television calling a multitude of politicians "peckerwoods" and "nuttier than fruitcakes." My grandfather taught me how to think for myself and the importance of using my vote and my voice. When I was little, I wanted to be President of the United States. I did not understand the significance that a woman President would have. I did not understand that women as a whole were the minority in the United States government. My grandfather never doubted me or made me feel different because I was a woman. My interest in feminist history and political science stem from the lessons that my grandfather taught me. Ultimately, this paper is dedicated to him, because without him I would not be where I am today. I know he would be proud.

I. Introduction

Hillary Clinton became Arkansas' 40th first lady in 1979. She was not immediately reinstated due to the unsuccessful re-election bid of her husband, Bill Clinton, for Governor in November 1980. The Clintons resecured the first family positions in 1983 and remained there through 1992. Janet Huckabee became Arkansas' 44th first lady in 1996. She remained in this role until 2007 following two successful re-elections of her husband, Governor Mike Huckabee.¹ While both men went on to run for President of the United States following their governorships, only one secured victory. Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee served alongside their husbands on opposing ends of the political spectrum—Clinton, a registered Democrat and Huckabee, a registered Republican.²

An evolving political and social atmosphere in Arkansas is revealed in the alternating elections of Democratic and Republican governors from Bill Clinton's initial campaign and following Mike Huckabee's final term. Prior to this time the state of Arkansas was a primarily blue state. However, the election of Governor Winthrop Rockefeller marked a state level comeback for the Arkansas Republican Party in 1966. While Republicans did pose a challenge after the Rockefeller election, the Democrats remained powerful.³ The Clintons and Huckabees served as state leaders not only during a robust period of contest between political parties in Arkansas, but in the context of the height of what is referred to as "third-wave" feminism, a phase of women's activism and

¹ "Former Governors – Arkansas," National Governors Association, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.nga.org/former-governors/arkansas/>.

² "Also Rans: A Chronological List of Losing Presidential Candidates of the United States," The Library of Congress, last modified March 25, 2022, https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/060_ran_chron.html#5.

³ "States' Rights Democratic Party," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, CALS, last modified November 10, 2021, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/states-rights-democratic-party-596/>.

debate explored below.⁴ Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee's presentation of feminism and femininity affected their husbands' public approval among Arkansans and, later, Americans at large. Each woman's response to the public scrutiny they received while serving as first ladies was also consequential. This thesis examines how the feminism and femininity of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee influenced their husbands' political campaigns, shaped their own political ambitions, and informed their responses to public scrutiny.

Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee were criticized equally, if not more, than their husbands throughout their times as first ladies, reaching into their own attempts at personal political gain. As the third wave of feminism transpired throughout the United States, the Clintons and Huckabees experienced political gain. The growing feminist movement heightened awareness of societal focus on the role of women in the home, workforce, and, for Hillary and Janet, the role of a southern first lady. Both women lived highly publicized lives in which reporters and constituents scrutinized them for being too feminine, not feminine enough, too feminist, and not feminist enough. As a result, the public scrutiny placed on Hillary and Janet not only affected the two women but also figured into Bill and Mike's campaigns and ultimately their results.

Many scholars have written about gender and southern politics. Their contributions have been shaped by the emergence of gendered historical analysis that began in the latter half of the twentieth century. This turn is perhaps best represented by historian Joan W. Scott's, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," published in *The American Historical Review* in December 1986. Scott argued that analysis of gender should not only

⁴ R. Claire Snyder, "What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay," *Signs* 34, no. 1 (2008): 175–96, <https://doi.org/10.1086/588436>.

focus on biological sex, explaining that gender is socially constructed and based upon a variety of factors. Scott's most powerful point is that gender history is more than simply rewriting women back into men's history. Scott stresses that the variety of societal, political, and cultural factors relating to gender need also be examined in order to successfully write gendered history.⁵ *The American Historical Review* republished Scott's entry in 2008, extolling the work as canonical to historians.⁶

The attention to gender in southern political history has grown in the years since. For example, historian Lorraine Gates Schuyler showed that soon after the 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, southern women made their voices heard in state and local politics in her book *The Weight of Their Votes: Southern Women and Political Leverage in the 1920s*.⁷ A collection of essays edited by Jonathan Wells and Sheila Phipps (*Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South*) represent this flowering of gendered history with essays exploring southern women who claimed a more public role by the mid-20th century while keeping their attention both on society's gendered expectations as well as their own standards for what was appropriately feminine.⁸ Marjorie Spruill's *Divided We Stand* chronicles the roots of the late twentieth-century division of liberal and conservative women, in which southern women figure prominently.⁹ Most

⁵ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (1986): 1053–75, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1864376>.

⁶ "Introduction," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5, (December 2008): 1344–1345, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.113.5.1344>.

⁷ Lorraine Gates Schuyler, *The Weight of Their Votes: Southern Women and Political Leverage in the 1920s*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), <https://libcatalog.atu.edu:2104/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=203482&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁸ Jonathan Daniel Wells, and Sheila R. Phipps, *Entering the Fray: Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New South. Southern Women*, (Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri, 2010), <https://libcatalog.atu.edu:2104/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=326789&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

⁹ Marjorie Spruill, *Divided We Stand*, (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2017).

recently, Angie Maxwell and Todd Shields have explored how the Republican Party's Nixon-era "southern strategy" related to gender and anti-feminism in the South. While the picture of women, gender, and politics in the South has steadily become clearer, it is far from complete. An analysis of Clinton and Huckabee as first ladies can serve to clarify competing perceptions of femininity and feminism in Arkansas and the South.

Several works offer insight into the political scrutiny on the basis of sex that Hillary Clinton faced while serving as Arkansas First Lady, First Lady of the United States, and throughout her personal political achievements and failures. Secondary sources include Judith Warner's *Hillary Clinton: The Inside Story*, Carl Bernstein's *A Woman in Charge*, and Shawn J. Parry-Giles *Hillary Clinton in the News: Gender and Authenticity in American Politics*. Investigative reporter Judith Warner homes in on the development of Clinton from a teenager into womanhood in 1993. Warner presents Hillary as a key character in her husband's ability to become governor and later president. The cover of the book captures the image that Warner offers to readers of the "Lawyer, Activist, Mother, Political Wife, Feminist—and now First Lady."¹⁰ Unlike Warner, noted Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein presents Hillary's life in a manner for readers to question what they should expect from her as a political candidate in the 2008 Democratic primaries. In his extensive biography of Clinton published in 2007, Bernstein draws upon interviews with individuals who worked for the Clinton campaign, official campaign records, and Hillary's autobiography. Bernstein aims to paint Hillary's character, philosophy, and expectations as a political candidate as inauthentic based on her role prior role as first lady.¹¹ Shawn J.

¹⁰ Judith Warner, *Hillary Clinton the Inside Story*, (New York: Penguin Group, 1993).

¹¹ Carl Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge: The Life of Hillary Rodham Clinton* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008).

Parry-Giles' 2014 analysis of Hillary Clinton focuses on the transitional roles that she has held throughout her time in politics. Parry-Giles builds upon Bernstein's inauthenticity claim by studying televised interviews of Hillary from the early 1990s through 2013. Parry-Giles contends that "Clinton arguably was forced to overcome additional authenticity obstacles that male candidates typically have not had to endure. Clinton's news biography ultimately issued a tale of forewarning to other political women who consider stepping into such masculine political spaces." Parry-Giles concurs with Bernstein on the issue of authenticity by analyzing the unfair burden on Hillary Clinton as a woman. Rather than truly being inauthentic, Parry-Giles argues her sex caused her to struggle to be and show that she was authentic.¹²

Scholars have almost completely ignored Janet Huckabee. Diane D. Blair's 1988 *Arkansas Politics and Government* offered a comprehensive examination of the state. Nearly two decades later, Jay Barth revised the book to include the early twenty-first century. This second edition analyzes the emergence of the Huckabees, with some brief incorporation of Janet's role. Barth acknowledges that Janet Huckabee's secretary of state campaign hurt Mike Huckabee's 2002 re-election campaign. The book also credits Janet's appearance on the ballot to somewhat normalizing a subsequent female candidate—Jimmie Lou Fisher—who ran against Mike Huckabee. However, the mention of Janet Huckabee's impact on her husband's campaign and a feminist approach in pursuing her own political career are not analyzed further than this singular mention.

¹² Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *Hillary Clinton in the News* (University of Illinois Press, 2014), 23.

This thesis offers an original contribution to the extant works in three ways: 1. Previous works have failed to analyze the differences and similarities between Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee, 2. Previous works have failed to place emphasis on the socially constructed ideas associated with feminism and femininity alike when analyzing Hillary Clinton or Janet Huckabee's impact on the public's (dis)approval of their husbands, 3. Previous works have neglected the vital role of third-wave feminism during the political careers of both Hillary and Janet. This thesis fills the gap by relying on a variety of available primary sources. Many state and national newspapers, televised interviews, and manuscripts are available in relation to Hillary Clinton's life. For example, Wellesley College offers digitized copies of newspapers throughout Hillary's time in school. The school paper covers the involvement and leadership that Clinton developed in her young adult life. In Hillary Clinton's autobiography, *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Living History*, she recognizes the impact that her sex had on the public scrutiny she and Bill faced firsthand. Much less primary source material is available regarding Janet's life. Ouachita Baptist University offers digitized copies of student handbooks and yearbooks in the years prior to and during Janet Huckabee's attendance there. OBU primary sources reveal the Christian values that the Huckabees were exposed to interpreted by students. Several interviews and reports on Janet Huckabee throughout her first ladyship are found in the *Arkansas Times*. Mike Huckabee's books, *Character is the Issue* (published in 1997) and *From Hope to Higher Ground* (2007) also offer insight into the public scrutiny Janet weathered from the perspective of a spouse. The most extensive primary source, however, is the Janet Huckabee papers located at the Ouachita Baptist University archives. Her papers include

newspaper clippings, constituent correspondence, 2002 Secretary of State campaign plans, personal notes, memorabilia, and images from 1997 to 2008.

The historical record reveals several things about Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee's femininity and public approval in the context of third-wave feminism, as well as suggests the impact on their husbands' political success. While each woman demonstrated a strong-willed persona, Hillary Clinton was vocal in the second wave of feminism and Janet Huckabee was not. Clinton entered the Arkansas political arena with the remnants of her feminist activism open to the public. She kept her maiden name in marriage, continued to grow in her own career, and did not exhibit the feminine standard that Arkansas First Ladies before her had done. Public scrutiny of her radical feminism and lack of traditional Southern femininity proved contingent to Bill Clinton's constituent support in Arkansas.

Although Janet Huckabee did not take an active role in second wave feminism, her actions and persona demonstrated support of some third wave characteristics. She pursued higher education, challenged the bounds of femininity that Arkansans expected to govern a First Lady, and spoke out without remorse to her critics. She embraced her reputation as rustic, valuing the natural resources that Arkansas had to offer and prioritizing environmental activism. Janet battled the classist critiques of women of the Little Rock elite who found her lacking in feminine graces. Because Arkansans so firmly associated Janet Huckabee with the domestic realm, any furniture that was moved, décor updated, or staff fired at the Governor's mansion resulted in direct criticism of her ability to manage a household. Janet's outspoken responses to her critics, much like Hillary Clinton, proved contingent to Mike Huckabee's political constituency in Arkansas.

Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee's personal forms of feminism and femininity affected their husband's political fortunes. Both women faced scrutiny from Arkansas as well as national media and voters for failing to uphold certain gender norms and both women ultimately endured pressure to adjust their supposedly masculine identities to bolster their husband's political careers. While these two women were opposed on multiple political issues and sometimes reacted differently to political realities, they shared the experience of criticism during their husband's political campaigns for not conforming to societal norms constructed for their sex.

This thesis begins with a brief summary of the three waves of feminism with particular emphasis of the key goals of the third wave. It also explores the concept of femininity, a broad topic with societal variables that make it difficult to pin down. In short, femininity, in regard to this thesis, refers to physical and nonphysical attributes related to women. To further examine the attributes of femininity at the time of third wave feminism, this thesis examines the work of third wave feminists and scholars' analysis. The third section of this thesis provides a background narrative of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee. Their early family life, education, and work shape the manners in which each woman approached feminism, femininity, and public scrutiny later in life. The fourth and fifth sections analyze of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee, respectively, from each woman's first state inauguration to her first presidential campaign trail. Due to the prominence of information and research currently existing for Hillary Clinton, Janet Huckabee is examined more deeply to gain greater understanding and offer a new contribution to existing historiography. The thesis concludes with a comparison of Hillary's and Janet's experiences. The two women differ greatly in several ways, though

they shared the experience of harsh public scrutiny in Arkansas and beyond. The starkest difference is revealed in how each woman responds to the public scrutiny and the impact that their actions have on their husband's constituent support.

II. Feminism and Femininity

What it means to be a woman in the United States, the South, and Arkansas has changed drastically in the past two hundred years. The socially constructed normalcies of womanhood have been hotly contested and often engineered by white men for much of American history. Among other things, women suffered exclusion from educational opportunities, the military, all levels of elections, the workforce, and the ability to thrive financially independent from their husband or father. Women of color and of the LGBTQ+ community endured compounded discrimination and oppression. Each wave of feminism charges forward to fight for equality of the sexes. However, in doing so, some women are excluded from the mix and others do not want change. When societal normalcies of a woman's place are challenged, the perception of what a woman's outward appearance should be challenged as well. While some changes are chalked up to trends in fashion and hairstyles, others are used to challenge the norms placed on the idealistic housewife or the modesty of a woman.¹³

Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee come from different parts of the United States but overlap in the state of Arkansas. Each woman perceives feminism and femininity in different manners, but clearly demonstrate both alignment and opposition to the roles assigned to them. The media covers their every move and how the women portray themselves reflects on their husbands' political success and is met with overwhelming public scrutiny. Before diving into the specific criticisms and the political scrutiny of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee, it is necessary to provide definitions for and differentiation between feminism and femininity. This chapters offers that clarification as

¹³ Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 9–39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1889653>.

well as brief analysis of the first and second waves of feminism as background for the third wave.

The First Wave of Feminism

Scholars trace the start of the first wave of feminism in the United States to Seneca Falls, New York 1848. The Seneca Falls Convention was organized by a group of women and a few men to advocate for women's suffrage. In a crowded chapel on the second day of the convention, roughly three-hundred men and women listened as key organizer Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men and women are created equal."¹⁴ Stanton challenged the well-known words of Thomas Jefferson from the Declaration of Independence. Offered as a challenging document, The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments revealed early concerns of United States women as second-class citizens and the property of their husband's and offering the clearest and most simplistic definition of feminism— equality between the sexes.¹⁵

The first wave of feminism was a fight led by middle-class White women. Women of other ethnic backgrounds, non-Christian religions, and lower socio-economic classes were primarily excluded or held at arm's length in the fight for equality. Stanton and other white feminists acknowledged the significantly greater oppression that Black women faced, but their concerns proved more rhetorical than real. The Equal Rights Association, which aimed for equality of sex and race, spanned a three-year period before dissolution in 1870. The organization was composed of over fifty national officers,

¹⁴ Sally McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 71, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=218107&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 71-103.

among which only five were Black women.¹⁶ This is not to say that Black women did not want to join the fight for equality. Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and Mary Church Terrell were Black feminists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁷ The issue at hand for first wave feminists was the intersectionality of sexism and racism.

Two years prior to the abolition of slavery in the United States, Sojourner Truth asked the men and women present at the Akron, Ohio Women's Convention, "Ain't I A Woman?"¹⁸ White feminists challenged the figurative shackles placed upon them by their husbands and fathers, while rhetorically mentioning the tangible enslavement of Black women by those same husbands, fathers, and often times white women alike. Sojourner Truth's question illuminated the intersectionality of race and gender.¹⁹ The way White women and Black women experienced life in the years respective to the first wave of feminism were disparate. While White women could be considered second class citizens to White men, Black women were not regarded by the law as citizens at all until the passage of the 14th amendment.²⁰

¹⁶ Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 69.

¹⁷ Tammy L. Brown, "Celebrate Women's Suffrage, but Don't Whitewash the Movement's Racism," American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU, June 2, 2022, <https://www.aclus.org/blog/womens-rights/celebrate-womens-suffrage-dont-whitewash-movements-racism>.

¹⁸ Venus E. Evan-Winters, "Race and Gender Intersectionality and Education," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, February 23, 2021, <https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-1345>.

¹⁹ DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*.

²⁰ Olivia B. Waxman, "It's a Struggle They Will Wage Alone! How Black Women Won the Right to Vote," *TIME*, August 17, 2020, <https://time.com/5876456/black-women-right-to-vote/>.



Illustration 1 Suffragist from First Wave Feminism 1914²¹

In 1920, the nineteenth amendment granted American women with the right to vote. Black women, however, remained disenfranchised in large proportions across the United States through the 1960s. State and local legislatures required literacy tests and poll taxes that barred many African American women from exercising their right to suffrage. The rising numbers of lynching and Ku Klux Klan violence throughout the Jim Crow era only furthered this problem.²² Equal rights reform was not ignited again until the late 1950s as the second wave of feminism in the United States emerged.

²¹ *Help Us to Win the Vote*, 1914, photograph, <https://www.loc.gov/item/97500240/>.

²² Waxman, "It's a Struggle They Will Wage Alone."

The Second Wave of Feminism

The 1960s and 1970s are regarded by the majority of scholars as the time frame of the second wave feminism.²³ Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 stating, “My definition of feminism is simply that women are people, in the fullest sense of the word, who must be free to move in society with all the privileges and opportunities and responsibilities that are their human and American right.”²⁴ Friedan is credited as the “instigator” of gaining support, media, and public attention of the feminist movement. She challenged the societal pressures placed on women to give up their careers and find fulfillment in the role of housewife and mother.²⁵

Black and White women were both active in the second wave of feminism. The issue of equality on the basis of sex allowed overlap and common ground for women of all backgrounds. However, the movement did not succeed in merging the issues of gender and race, leaving Black women to fight a largely separate battle.²⁶ Black women were not completely excluded, but rather sidelined from the majority of concerns. Betty Friedan co-founded and acted as president of the National Organization of Women that sought to be racially inclusive. Many of the African American women in NOW clashed heads with Friedan and accused her of exploiting the Civil Rights movement to boost white women’s equality in the workplace. African American feminist Frances M. Beal published an essay

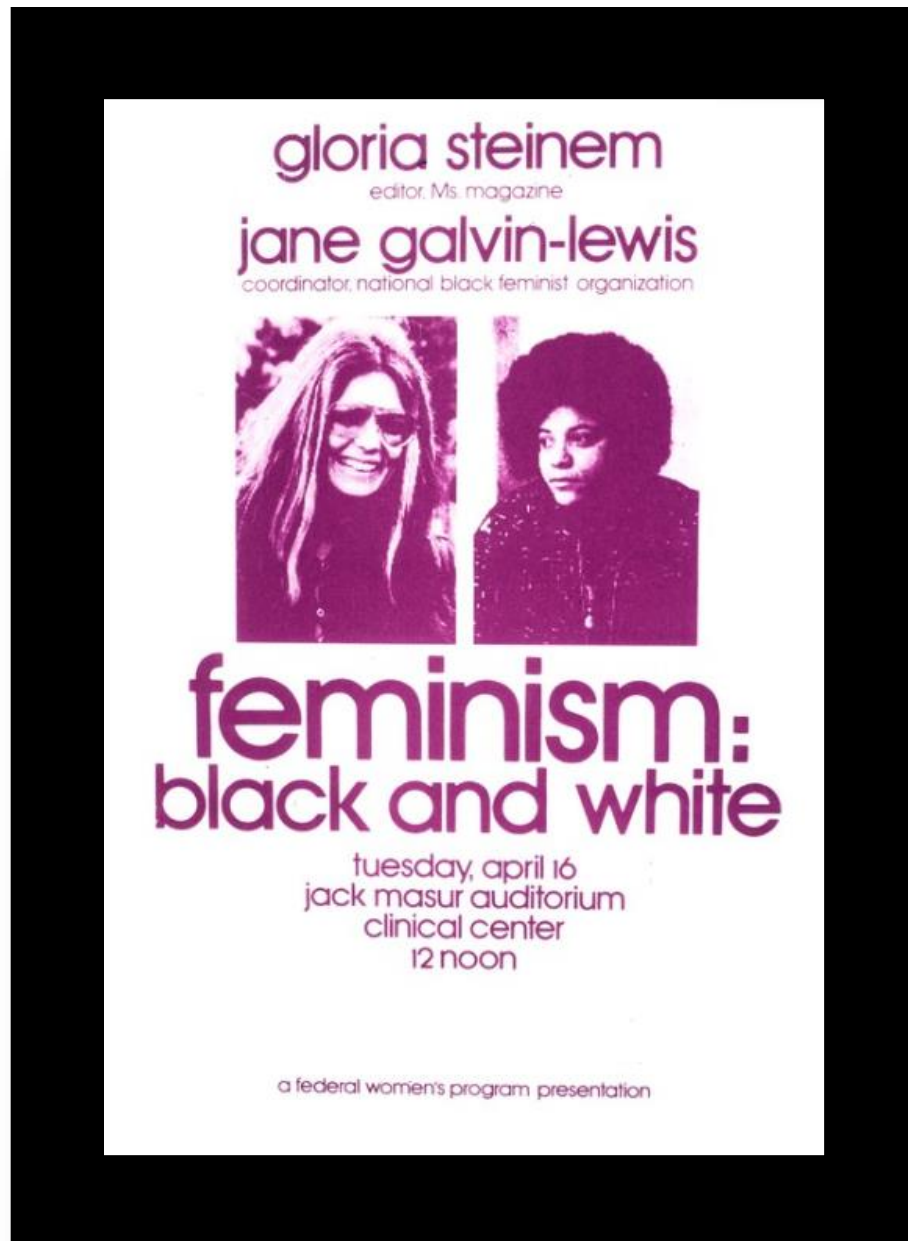
²³ “Feminism: The Second Wave,” National Women's History Museum, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-second-wave>.

²⁴ Betty Friedan, *Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

²⁵ “Feminism: The Second Wave,” National Women's History Museum, accessed June 18, 2020, <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-second-wave>.

²⁶ M. Rivka Polatnick, “Diversity in Women’s Liberation Ideology: How a Black and a White Group of the 1960s Viewed Motherhood,” *Signs* 21, no. 3 (1996): 679–706, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3175175>.

detailing this matter titled, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female,” in 1969. Beal stressed the disparity in white and non-white feminists.²⁷



*Illustration 2 Second Wave Feminists Gloria Steinem and Jane Galvin-Lewis Poster*²⁸

²⁷ “Feminism: The Second Wave,” National Women's History Museum.

²⁸Gloria Steinem, Jane Galvin-Lewis, and National Institutes of Health (U.S.), Medical Arts and Photography Branch, *Feminism Black and White*, n.d. Color, 1 photomechanical print (poster): 56 x 34 cm,

The advocacy of Black and White women aided in President John F. Kennedy's signing of the Equal Pay Act of 1963. This act made it a law for women to receive equal pay to their male counterparts for equal work. President Kennedy proposed a Civil Rights bill to Congress regarding desegregation but was assassinated before the legislation was enacted. His successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, pushed for the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964. This act prohibited discrimination, "on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin," and extended to the hiring process of employers and public spaces.²⁹

Feminists felt hopeful with legislation that aided in their climb to equality with men in the workplace. The next issue that they sought to address was freedom over their bodies. Contraceptive methods were approached differently by state legislatures.³⁰ In 1965 the *Griswold v. Connecticut* Supreme Court decision declared it unconstitutional to deny a married couple the right to seek contraceptive counsel in family planning. This right was extended to single women in 1972 in the case of *Eisenstadt v. Baird*. The largest success for second wave feminists was the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973, which found that the right to an abortion was protected by the constitution as a matter of personal privacy.³¹

Feminists continued to challenge freedom of their bodies in regard to their physical appearance and challenged the notion of what it "looked like" to be a woman.

<https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/ihm/index.html>>U.S. National Library of Medicine (NLM): Images from the History of Medicine. <https://jstor.org/stable/community.28559244>.

²⁹ "Legal Highlight: The Civil Rights Act of 1964," United States Department of Labor, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration & Management, accessed March 13, 2022, <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/civil-rights-center/statutes/civil-rights-act-of-1964>.

³⁰ "Second Wave Feminism Primary Sources & History | Gale," *Women's History: Second Wave Feminism*, Gale, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/womens-studies/collections/second-wave-feminism>.

³¹ Kermit L. Hall, *The Oxford Guide to United States Supreme Court Decisions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 115-118.

Women cut their hair and normalized wearing pants rather than skirts or dresses. While the movement gained traction, skepticism also grew, “As mainstream media focused on the hair and dress styles of feminist activists and journalists derided women’s liberationists as “ugly” and “unfeminine,” some Americans were led to believe that, by failing to “look like” traditional women, feminists hoped to destroy womanhood and gender difference altogether.”³²



Illustration 3 Phyllis Schlafly speaking on behalf of women against the Equal Rights Amendment³³

³² Betty Luther Hillman, “‘The Clothes I Wear Help Me to Know My Own Power’: The Politics of Gender in the Era of Women’s Liberation,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 34, no. 2 (2013): 155–85, <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.34.2.0155>.

³³ Annie Goldsmith, “Revisiting the STOP ERA Movement—and Its Leader, Phyllis Schlafly—in Photos,” *Town & Country*, April 26, 2020, <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/arts-and-culture/g32147431/stop-era-phyllis-schlafly-movement-photos/>.

As feminists advocated for the passage of the ERA, antifeminists fought back with equal force. The Equal Rights Amendment did not get the approval of states required in the allotted seven years and thus did not get passed.³⁴

The second wave of feminism did not die with the failed ERA. A new approach to feminism arose in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Women began to connect feminism with environmentalism and the movement of ecofeminism was born. Ecofeminists, “noted that women and nature were often depicted as chaotic, irrational, and in need of control, while men were frequently characterized as rational, ordered, and thus capable of directing the use and development of women and nature. Ecofeminists contend that this arrangement results in a hierarchical structure that grants power to men and allows for the exploitation of women and nature, particularly insofar as the two are associated with one another.”³⁵ In order to find equality, early ecofeminists believe social reform was needed in legislation regarding nature and legislation regarding women simultaneously.

The Third Wave of Feminism

Leading feminist scholar, Lesli L. Heywood, contributed to a comprehensive encyclopedia focused on third wave feminism in 2006.³⁶ The encyclopedia sparked controversy among feminist scholars and greatly divided feminists into two categories—those that agreed the third wave was alive and had not yet fulfilled the totality of women’s equality from the first and second waves, and those that argued the feminist

³⁴ “Equal Rights Amendment,” ERA, Alice Paul Institute, accessed April 4, 2022, <https://www.equalrightsamendment.org/>.

³⁵ Kathryn Miles, “Ecofeminism,” *Britannica*, accessed March 18, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecofeminism>.

³⁶ “Leslie L. Heywood - Our Faculty - English, General Literature and Rhetoric: Binghamton University,” English, General Literature and Rhetoric - Binghamton University, accessed May 28, 2022, <https://www.binghamton.edu/english/faculty/profile.html?id=heywood>.

movement either had fulfilled the totality of equality and/or died with the second wave, giving way to an era of post-feminism.³⁷ Heywood offers a historical introduction to the encyclopedia differentiating these two groups, “Third Wave feminism is feminism with a difference, whereas post-feminism regards feminist emphasis on women’s oppression and victimization as no longer needed.”³⁸ A research study conducted at Kent State University in 2003 explored the argument for post-feminism rather than third wave feminism. The study divided postfeminist arguments into four claims:

(1) Support for the women's movement has decreased over the 1980-90 period. (2) Antifeminism has increased among "pockets" of young women, women of color, and full-time homemakers. (3) Feminism has lost support because it has become irrelevant. For women who were feminists when younger, the movement failed to achieve gender equality; for young women in the current era, the success of the movement means it is no longer needed. (4) A "no, but... " version of feminism has developed, in which women are "reluctant to define themselves with the feminist label, but they approve of and indeed demand equal pay, economic independence, sexual freedom, and reproductive choice" (Ouellette 1992, 119).³⁹

In regard to the first claim, the researchers used data collected from the Center of Political Studies who questioned adults regarding their support for the feminist movement from 1972 to 1996. The study found that support for feminism remained stagnant or showed increase based on the wording of the question but did not show any decline. Regarding the second claim, the researchers found that of the “pockets” of women who increased in antifeminism, young women and women of color did not show

³⁷ Phyllis Holman Weisbard, “The Women’s Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Collections: A Quarterly of Women’s Studies Resources* 27, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 30–31, <https://libcatalog.atu.edu:2104/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=21147930&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Elaine J. Hall and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez, “The Myth of Postfeminism,” *Gender and Society* 17, no. 6 (2003): 878–902, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594675>.

increase. While homemakers in the study did show a slight increase in antifeminism, the researchers explained this did not support the backing expressed in postfeminist claims. For the third claim, the researchers found that the majority of adults questioned found that feminism was relevant, in tune with working women, and necessary for the future. The fourth claim found that there were large portions of adults who did not wish to identify as feminists but did support the feminist movement. However, there were still substantial numbers of adults who would identify as feminists. Overall, the findings argued that post-feminism was a “myth” created by popular media and that the third wave feminism was active in the United States throughout the 1980s to early 2000s.⁴⁰

The majority of scholars consider the latter half of the 1980s as a starting point of third wave of feminism. The true indicator of how the start of the third wave is not as clear as the prior two waves. Two instances credited by feminist scholars as inciting interest in feminist advocacy are the controversy surrounding Anita Hill and the rise of punk rock.⁴¹ When Clarence Thomas was nominated as a United States Supreme Court Justice in 1991, attorney Anita Hill stepped forward and accused Thomas of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was then an arcane topic and women who spoke out endured harsh scrutiny. Hill faced a white, all-male committee and offered testimony to circumstances that had never been discussed in such a public manner, especially regarding such a prominent figure, before.⁴² The hearing was televised, and Anita Hill

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Feminism: The Third Wave,” National Women's History Museum, June 23, 2020, <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/feminism-third-wave>.

⁴² Sierra Austin, Peggy Solic, Haley Swenson, and Gisell Jeter-Bennett; Introduced by Katherine M. Marino, “Anita Hill Roundtable,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 35, no. 3 (2014): 65–74, <https://doi.org/10.5250/fronjwomestud.35.3.0065>.

was condemned by many viewers. Clarence Thomas was appointed to the Court. Following the appointment, an unprecedented number of women came forward to share that they had also experience sexual harassment. The 1992 elections that followed revealed women pursuing political positions in greater force. The United States House of Representatives gained nineteen women as a combined total of forty-seven and the Senate housed six women. 1992 was coined “Year of the Woman.”⁴³



*Illustration 4 Anita Hill hearings for sexual harassment charges against Justice Clarence Thomas*⁴⁴

The second instigator in third wave feminism started as an underground movement. The punk rock scene began in the late 1960s and was dominated by male bands. Women were typically excluded from making this type of music on their own. Underground punk rock groups that consisted only of women formed and called

⁴³ Kathleen Dolan, “Voting for Women in the ‘Year of the Woman,’” *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 1 (1998): 272–93, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991756>.

⁴⁴ Elise Viebeck, “Joe Biden was in charge of the of the Anita Hill hearing. Even he says it wasn’t fair.,” *The Washington Post*, April 26, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/joe-biden-was-in-charge-of-the-anita-hill-hearing-even-he-says-it-wasnt-fair/2019/04/26/a9a6f384-6500-11e9-82ba-fcfeff232e8f_story.html.

themselves the “Riot Grrrl Movement.”⁴⁵ Self-identified “riot grrrls” produced small scale, handmade documents that they called “zines.” Zines were copied and passed around throughout communities of young girls in the 1980s.

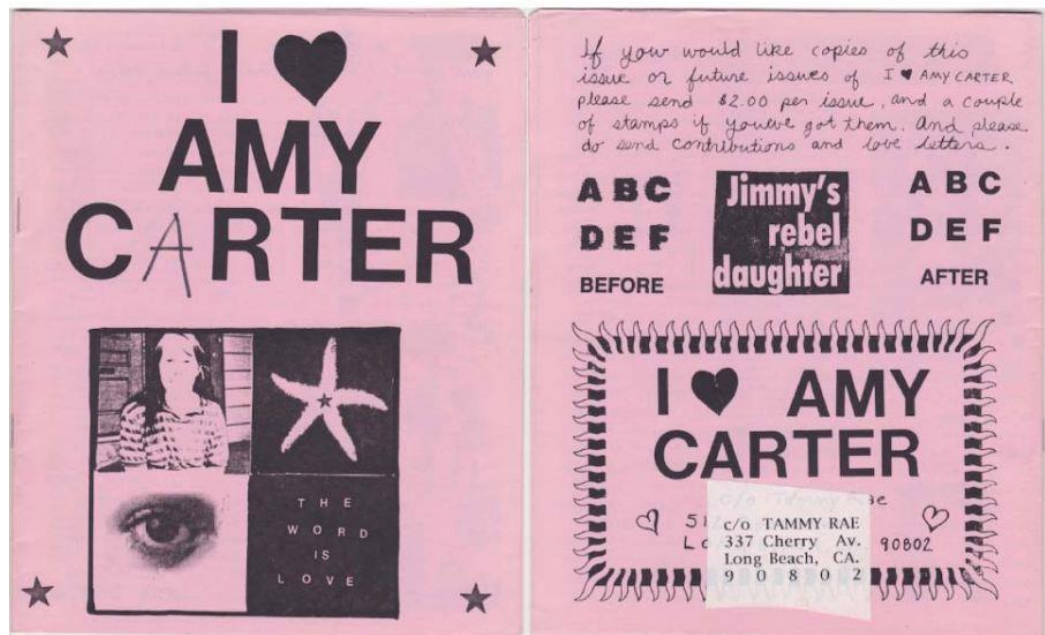


Illustration 5 Feminist Riot Grrrl Zine circa 1990s⁴⁶

What started as a document of common concern on the exclusion of girls from punk rock developed into, “the angry views of girls interested in calling out the multiple ways they were dismissed, scorned, violated, and controlled not only in the punk scene but also in their daily lives.”⁴⁷ Riot Grrrls’ wrote feminist and anti-racist agenda into their music.

⁴⁵ Steve Feliciano, “The Riot Grrrl Movement,” The New York Public Library, June 19, 2013, <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/06/19/riot-grrrl-movement>.

⁴⁶ Aric Faulkner, “ISU alum’s research on feminist zines explores Riot Grrrl culture,” *Illinois State University News*, February 12, 2015, <https://news.illinoisstate.edu/2015/02/isu-alums-research-feminist-zines-explores-riot-grrrl-culture/>.

⁴⁷ Janice Radway, “Girl Zine Networks, Underground Itineraries, and Riot Grrrl History: Making Sense of the Struggle for New Social Forms in the 1990s and Beyond,” *Journal of American Studies* 50, no. 1 (2016): 1–31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44162970>.

The growing popularity led to the formation of “girl power” that was picked up by pop groups like the Spice Girls in the latter half of the 1990s.⁴⁸

These two instances reveal the main agenda of the third wave of feminism. Riot Grrrl Ani DiFranco explains, “...feminism is self-determination, and it’s very open-ended: every woman has the right to become herself, and do whatever she needs to do.”⁴⁹ Publication of feminist literature increased in the 1990s and developed theory including intersectionality of feminism. The third wave of feminism showcased the first movement in which white and nonwhite women could recognize the differences in their life experiences but that they shared discrimination and harassment on the basis of their sex. For third wave feminists, the issue went beyond equality, but the ability to reach self-fulfillment in any way they see fit—motherhood, career, education, etc.⁵⁰

Ecofeminism from the second wave was disputed by the majority of the third wave. However, rather than disappearing all together, ecofeminist scholarship changed names to seek greater approval from a wider audience. Ecofeminism became gender and environment, ecological feminism, feminist environmentalism, and critical feminist socialism in print publications.⁵¹ While ecofeminists in the third wave took on many names, their message continued to find conservatism in the environment.

⁴⁸ “Feminism: The Third Wave.” National Women’s History Museum.

⁴⁹ “Ani DiFranco,” Goodreads, accessed April 2, 2022, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/323599-my-idea-of-feminism-is-self-determination-and-it-s-very-open-ended>.

⁵⁰ R. Claire Snyder, “What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay,” *Signs* 34, no. 1 (2008): 175–96, <https://doi.org/10.1086/588436>.

⁵¹ Greta Gaard, “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism,” *Feminist Formations* 23, no. 2 (2011): 26–53, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41301655>.

Defining Femininity

Femininity, in the most simplistic definition, refers to the “qualities or attributes regarded as characteristic of women.”⁵² The etymology of the word dates back to the fourteenth century meaning, “of the female sex.”⁵³ Femininity standards are continuously changing and can vary significantly by a multitude of factors. Because of the evolving nature of femininity, it can be argued that the concept as a whole is socially constructed. At the same time, the biological aspect of sex organs from birth can form an argument that women are naturally different than men and thus femininity is natural order and not socially constructed.⁵⁴ For the analysis of public scrutiny and femininity of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee, this thesis defines femininity as socially constructed.

There are numerous elements that determine what femininity standards are at a given time and location. Arguably, the most prominent influence of femininity is portrayed by the media.⁵⁵ However, the demographics, culture, religion, and traditions of an area can still portray variations of the media’s portrayal of femininity. Third wave feminist and journalist Susan Brownmiller published *Femininity* in 1984. In grappling with the definition of femininity, Brownmiller develops eight identifiers—body, hair, clothes, voice, skin, movement, emotion, and ambition. Each of these identifiers are physically overt, which proves helpful to analyze Clinton and Huckabee’s extraordinarily

⁵² “Definition of Femininity in English,” Lexico Dictionaries | English, *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed April 26, 2022, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/femininity>.

⁵³ Douglas Harper, “Feminine,” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed April 18, 2022, https://www.etymonline.com/word/feminine#etymonline_v_5843.

⁵⁴ “Femininities & Masculinities,” *Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment*, Gendered Innovations, accessed May 12, 2022, <https://genderedinnovations.stanford.edu/terms/femininities.html>.

⁵⁵ Mimi Schippers, “Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony,” *Theory and Society* 36, no. 1 (2007): 85–102, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4501776>.

public existence. Brownmiller's analysis offers a unique perspective from a woman who is analyzing the constraints placed upon her sex in the time frame of third wave feminism and Hillary and Janet's first ladyships. Utilizing Brownmiller's eight identifiers of femininity coupled with the works of sociologists, third wave feminists, and media coverage, the following sections explore socially constructed aspects of femininity.

Body, Hair, and Skin

Throughout the 1980s to the early 2000s, femininity was dictated by a fitness and diet craze.⁵⁶ A slim figure portrayed fitness, but defined muscles on women were not ideal. Significantly smaller breasts and hips were preferred in contrast to previous decades. It was often a standard assumption that women should be shorter in height than their male partners, while tall women were simultaneously glamourized with the emergence of the first "super models."⁵⁷ Eating disorders rose at rapid rates and linked directly to the societal pressures to reach the ideal feminine body type. Women wore their hair long to avoid appearing "boyish" or "dyky."⁵⁸ However, women who were married and had children could find it acceptable by societal standards to wear their hair short.⁵⁹ Gray hair signified old age, so it was necessary for women to color their hair to hide signs of aging or thinning. Voluminous hair was on trend and was often times achieved by

⁵⁶ Amanda Cruz Mendoza, "That's so 80s: Beauty Standard," Office of Research & Sponsored Programs, Sonoma State University, accessed April 21, 2022, <https://orsp.sonoma.edu/training-and-events/gallery/thats-so-80s-beauty-standard>.

⁵⁷ Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (New York: Linden Press/Simon & Schuster, 1984), 27-29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-56.

perming one's hair.⁶⁰ The ideal feminine skin type was unblemished, free of unwanted hair, and white.⁶¹ Thick eyebrows and a full face of makeup were expected.⁶²

Clothes and Movement

“Power dressing” originated in the 1980s as women began to enter areas of the work force that were previously dominated by men. Tailored, wide shouldered, and bright colored suit jackets were paired with slacks or a knee length skirt and practical heels were the feminine fashion standard of power dressing.⁶³ The fitness frenzy encouraged colorful and stretchy material workout pants. Minimalism and casual wear took hold in the 1990s⁶⁴ and by the early 2000s jeans became socially acceptable for women to wear daily.⁶⁵ Princess Diana of Wales was regarded as a key fashion icon and trend setter throughout the latter 1980s until her death in 1997.⁶⁶

The key defining feature for femininity and clothing is the skirt, as Brownmiller examines:

A traveler who does not speak a word of a foreign language can locate the male of female restroom in an international airport by seeking out a recognizable logo. A painted stick figure with a triangular skirt leads unquestionable to the women's lounge; a stick figure without a skirt is where the men should enter.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Mendoza, “That’s so 80s: Beauty Standard.”

⁶¹ Brownmiller, *Femininity*, 57.

⁶² Mendoza, “That’s so 80s: Beauty Standard.”

⁶³ Karina Reddy, “1980-1989,” Fashion History Timeline, Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, May 29, 2020, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1980-1989/>.

⁶⁴ Karina Reddy, “1990-1999,” Fashion History Timeline, Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, September 15, 2020, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1990-1999/>.

⁶⁵ Karina Reddy, “2000-2009,” Fashion History Timeline, Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, July 5, 2021, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/2000-2009/>.

⁶⁶ Janelle Okwodu, “Princess Diana’s Greatest Fashion Moments Epitomize Royal Glamour,” *Vogue*, July 1, 2021, <https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/diana-princess-of-wales-style-evolution>. Marguerite Helmers, “Media, Discourse, and the Public Sphere: Electronic Memorials to Diana, Princess of Wales,” *College English* 63, no. 4 (2001): 449, <https://doi.org/10.2307/378889>.

⁶⁷ Brownmiller, *Femininity*, 82.

Movement is restricted when wearing a skirt and the feminine exclusiveness to the clothing piece requires restrictions when bending down, walking upstairs, or sitting.⁶⁸ Brownmiller stresses the importance of etiquette lessons passed down from mothers to daughters as the main contributor to feminine movement—women curtsy, not bow; cross ankles, not legs; twirl baton or take up needlework, not an activity that will enhance muscles.⁶⁹

Voice and Emotion

Puberty is the defining characteristic of feminine and masculine voice tones. Brownmiller analyzes the historical evidence in a public distaste for women with a “loud, unpleasant voice, a short temper, and impertinent speech...,” with the word’s fishwife, shrew, harridan, magpie, virago, termagant, and scold.⁷⁰ However, there is no masculine equivalent of these words that relate strictly to feminine voice. Women in the 1980s and continuing throughout the 2000s who speak loudly, have strong opinions, or argue, risk being labeled a “bitch.”⁷¹ The feminine standard that is preferred for women remains soft-spoken and supportive, not authoritative.

In 1970, a group of professional psychologists were given a questionnaire and asked to identify masculine and feminine traits in emotion. Brownmiller reveals the findings for feminine traits as, “cries very easily, very emotional, very excitable in a minor crisis, very easily influenced, very subjective, unable to separate feelings from ideas, very illogical, and very sneaky.” The finding for masculine traits were, “very

⁶⁸ Ibid., 86-87.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁷¹ Ibid., 118.

direct, very logical, can make decisions easily, never cries.”⁷² The questionnaire was actually a list of non-gender specific bipolar disorder diagnoses, and the intent of the study was to show how stereotypically women were projected to be in psychology literature. Brownmiller acknowledges the complexity in truly defining emotional differences biologically. Thus, feminine prevalence of emotion and masculine avoidance of emotion can be argued as a societal pressure.⁷³

Ambition

Ambition is not a socially accepted feminine trait. Brownmiller makes the argument that personal ambition has been pushed aside to fulfil the role of nurturance which, “embraces a love of children, a desire to bear them and rear them; warmth, tenderness, compassion, sustained emotional involvement in the welfare of others, and a weak or nonexistent competitive drive.”⁷⁴ The 1980s throughout the early 2000s finds the occupations of motherhood and homemaker the ideal feminine standard. However, as analyzed in relation to femininity and *Clothes*, these three decades also proved to be a time of significant growth of women entering the labor force. Challenges, as such, to femininity increased public scrutiny in relationship to Clinton, Huckabee, and their husbands in their roles of Arkansas Governors.

Arkansas, Feminism, and Femininity

Third wave feminists offered a significant contribution to defining the boundaries of femininity for United States women in the 1980s to early 2000s. However, there are

⁷² Ibid., 207.

⁷³ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 221.

several demographic factors specific to the South and the state of Arkansas that are necessary for analysis of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee’s unique experience with public scrutiny. Religion and political ideology, education level and employment opportunities, of the majority of Arkansans reveal the socially constructed ideals of what femininity is and is not within the state during the time frame of third wave feminism.⁷⁵

Arkansas falls within the Bible belt, meaning it is typically associated with conservatism and fundamental Christianity. Even in more recent studies Arkansans are sixteen percent higher than the national average of Americans to identify as Christians.⁷⁶ Christian denominations can view the role of women in the church, in the home, as mothers, and as wives differently. While serving as first ladies, Hillary Clinton identified as a First United Methodist and Janet Huckabee as a Southern Baptist. The trend in Arkansans who identified as Methodist from 1980 to 2010 declined from 214,526 to 158,574⁷⁷ within the thirty-year span, while Southern Baptist Arkansans increased from 522,985 to 661,382.⁷⁸

While the official stances on a woman’s role in either denomination differ, the majority of Arkansans identified and continue to identify as Christians. The role of a woman in the church translates into the role of a Christian wife, and the role of a Christian mother for these same constituents. With the prominence of Christianity within

⁷⁵ Fons J.R. van de Vijver, “Cultural and Gender Differences in Gender-Role Beliefs, Sharing Household Task and Child-Care Responsibilities, and Well-Being among Immigrants and Majority Members in the Netherlands,” *Sex Roles* 57, no. 11-12 (September 19, 2007): 813–24, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9316-z>.

⁷⁶ “Arkansas Population 2022,” Arkansas Population 2022 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs), World Population Review, accessed May 21, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/arkansas-population>.

⁷⁷ “Southern Baptist Convention States (2010),” QuickLists, The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed April 14, 2022, https://www.thearda.com/ql2010/QL_S_2010_2_1168c.asp.

⁷⁸ “United Methodist Church, The States (2010),” QuickLists, The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed April 14, 2022, https://www.thearda.com/ql2010/QL_S_2010_2_1183c.asp.

the state it is evident that Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee experienced public scrutiny when aligning and skewing from religiously constructed bounds of femininity. It is arguable that not all Arkansans Christians of the 1980s to early 2000s agreed with the official stances of their church, but it is also arguable that as practicing and active members they chose to conform to their respective church ideals and official stances on what a woman should and should not be.

The official stance on women's role in the First United Methodist church is:

The United Methodist Church, by polity and practice, supports the full inclusion of women in every aspect of church life. Among groups that specifically work to eliminate sexism and promote the full inclusion of women are the General Commission on Status and Role of Women and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. In 1956 full clergy rights were granted to women in The Methodist Church.⁷⁹

The official stance on women's role in the Southern Baptist church is:

WHEREAS, The Scriptures attest to God's delegated order of authority (God the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, man the head of woman, man and woman dependent one upon the other to the glory of God) distinguishing the roles of men and women in public prayer and prophecy (1 Cor. 11:2-5); and WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that women are not in public worship to assume a role of authority over men lest confusion reign in the local church (1 Cor. 14:33-36); and WHEREAS, While Paul commends women and men alike in other roles of ministry and service (Titus 2:1-10), he excludes women from pastoral leadership (1 Tim. 2:12) to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic fall (1 Tim. 2:13ff); and WHEREAS, These Scriptures are not intended to stifle the creative contribution of men and women as co-workers in many roles of church service, both on distant mission fields and in domestic ministries, but imply that women and men are nonetheless divinely gifted for distinctive areas of evangelical engagement; and WHEREAS, Women are held in high honor for their unique and significant contribution to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the building of godly

⁷⁹ Tom McNally, "Commentary: Why Do United Methodists Ordain Women When the Bible Specifically Prohibits It?" The United Methodist Church, February 23, 2022, <https://www.umc.org/en/content/commentary-mcnally-why-do-united-methodists-ordain-women>.

homes should be esteemed for its vital contribution to developing personal Christian character and Christlike concern for others.⁸⁰

Both stances acknowledge women have every authority in contributing to the church, the difference lies in how they can contribute. While the United States Constitution separates church from state, religion and politics and remained closely entwined for many Americans.⁸¹ As the majority of Arkansan constituents are Christians, it is unsurprising that the elected officials of said constituents are also Christians that can relate to their voters.

In 1978, aside from Winthrop Rockefeller's four-year Governorship from 1967 to 1971, Arkansas had not had a Republican Governor since 1874. When Bill Clinton was first elected as Arkansas Governor in 1978, he continued the lineage of Democrats before him. Clinton lost re-election in 1980 to Republican Frank White but won the Governor seat again in 1982 serving to 1992. Mike Huckabee was elected as Lieutenant Governor in 1993 and then assumed the Governorship from 1996 to 2007. Huckabee became the longest serving Republican Governor in Arkansas history.⁸²

The shift from a solid blue state to a teetering red state from the 1980s to the early 2007s arguably, reveals a transition to conservatism in response to third wave feminism and liberal ideology at the same time. A 1998 study found, "this shift in the party

⁸⁰ "Resolution on Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry," SBC.net, Southern Baptist Convention, accessed April 18, 2022, <https://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/resolution-on-ordination-and-the-role-of-women-in-ministry/>.

⁸¹ "The First Amendment Says Nothing about 'Separation of Church and State' or a 'Wall of Separation between Church and State.' Where Did This Idea Come from? Is It Really Part of the Law?," Freedom Forum Institute, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.freedomforuminstitute.org/about/faq/the-first-amendment-says-nothing-about-separation-of-church-and-state-or-a-wall-of-separation-between-church-and-state-where-did-this-idea-come-from-is-it-really/#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20establishment%20clause%20prohibits,convictions%20into%20the%20public%20arena.>

⁸² "Former Governors – Arkansas," National Governors Association.

loyalties of the electorate was in turn based on the increased ideological polarization of the Democratic and Republican parties during the Reagan and post-Reagan eras.” In short, President “Reagan's program of tax cuts, increased military expenditures, and reductions in domestic social program,” throughout the 1980s, played a key factor in political ideological realignment.⁸³ Liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats were faced with voting against their party lines. But as a whole, political scientists argue that the majority of Democrats in the state of Arkansas are far more conservative than the national party itself.⁸⁴

From 1940 through the latter half of the 1960s, the Republican Party held more opportunity for women to represent and take part in the national convention than the Democratic Party. The Equal Rights Amendment, which proposed the invalidation of any federal or state laws that are discriminatory towards women,⁸⁵ was endorsed by the Republican Party four years prior to the Democratic Party. The President of the National Federation of Republican Women and the female co-chair of the Republican National Committee were two of the staunchest supporters of the ERA when it faced Congress from 1970 to 1972. However, by 1980 Republican support of the feminist movement showed significant decline— “At their convention that year the Republican Party removed the ERA from its platform a second time -- only eight years after both parties resumed support. It actively opposed legalized abortion and generally shunned those few

⁸³ Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders, “Ideological Realignment in the U.S. Electorate,” *The Journal of Politics* 60, no. 3 (1998): 634–52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647642>.

⁸⁴ Christopher A. Cooper and H. Gibbs Knotts, “South Polls: Partisan Change in Southern State Legislatures, 1953–2013,” *Southern Cultures* 20, no. 2 (2014): 75–89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26217476>.

⁸⁵ “Hour of Decision: The Equal Rights Amendment in Arkansas,” *Zero Hour: Arkansas in 1980*, UA Little Rock: Center for Arkansas History and Culture, 2020, <https://ualrexhibits.org/zerohour/era/>.

Republican women still willing to call themselves feminists.”⁸⁶ In Arkansas 1975, a “Valentine’s Day Debate” was held by the Arkansas General Assembly. University of Arkansas political science professor Diane Kincaid entered into a debate against the nationally known anti-ERA advocate, Phyllis Schlafly. Despite the general consensus that Kincaid won the debate, Arkansas is one of the states that opted out of supporting the ERA.⁸⁷

The majority of Arkansans from the decision of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 throughout the early 2000s showed opposition to abortions. The Arkansas Right to Life Organization gained traction in the late 1970s and continued to pursue political action to prohibit abortions throughout Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee’s first ladyship.⁸⁸ Supporters of the issue regard abortion rights synonymous to women’s rights. Because the issue is prominent in Arkansas politics and related to a woman’s body, both Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee had to address the issue and face political scrutiny regardless of the stance they chose to take.

Education and employment in Arkansas are also important aspects of the background to Hillary and Janet’s stories. In 1980, 44.5 percent of Arkansans aged twenty-five and older had not attained a high school diploma. By 2000, this number dropped to 24.7 percent.⁸⁹ There is a strong correlation between the education level of

⁸⁶ Jo Freeman, “Whatever Happened to Republican Feminists?” 1996, <https://www.jofreeman.com/polhistory/repulfem.htm>.

⁸⁷ Nancy Hendricks, “Diane Frances Divers Kincaid Blair (1938-2000),” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, CALS, last modified September 20, 2018, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/diane-frances-divers-kincaid-blair-4171/>. “Hour of Decision: The Equal Rights Amendment in Arkansas.”

⁸⁸ “Activities & Accomplishments,” Arkansas Right To Life, October 30, 2019, <https://artl.org/activities-accomplishments/>.

⁸⁹ “Digest of Education Statistics,” National Center for Education Statistics, accessed May 28, 2022, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_105.asp.

women and fertility rates. Women who attend college or choose to enter the workforce may delay having children or have fewer children than women who do not.⁹⁰ However, Arkansas faced a large problem in the number of women pursuing higher education in part due to the high number of unplanned teenage pregnancies in the 1980s.⁹¹

From 1975 to 2000 the percentage of mothers in the labor force increased from 47 percent to 73 percent. Research also revealed that the more education a mother has, the more likely she is to enter into the labor force rather than enter the role of a homemaker.⁹² The growing numbers of women choosing to hold a job outside of the home was not favored by all Arkansans. Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee faced public scrutiny for their roles as mothers, wives, and laborers throughout this time frame.

⁹⁰ Abigail Cornett, "Analyzing the Relationship Between Female Education and Fertility Rate," *Drake Undergraduate Social Science Journal* (2020): 1–10, <https://www.drake.edu/media/departments/offices/dussj/2020documents/Cornett%20DUSSJ%202020.pdf>.

⁹¹ Melanie K. Welch, "Teen Pregnancy," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, CALS, September 9, 2021, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/teen-pregnancy-9067/>.

⁹² "The American Family Today," Social & Demographic Trends Project: Parenting in America, Pew Research Center, December 17, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/12/17/1-the-american-family-today/>.

III. Early Foundations

Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee were raised in vastly different circumstances, supported opposing political parties, and held divergent beliefs on numerous political, social, and cultural issues. What Clinton and Huckabee shared however, was their gender, is the public scrutiny of their feminism, and critical observation of their femininity displays while serving as Arkansas first ladies. To understand and analyze their time in office, it is necessary to acknowledge their differing backgrounds and how those play into their political ideologies, feminism, and presentation of femininity. The following chapter consists of brief biographical information of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee's upbringings, education, and entry into the political arena of Arkansas.

Hillary Rodham

Hillary Rodham acknowledged the tremendous impact that her upbringing had on her development throughout her 2003 autobiography, *Hillary Rodham Clinton: Living History*. She wrote, "I had been shaped by my family upbringing, education, religious faith and all that I had learned before—as the daughter of a staunch conservative father and a more liberal mother, a student activist, and advocate for children, a lawyer, Bill's wife, and Chelsea's mom."⁹³

Born on October 26, 1947 in Chicago, Illinois, Hillary Rodham was the only daughter and eldest of three children parented by Hugh Rodham and Dorothy Howell. Hugh Rodham was raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the middle child of three boys. He was raised in a strict Methodist and conservative household. After graduating college, he

⁹³ Hillary Rodham Clinton, *Living History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), IX.

boarded a train for Chicago in search of work. After finding a job as a salesman of drapery fabrics, Hugh Rodham traveled throughout the Midwest on business, eventually catching the eye of Chicago native Dorothy Howell. Howell's childhood was not strict nor structured like Hugh Rodham's had been. Dorothy Howell was the eldest of two daughters, abandoned by their mother at age four and rarely glimpsing their father. At age eight, Howell and her sister were sent to California to live with their paternal grandmother. Her grandmother placed strict rules on the girls, did not allow visitors to the house and forbade them from attending parties or any type of public functions. When Dorothy was discovered trick-or-treating with friends one Halloween, her grandmother punished her by confining her to school and her bedroom for an entire year.⁹⁴ She found living conditions with her grandmother to be oppressive and found a job that enabled her to move away at age fourteen. Once Howell graduated from high school, her estranged mother contacted her and promised to pay for her college education if she returned to Chicago. Upon arrival, she found that her mother had no intentions of paying for her education and instead wanted her to work as a housekeeper. Unable to attend school, Howell began working as a clerk typist in a textile company where she met traveling salesman Hugh Rodham. Rodham and Howell were married in early 1942.⁹⁵

Her father's Methodist and conservative values manifested in Hillary Rodham's early life. She described her father as a strict man but that he was always harder on her brothers than herself.⁹⁶ He ran the household with authoritarianism, but held a progressive notion that, "Hillary would not be limited in opportunity or skills by the fact

⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

that she was a girl.”⁹⁷ Depression plagued the men in Hugh Rodham’s family. Less than a year after Hillary’s birth, her father’s parents requested he return to Scranton to help his younger brother, Russell, who had suffered from depression. Upon Hugh’s arrival he found his brother attempting to hang himself in their parent’s attic and he was the one to cut him down. Hugh moved Russell into his home with Dorothy and Hillary. Russell became an alcoholic and his depression worsened. He was killed in 1962 in a housefire that was started by a lit cigarette. Hugh’s elder brother, Willard, never married and dedicated himself to caring for his father following the death of the Rodham mother. When the Rodham’s father died in 1965, Willard passed away only five weeks later from coronary thrombosis. The remaining Rodham family felt that Willard’s true cause of death was from loneliness.⁹⁸ Hillary noticed the pain these deaths had caused her father and felt his spirit had been broken. Shortly after the deaths he closed his business and retired at the age of fifty-five. Friends of the family described Hugh Rodham as verbally abusive to his wife and a bully to his children. Praise was something that the Rodham children had to earn.⁹⁹ Her mother Dorothy was regarded as the heart and nurturer of the family. Despite her husband’s disagreeable nature, Dorothy refused to divorce Hugh because she feared the breakdown of her family, recalling the abandonment by her own parents early in her childhood. The three Rodham children took Dorothy’s staunch opposition to divorce to heart. Hillary’s Sister-in-law Nicole Boxer recalled:

It was drummed into me by Dorothy that nobody in this family gets divorced. From Dorothy—and Tony [Hillary’s brother]—I heard divorce is not an option.

⁹⁷ Carl Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 13-14.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

She'd say, "You can work it out." She said, "You have to talk to him on a level he can understand. Don't give up on him. *You do not leave the marriage.*"¹⁰⁰

Hillary was regarded by her high school classmates as a teacher's pet. Her closest friends believed she wanted to find praise from her teachers that was not so easily granted by her father. She regularly attended services at the Park Ridge Methodist Church in Chicago. When she was in tenth grade, a new Reverend named Don Jones was assigned to her church. Hillary regarded Reverend Jones as a mentor who helped her develop her sense of politics and Christianity. Jones took Hillary and several other church youth members to hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speak in Chicago 1961. King's speech discussed a parable in which a man who ignored other men in need was condemned to hell.¹⁰¹ Reverend Jones challenged his young Methodist audience to do good work and give all they could of themselves to others. Hillary credited this message for her drive to enact social change later in her life.¹⁰²

In 1965 Hillary Rodham enrolled at Wellesley College, an elite, historically women's private liberal arts institution in Massachusetts. Hillary recalled her parent's responses to her enrollment:

My mother thought that I should go wherever I wanted. My father said I was free to do that, but he wouldn't pay if I went west of the Mississippi or to Radcliffe, which he heard was full of beatniks. Smith and Wellesley, which he had never heard of, were acceptable.¹⁰³

While she had been in the top five percent of her high school class, she struggled academically amongst the private school and European educated girls that were now her

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 34-35.

¹⁰² Clinton, *Living History*, 25.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

classmates.¹⁰⁴ Author of *A Woman in Charge*, Carl Bernstein explained in his 2007 biography of Hillary:

Hillary was no longer considered brighter than most of her classmates. In fact, admission to Wellesley, even more than the other Seven Sisters colleges in the Northeast, was predicated on the assumption that, upon matriculation, you were demonstrably brilliant. Most of her fellow students had been in the top 1 to 2 percent of their high school graduation class. In 1965, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Brown, and the other traditional Ivy League universities were still all-male bastions. Thus, Wellesley had its pick of almost any girl in the country who aspired to the best possible education (and could afford it or win a scholarship).¹⁰⁵

When Hillary phoned home to her parents to tell them of her struggle, her father advised her to give up and return home and her mother encouraged her not to quit so easily.

Hillary took heed of her mother's advice and began to thrive academically and socially.¹⁰⁶ During her four years at Wellesley College, Rodham became a student leader. Her name was frequently published in the school's newspaper *Wellesley News*. She served as the head of the Young Republicans Club, president of the College Government Association, and interned as a research assistant for the House Republican Conference. She was a woman's activist and gave public speeches including one titled, "Girls, Government and the Gap."¹⁰⁷ She called on her fellow classmates on several occasions to exercise their right to free speech and when serving in elected positions she wanted to hear from her constituents. Image 6 provides an example of her call to her classmates:

Janet MacDonald and Hillary Rodham, both '69, were two participants in this weekend's Student Leaders' Conference at Craigville. A report of the conference is not printed in this week's NEWS because the report has already been made available to all students and contains within its page's specific references to individuals in charge of the various committees and work forces being established.

¹⁰⁴ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Clinton, *Living History*, 39.

¹⁰⁷ Martha Wasson, "Soph's Plan Weekend for Dads," *The Wellesley News*, April 24, 1969, vol. 62, issue 24, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley9834>.

Hillary urges students to examine the report carefully, and to contact her with additional ideas and suggestions.¹⁰⁸

Other school newspaper articles list Hillary as a primary contact for students who wanted to get involved in various issues including, “Student leader for rent strike on Boston’s South End”¹⁰⁹ and “Do you have any other ideas about how to perk up school spirit at Wellesley? Please send these suggestions to Hillary Rodham '69.”¹¹⁰



Illustration 6 Wellesley News article with Hillary Rodham listed as student leader 1968¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Mary Enterline, “Sophs To Welcome Fathers For Traditional Activities,” *The Wellesley News*, May 2, 1968, vol. 61, issue 25, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley9806?search=rodham>.

¹⁰⁹ Sue Wing, “Student Leaders Voice Support for South End Rent Strike,” *The Wellesley News*, March 6, 1969, vol. 62, issue 18, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley9828>.

¹¹⁰ “School Spirit,” *The Wellesley News*, December 19, 1968, vol. 62, issue 14, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley9823?search=rodham>.

¹¹¹ Wendy Judge, photograph, in *The Wellesley News*, May 2, 1968, vol. 61, issue 25, <https://repository.wellesley.edu/object/wellesley9806?search=rodham>.

Hillary majored in political science and graduated with highest honors. Her classmates selected her as key commencement speaker at her 1969 graduation ceremony, which in turn gained her national media coverage for the first time.¹¹² Senator Edward W. Brooke addressed the four hundred women in Hillary's graduation class. He spoke against protest and encouraged the women to avoid aiding in "counterproductive disruption."¹¹³ Classmates recalled the disbelief and anger they felt in reaction to the Senators' speech.¹¹⁴ When the Senator took his seat, Hillary took her place on stage and delivered an impromptu rebuttal on behalf of her class. She abandoned the speech she had planned and remarked:

The question about possible and impossible was one that we brought with us to Wellesley four years ago. We arrived not yet knowing what was not possible. Consequently, we expected a lot. Our attitudes are easily understood having grown up, having come to consciousness in the first five years of this decade—years dominated by men with dreams, men in the civil rights movement, the Peace Corps, the space program—so we arrived at Wellesley and we found, as all of us have found, that there was a gap between expectation and realities. But it wasn't a discouraging gap, and it didn't turn us into cynical, bitter old women at the age of 18. It just inspired us to do something about that gap. What we did is often difficult for some people to understand. They ask us quite often: "Why, if you're dissatisfied, do you stay in a place?" Well, if you didn't care a lot about it you wouldn't stay. It's almost as though my mother used to say, "You know I'll always love you but there are times when I certainly won't like you." Our love for this place, this particular place, Wellesley College, coupled with our freedom from the burden of an inauthentic reality allowed us to question basic assumptions underlying our education.¹¹⁵

¹¹² "Hillary Rodham Clinton at Wellesley," Wellesley College, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.wellesley.edu/news/journalists/hillary-rodham-clinton>.

¹¹³ "Senator Edward W. Brooke's Commencement Address to the Wellesley College Class of 1969," Wellesley College, accessed May 18, 2022, <https://www.wellesley.edu/events/commencement/archives/1969commencement/commencementaddress>.

¹¹⁴ Ewafa, *Hillary Rodham, age 21 - Wellesley Commencement, Full Speech, May 31, 1969*, YouTube video, 15:08, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sSwLrRAKtWA>.

¹¹⁵ "Senator Edward W. Brooke's Commencement Address to the Wellesley College Class of 1969," Wellesley College.



Illustration 7 Hillary Rodham giving commencement speech Wellesley College 1969¹¹⁶



Illustration 8 Hillary Rodham poses in her family home for LIFE article¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ben Cosgrove, "Hillary Clinton's First National Splash: LIFE, 1969," *LIFE*, January 2, 2020, <https://www.life.com/people/life-with-hillary-portraits-of-a-wellesley-grad-1969/>.

Word of Hillary Rodham's rebuttal traveled quickly. *Life* magazine published an article covering notable commencement speeches from students graduating in 1969. The *Life* photographer traveled to the Rodham household in Park Ridge, Illinois to take Hillary's headshots. The photographer noted, "Had to go for nothing more than informal portraits, but should be some good expressions & hand gestures, etc. Her glasses helped."¹¹⁸ The title of Rodham's article in *Life* quoted her stating, "Protest is an attempt to forge an identity." The article covered three other graduating seniors who spoke out against, "Vietnam, racism, and adult hypocrisy," during their commencement ceremonies.¹¹⁹

Hillary entered Yale Law School in fall of 1969, one of twenty-six women in a class of 235. She later recalled that it did not take long for her to find her calling, "I realized that what I wanted to do with the law was to give voice to children who were not being heard."¹²⁰ Throughout her first year she also found herself repeatedly running into a young man from Arkansas named Bill Clinton. However, the two did not speak to one another until the following spring:

I was studying in the library, and Bill was standing out in the hall talking to another student, Jeff Gleckel, who was trying to persuade Bill to write for the *Yale Law Journal*. I noticed that he kept looking over at me. He had been doing a lot of that. So I stood up from the desk, walked over to him and said, "If you're going to keep looking at me, and I'm going to keep looking back, we might as well be introduced. I'm Hillary Rodham." That was it. The way Bill tells the story, he couldn't remember his own name.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Clinton, *Living History*, 50.

¹²¹ Ibid., 52.

The couple did not speak again until the final day of classes in spring 1971. Bill followed Hillary to the registrar's office under the ruse that he had not signed up for classes. When they arrived the woman working in the registrar office looked puzzled at Bill, "what are you doing here? You've already registered." Hillary was amused when he confessed, he just wanted to spend time with her. She invited him to a party in her dorm room that same night. When Bill arrived, he hardly spoke to Hillary or her friends. At the time, Hillary already had a boyfriend and did not see much of a future with Bill. However, he called her the following week and upon learning she had come down with a cold he brought her chicken noodle soup and juice. Hillary asked why he had not spoken much at her party. Bill responded, "Because I was interested in learning more about you and your friends." She pondered his response:

I was starting to realize that this young man from Arkansas was much more complex than first impressions might suggest. Th this day, he can astonish me with the connections he weaves between ideas and words and how he makes it all sound like music.¹²²

Friends of Rodham claim that her drive to make an impact in the legal world as a woman was altered when she met Bill Clinton. Instead, she set out to team up with Bill Clinton to make an impact on the world together.¹²³ However, in 1973 when Bill first asked Hillary to marry him she declined haunted by the turmoil caused by the failed marriage of her mother's parents.¹²⁴ After several more declined marriage proposals from Bill, Hillary accepted two years later. The couple married on October 11, 1975, in a home

¹²² Ibid., 54.

¹²³ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 61-62.

¹²⁴ Clinton, *Living History*, 61.

that Bill purchased in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Unlike most married women at this time, Hillary kept her maiden rather than take on Bill's following their marriage.¹²⁵



Illustration 9 Hillary Rodham and Bill Clinton on their wedding day¹²⁶

As Bill Clinton began his climb in Arkansas politics, Hillary continued to develop as a lawyer. She taught law at the University of Arkansas and showed interest in child and family legal issues. In 1976 Hillary became an associate in Little Rock at Rose Law Firm, the first woman in the firm's history, and Bill began his first term as Attorney General of Arkansas. By 1979, Hillary became a partner in her firm, and Bill was elected to his first term as Arkansas Governor.

Janet McCain

Some 1,000 miles to the south and eight years after Hillary's birth, Janet McCain was born on July 16, 1955, in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Her father, Angus Bouie McCain,

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹²⁶ *Hillary and Bill Clinton's Wedding*, 1975, photograph, ABC News, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-11-09/hillary-and-bill-clintons-wedding/7981974?nw=0>.

worked in the oilfields while her mother, Pat Potter McCain, was a homemaker.¹²⁷ She was one of five children: three girls and two boys. Janet's father left her mother early in her childhood, prompting her mother moving with all five children to start over in Hope, Arkansas.¹²⁸

A single mother of five children, Janet's mother had to be frugal. Janet recalled her desire to attend Girl Scout camp as a child, but that her mother lacked the money to pay for it. In response, Janet raised the money on her own to attend. She credited this experience as foundational to her work ethic later in life, remembering that it taught her how much more you appreciate things when you must work hard for them.¹²⁹ Mike Huckabee described the impact that Janet's childhood later played in her untraditional role as a wife:

Janet grew up learning to be frugal, what it means to share, and developing a lot of independence. In her life, the mother was the primary role model, so she had quite a different perspective of family responsibilities than I had. Even today, if something needs to be fixed, she fixes it. I am utterly inept when it comes to mechanical things. My father, on the other hand, was a talented mechanic. He liked physical labor. He did everything from wiring houses to putting out fires, and on his days off he was a mechanic in his little generator shop. If something needed to be done around the house, he would do it. He could fix things much better than he could explain to a child how to do it. Rather than, "Let me show you how," he'd say, "Just let me get this done." Consequently, I appreciate the fact that Janet can change tires.¹³⁰

Janet witnessed her mother's strength pulling the household through tough times. After settling in Arkansas, Janet's mother remarried to Johnny House. Despite being remarried,

¹²⁷ Revis Edmonds, "Janet McCain Huckabee (1955–)," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, CALS, November 17, 2021, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/janet-mccain-huckabee-14879/>.

¹²⁸ Mike Huckabee and John Perry, *Character Is the Issue: How People with Integrity Can Revolutionize America* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 77-78.

¹²⁹ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Mrs. Huckabee," June 22, 2004, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

¹³⁰ Huckabee and Perry, *Character Is the Issue*, 78.

her mother continued to hold a job outside of the home. When Janet was eleven, her mother campaigned for Hempstead County Clerk and won the 1966 election. She was re-elected twice more serving until 1973. Janet and her siblings campaigned alongside their mother in each election. This experience piqued Janet's interest in politics from an early age.¹³¹

Janet was a star basketball player throughout her high school career in Hope. She loved adventure, outdoors, and any activity that challenged her physically. She regularly attended church and was active in a student-led religious program at her school. The leader of the school religious program was her future husband, Mike Huckabee. Mike Huckabee recalled meeting Janet in high school stating, "Janet's sense of adventure attracted me when we were both high school students in Hope. Another attraction was her spiritual strength. People can provide some of the moral anchors we need in life, and my most extraordinary anchor is Janet."¹³² Janet McCain began dating Mike Huckabee in her junior year of high school. The relationship continued as they both enrolled in college at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas in fall 1973.¹³³

¹³¹ Edmonds, "Janet McCain Huckabee (1955-)."

¹³² Huckabee and Perry, *Character Is the Issue*, 77.

¹³³ Edmonds, "Janet McCain Huckabee (1955-)."



*Illustration 10 A young Janet McCain*¹³⁴

Ouachita Baptist University is a private college with deep Christian roots. The 1973 to 1974 student handbook that Janet and Mike received as incoming freshmen reveal the university's atmosphere. Christian spiritual growth was a priority in the handbook and to foster this growth students were required to participate in religious services on campus to graduate:

The chapel services are conducted each Tuesday, and these required programs serve as a time of spiritual growth and guidance as well as a medium for intra-university communication. In addition to the Tuesday programs, all freshmen will have an assembly on Thursday in which an orientation program will be the major emphasis. These programs will last for six weeks. One chapel credit will be given to a student who attends at least three-fourths of the regularly scheduled chapel services during a semester. The allowance of 25 per cent absence from chapel is intend to cover all excusable cuts. All students enrolled for 12 hours or more must register for chapel. Seven chapel credits are required for graduation from Ouachita Baptist University.

¹³⁴ Laura Amato, "Janet Huckabee, Mike's Wife: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know," *Heavy*, August 6, 2015, <https://heavy.com/news/2015/08/janet-huckabee-mike-huckabee-wife-republican-debate-fox-news-family-kids-arkansas-president-primaries/>.

Outside of religious organizations, the university offered a multitude of professional and departmental campus organizations. The list reveals that there was a Young Democrats club, but no other politically affiliated organizations. Students were expected to abide by a dress code that met, “Modesty, neatness, cleanliness and good taste are required at all times.” The university implemented policy to discourage sexual relations of students by locking all women’s dormitories each evening. The women’s dorms were opened at 6:30AM each morning unless a female student made special arrangements with the Head Resident Director. If two students wished to be married, they were required to notify the University:

STUDENT MARRIAGES ~ Many students find their life-time partners during the span of their college years, however the administration and faculty of OBU believe that hasty and/or secret marriages are contrary to the best interest of all persons concerned. Any student or students who plan to be married should give written notice to the Dean of Students at least two weeks prior to the date of the intended wedding. Also, there must be on file in the Dean of Students' Office a letter of permission from the parents of the student unless that student is over 21 years of age.

The male faculty outnumbered the female faculty in the 1974 yearbook. A majority of teachers possessed a Doctorate, while no females did. As established in the Baptist religion, no women were teachers of religion. The primary position held by the female faculty were clerk, reception, secretary, and librarian. The demographics for the university today reveal there are still a greater number of male faculty.¹³⁵

Janet dropped out of OBU after completing one year, while Mike continued his education until obtaining his Bachelor’s degree. On May 25, 1974, Janet and Mike were

¹³⁵ “Ouachita Baptist Demographics & Diversity Report,” College Factual, June 16, 2022, https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/ouachita-baptist-university/student-life/diversity/#gender_diversity.

married in her family's home, both aged eighteen. The couple had limited finances as college students and Mike slipped a soda can tab onto Janet's finger in lieu of a wedding ring.¹³⁶ Janet acknowledged the differences that she and Mike found throughout their courtship and early into their marriage. She also revealed that her marriage prioritized their faith when she offered advice to a newlywed couple:

Even after being married myself for twenty six years, I still don't have all the answers on how to make a marriage perfectly blissful. For every question or problem that arises, there will be a dozen different solutions... In good times and bad, you will learn more and more about life and each other. I can only say that each day will be new and exciting. Use each new day to live your best for God and all things will fall into perfect place in your relationship. Talk to each other about the big things and also the little ones. Keep those communication lines open. Remember you are totally different people. You won't always like the same things or feel the same way. Respect that and use it to become the perfect couple. You are like two warped boats that don't fit together at first, but through the course of time and all the different situations you weather together, you eventually become as one.¹³⁷

The couple's priority on religion in their marriage was well known to their friends and family. A childhood friend of Mike Huckabee's, Lester Sitez III, told reporters, "Those two folks were virgins when they got married, I can tell you that."¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Melinda Henneberger, "Shoots Bear, Submits to Husband: The Fascinating Marriage of Mike and Janet Huckabee," *Slate*, January 29, 2008, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2008/01/the-fascinating-marriage-of-mike-and-janet-huckabee.html>.

¹³⁷ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Cassie and Ben," July 18, 2000, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

¹³⁸ Henneberger, "Shoots Bear, Submits to Husband: The Fascinating Marriage of Mike and Janet Huckabee."



Illustration 11 Mike and Janet Huckabee on their wedding day¹³⁹

One year after the Huckabees were married, Janet began experiencing severe back pain. Initially, doctors assumed Janet suffered from a slipped disc, but after further examination found that she had spinal cancer. She began treatment for the cancer and her doctors predicted she would be unable to walk or bear children. However, she made a full recovery and gave birth to three children—John Mark, David, and Sarah Huckabee.

Janet dedicated herself as a mother and homemaker throughout the 1980s. Following her mother’s example, she also sought to be of service outside the home. She served two terms as president of the Arkansas Parent Teacher Association and

¹³⁹ Mike Huckabee (@GovMikeHuckabee), “46 yrs ago today @janethuckabee & I married in her house in Hope, AR b/c we couldn’t afford big wedding. She’s survived spinal cancer, 3 kids, 6 grandkids & many adventures,” Twitter photo, May 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/GovMikeHuckabee/status/1264912540934574085/photo/1>.

volunteered at her children's schools in multiple capacities. Mike Huckabee has suggested the most challenging position she held throughout the decade was that of the preacher's wife. Mike pastored the Beech Street First Baptist Church from 1986 to 1992. Janet served as a Sunday School teacher, a Senior Adult Ministry volunteer, and aided in production of a weekly elementary school teaching video called "Kampus Kids."¹⁴⁰ The Huckabees endured scrutiny as a family. Mike Huckabee recalled:

...their [John Mark, David, and Sarah] whole lives people have expected them to be either perfect or horrible. If they act up, I hear "Hey, what do you expect? They're the preacher's kids." Or folks expect them to be perfect and are flabbergasted when they aren't: "I can't believe you would do that when your *father* is a *pastor*." It's exactly the same when your father is the governor. And, of course, Janet feels the full force of these harsh comments when they hit.¹⁴¹

From 1990 to 1995 Janet worked outside the home as a substitute teacher for Texarkana School District and from 1992 to 1996 a technician and clerk in the ICU at St. Michael Hospital in Texarkana, Texas. When Mike began his political career in Arkansas in 1992, Janet continued to work while aiding in his campaigns. On July 15, 1996, Mike Huckabee became Governor of Arkansas.¹⁴²

Hillary Clinton grew up in a two-parent household with a demanding father and a subservient mother, while Janet Huckabee was raised by a single parent with mother as head of the household and local public servant. Both women were challenged to work

¹⁴⁰Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Historical Bios, "JANET MCCAIN HUCKABEE, BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH," 1997, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

¹⁴¹ Huckabee and Perry, *Character Is the Issue*, 80.

¹⁴²Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Historical Bios, "Women like us," November/December 1997, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

hard and develop independence in their respective circumstances. Clinton and Huckabee valued public service and political involvement throughout their early years of life.



*Illustration 12 Bill and Hillary at Governor's Inauguration 1979*¹⁴³



*Illustration 13 Mike and Janet at Governor's Inauguration 1996*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Karen Blumenthal, "What Will They Call Hillary Clinton If She Wins?" *The Guardian*, January 13, 2016, US edition, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/13/what-will-they-call-hillary-rodham-clinton-if-she-wins-writers-language>.

¹⁴⁴ "A Look at Mike Huckabee," *USA TODAY*, January 27, 2016, <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/news/politics/2015/01/12/a-look-at-mike-huckabee/21637391/>.

Hillary Rodham's first televised interview as First Lady of Arkansas aired in 1979, only one month after Bill's inauguration. The interview was broadcast on a PBS segment titled InFocus. The interviewer showed no reserve in probing gendered topics, ranging from the subject of Hillary's maiden name, her lack of children, her insistence on working out of the home, to her overall ability to perform the role of a First Lady. He phrased his questions as issues that the majority of Arkansans wished to know, particularly her name, "You must get very tired of being asked questions by people like me and us men, like me, and by people in general public about your decision not to use your husband's name?" Hillary explained:

Mm-hmm. Well I don't get tired of it. I think it's, it's, an understandable question. But, for many of the things that we've just been talking about the that the decision to keep my own name particularly in my professional work was one that seemed a very natural kind of decision. Because, as I said, I was older when I got married and I had practiced law and I had worked in Washington and Boston and written several articles. I had developed something of a specialization in the area of children and family law and I knew that we were going to be undergoing a great deal of scrutiny and a great deal of attention if Bill continued in politics, which he intended to do in some form or another. And, since I wanted to continue practicing law I really did not want to mix my professional activities with his political activities. I didn't want anyone ever to, to, think that I was either taking advantage of his position or in some way riding on it and there aren't very many ways to persuade people of that. But, I thought it essential that I try to keep as much of a distinction between my legal career and my obligations as Bill's wife as I possibly could. Keeping my name was part of that, as well as, the sort of professional reputation that I'd already built up.

The interviewer pressed, "Well your husband won the governorship in a landslide, but we're still led to believe that it possibly could have cost him a few votes because your

¹⁴⁶ Paul Riviere, "1978 Arkansas Elections: A Compilation of Primary, Run-Off & General Election Results for State & District Offices," Secretary of State, Accessed July 13, 2022, <https://www.sos.arkansas.gov/uploads/elections/1978%20Election%20Results.pdf>.

name is not the same as his.” Hillary acknowledged the possibility but drew attention to Bill’s youth, his birthplace being in the small town of Hope rather than a larger town that had produced other well-known Arkansan politicians like Jonesboro (Senators Thaddeus and Hattie Caraway), and other issues voters had that did not involve her. The interviewer continued with the insinuation that Hillary was not feminine enough and too feminist for an Arkansan first lady:

The thought occurs to me that you really don’t fit the image that we have created for the Governor’s wife in Arkansas. You’re not a native. You’ve been educated in liberal eastern universities. You’re less than forty. You don’t have any children. You don’t use your husband’s name. You practice law. Does it concern you that maybe other people feel that you don’t fit the image that we have created for the Governor’s wife in Arkansas?

Hillary’s response emphasized her family orientation and grounded her marriage and future in Arkansas:

No, because just as I said before I think each person should be assessed and judged on that person’s own merits. I’m not forty, but that hopefully will be cured by age, eventually I will be. We don’t have any children yet—we’re hoping to have children so that I hope will be cured in a number of years also. That doesn’t bother me and I hope that it doesn’t bother very many people. I think that in a way it is kind of a tribute to the state that someone who may or may not fit an image is accepted on her own terms. You know I came to Arkansas on my own free will. I was not born here and I fell in love with the state and decided to stay. Bill and I were married. I think that is a kind of indication of what we’re trying to do in the state.¹⁴⁷

Throughout her initial First Ladyship in Arkansas, Hillary refused to yield to the public criticism of her appearance and place. Bill Clinton’s mother recalled, “I would grind my teeth and wish I could sit Hillary on the edge of my tub and give her some makeup lessons. Show her how to bring out all that natural beauty she was covering up

¹⁴⁷ AlphaX News, *Hillary Rodham Clinton interview, 1979*, YouTube video, 27:55, May 13, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bg_sEZg7-rk.

by going natural. None of that mattered to her, though. She was too busy getting educated and doing good things like starting youth advocate programs.”¹⁴⁸ Hillary’s mother-in-law revealed a thought that was shared by the majority of Arkansans. Southerners by this time had long thought of makeup as the mark of a put together woman. Not wearing it was not only not feminine but was an embrace of counterculture—feminist.¹⁴⁹

Journalist Gail Sheehy conducted numerous interviews with Arkansans who felt strongly that Hillary Rodham was not feminine enough and was too feminist. Sheehy found that to constituents, “the governor’s spouse became the lightning rod for people’s resentment.”¹⁵⁰ When Bill began his 1980 re-election campaign for Governor, thirty-one percent of Democratic Primary votes were secured by his opponent. Frank White, the Republican opponent, seized the opportunity to air television advertisements to further attack Bill Clinton.¹⁵¹ The ads targeted Clinton’s approach to Cuban refugees and taxes, but the final blow attacked Bill’s, “hippie wife and bearded chief of staff.”¹⁵² Bill Clinton lost re-election in 1980.

¹⁴⁸ Gail Sheehy, *Hillary’s Choice* (New York: Random House, 1999), 204-205.

¹⁴⁹ Blain Roberts, *Pageants, Parlors, and Pretty Women: Race and Beauty in the Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 50-56.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁵¹ Tom W. Dillard, “Frank Durward White (1933–2003),” *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, CALS, December 16, 2019, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/frank-durward-white-125/>.

¹⁵² Sheehy, *Hillary’s Choice*, 236.

support. Rather than step out of the public eye, Hillary immersed herself into a campaign strategy for Bill to secure the next Governor's election.

“In order to avoid any problems and put it to rest, I will forever be known as Hillary Rodham Clinton,” Hillary told Arkansans in the year following Bill's political loss.¹⁵⁵ Hillary stopped wearing her glasses in public and put on makeup. Consumer trends in makeup at the time revealed large, round eyes were popular.¹⁵⁶ The removal of her glasses and addition of eye makeup to achieve this look signifies Hillary's attempt to appear more feminine. She also died her hair blonde and straightened out the curls in her hair. Hillary updated her wardrobe with close resemblance to Princess Diana, who was regarded as a fashion icon.¹⁵⁷ When speaking to crowds she sometimes affected a southern drawl. Former Wellesley College classmates who had been empowered by Hillary's feminism felt discouraged by her new submission to Arkansans' sensibilities. One classmate recalled, “When she had to begin to change her appearance—dye her hair, lose a lot of weight, get rid of her glasses, not speak up, not be as much who she was—that hurt all of us.”¹⁵⁸ Within a year Hillary Rodham Clinton rebranded her physical appearance to fit the socially constructed ideals of femininity that Arkansan voters associated with a traditional, Southern First Lady.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, she implicitly backed off of her feminism. In 1982, Bill Clinton defeated Frank White in the Governor election. Hillary Rodham Clinton was reinstated as first lady of Arkansas and continued to

¹⁵⁵ FRONTLINE PBS, *How Hillary Clinton Responded to the Gennifer Flowers Scandal | The Choice 2016* / FRONTLINE, YouTube video, 6:56, October 3, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvR62T1gO0w>.

¹⁵⁶ Geoffrey Jones, “Blonde and Blue-eyed? Globalizing Beauty, c.1945-c.1980,” *The Economic History Review* 61, no. 1 (2008): 125-54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40057559>.

¹⁵⁷ Okwodu, “Princess Diana's Greatest Fashion Moments Epitomize Royal Glamour.”

¹⁵⁸ Jones, “Blonde and Blue-eyed? Globalizing Beauty, c.1945-c.1980.”

¹⁵⁹ Sheehy, *Hillary's Choice*, 238.

navigate the scrutiny of the position. Although her physical appearance changed to meet the public standard of femininity, Hillary continued to work as a partner in her Little Rock law firm.¹⁶⁰ Initially her appearance was enough to console voters, but throughout the decade her job outside of the home became controversial.



Illustration 16 Hillary Rodham during first term as Arkansas first lady 1979¹⁶¹



Illustration 17 Hillary Rodham Clinton during second term as Arkansas first lady 1982¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Robert Draper, "How Hillary became Hillary," *New York Times*, October 11, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/16/magazine/how-hillary-clinton-became-hillary.html>.

¹⁶² The Clinton Foundation, "The Roots of Hillary Clinton," *TIME*, November 2, 2016, <https://time.com/hillary-clinton-roots/>.

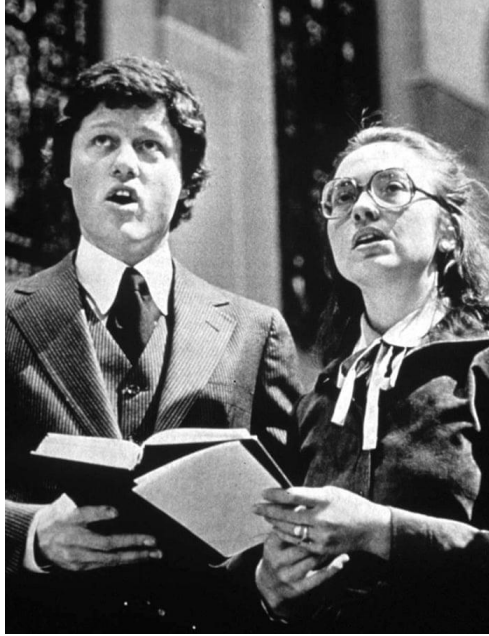


Illustration 18 Bill and Hillary at Governor's Inauguration 1979¹⁶³



Illustration 19 Bill and Hillary at Governor's Inauguration 1982¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Karen Blumenthal, "What Will They Call Hillary Clinton If She Wins?," *The Guardian*, January 13, 2016, US edition, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/13/what-will-they-call-hillary-rodham-clinton-if-she-wins-writers-language>.

¹⁶⁴ Jillian Selzer, "Hillary and Bill Clinton have been together for nearly 50 years. Here's a timeline of their relationship," *Insider*, last modified January 20, 2021, <https://www.insider.com/hillary-bill-clinton-relationship-timeline-2018-12>.



Illustration 20 Princess Diana of Wales at a movie premier 1985¹⁶⁵



Illustration 21 Hillary Rodham Clinton poses for picture as Arkansas first lady 1985¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Noor Lobad, "Bruce Oldfield: Princess Diana's Favorite Designer," *L'OFFICIEL*, July 14, 2021, <https://www.lofficielusa.com/fashion/bruce-oldfield-british-designer-princess-diana>.

¹⁶⁶ "Photos: Hillary Clinton through the years," *The Sentinel*, September 9, 2016, https://hanfordsentinel.com/news/national/photos-hillary-clinton-through-the-years/collection_758cf87c-1c70-5e0d-8ae4-68383ee17ba4.html#2.

Six months after Bill's election he gave Hillary another job to hold as Chairman of the Arkansas Education Standards Committee.¹⁶⁷ He justified this appointment stating, "I will have a person who is closer to me than anyone else overseeing a project that is more important to me than anything else."¹⁶⁸ However, this project proved just as important to Hillary Rodham Clinton. When Hillary joined Bill Clinton in Arkansas nearly a decade before the appointment, she was a law professor at the University of Arkansas. She was disheartened by students that justified their poor education by poking fun at their home state. Several students would respond to her disappointment by asking, "What do you expect from us? We're from Arkansas." Hillary leveraged experience as an educator to advocate for education reform and appeal to Arkansan voters:

It seems to us that nothing government does is so directly connected to our idea of who and what we are, and what we want to be, as our public schools. Our children are our hope and our future. We cannot fail them. The world outside the classroom will punish the illiterate soon enough; for our schools and teachers to play an indefinite game of 'let's pretend' with students who are not learning constitutes a failure of nerve we can no longer afford. Passing students who deserved to fail was tantamount to educational fraud. We Arkansans have to quit making excuses.¹⁶⁹

A major part of Hillary's success in this venture was her effort to identify herself as an Arkansan. The concerns that were voiced in her initial first ladyship began to fade as Hillary transformed into the image that Arkansas constituents could identify with. An Arkansas reporter recalled, "In the early days, people here reacted to her otherness, but that wasn't true after a while. She looked more like us, she acted more like us, she talked more like us. And she knew everybody by then. You don't come off as a know-it-all

¹⁶⁷ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 169.

¹⁶⁸ "Hillary," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 26, 1993, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F1993%2F05%2F26&id=Ar01800&sk=AB404E31&viewMode=image>.

¹⁶⁹ Clinton, *Living History*.

when you have relationships.” The head of the Arkansas Education Association in 1983 stated, “They knew her as a person.”¹⁷⁰

The Clintons’ plan to enact education reform would prove a challenge. Taxes would need to be increased, students would need to take standardized tests, and the greatest obstacle, teachers would be required to take tests. Hillary recalled that this plan enraged the Teacher’s Union, but she argued that there would be no way to improve education in the state if teachers were falling short in the classrooms. She prepared herself to present the plan to the Arkansas state House and Senate. After her presentation she noted:

I laughed when Representative Lloyd George, a legislator from rural Yell County, later announced to the assembly: “Well, fellas, it looks like we might have elected the wrong Clinton!” It was another example of a phenomenon I call “the talking dog syndrome.” Some people are still amazed that any woman (this includes Governors’ wives, corporate CEOs, sports stars and rock singers) can hold their own under pressure and be articulate and knowledgeable. The dog can talk! In fact, it’s often an advantage if people you hope to persuade underestimate you at first. I would have been willing to bark my whole speech in order to guarantee education reform!¹⁷¹

Hillary’s prevalence in front of Arkansas legislators was short lived. Although she softened her feminine image, her feminism showed through. Bill Clinton became the key spokesman for enacting the education reform plans developed by Hillary’s committee. For the first time in over twenty-six years, Bill Clinton was able to secure a raise in taxes by one cent. Arkansas public school standards were approved, and to the dismay of the teacher’s union, all teachers in the state were required to take competency tests. Although

¹⁷⁰ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 169.

¹⁷¹ Clinton, *Living History*, 50.

Bill Clinton took over as the face of the education reform, teachers, committee members, and other Arkansans credited Hillary for the true reformer— for good or bad.

From 1980 to 1990 educational attainment in the form of high school and college completion increased as a result of the education reform enacted by the Clintons. The percentage of high school graduates rose from 55.5 percent to 66.3 percent and the percentage of college graduates from 10.8 percent to 13.3 percent.¹⁷² ¹⁷³ Arkansans were satisfied with the roles that Bill and Hillary played, and the couple secured reelection by a landslide in both 1984 and 1986.¹⁷⁴ The Governor term limit increased from two years to four years in 1986 and the next election was in 1990. Democratic party leaders began urging Bill to announce a bid to run for President of the United States in the 1988 election. Hillary grew frustrated with Bill's indecision. She set a deadline for him to decide what his next step would be, and on July 15, 1987, Bill reserved the ballroom of the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock to publicly announce his choice. Bill Clinton revealed he would not be running for President in the 1988 election and chalked up his reasoning to a concern about missing out on family time with his wife and daughter.¹⁷⁵ However, personal staff and close friends later admitted Bill's decision was based on something much more controversial— a skeleton in the closet in the form of a string of extramarital affairs. Rumors had circulated throughout Bill and Hillary's marriage that while he was a

¹⁷² "Past Census Data," Arkansas State Data Center, Arkansas Economic Development Institute, August 20, 2021, <https://arstatedatacenter.youraedi.com/past-census-data/>.

¹⁷³ Arkansas State Data Center, Arkansas Economic Development Institute, *1990 Census of Population and Housing*, Report 040 Arkansas, <https://arstatedatacenter.youraedi.com/census/censusdata/Census1990/Counties/ArkState.pdf>.

¹⁷⁴ "Former Governors – Arkansas," National Governors Association.

¹⁷⁵ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 176-178.

known womanizer, she ignored his actions for the sake of future political mobility.

Betsey Wright, a top aide to the Clintons recognized:

Hillary had long ago made some peace with his womanizing and the trade-offs. And that what she wanted out of the relationship was worth putting up with some of that...she was as aware as I was that those women were not people that he wanted any deep relationship with. They weren't the kind of women that he shared a passion with intellectually or for politics or certainly not for Chelsea who was a huge bond with them.¹⁷⁶

Betsey Wright approached Bill Clinton to discuss any women that could potentially come forward and reveal a relationship if he chose to run for President. Clinton walked Wright through a list of women he had had extramarital affairs with and how often. Wright believed this played heavily into Bill's decision in 1988.

From 1988 to 1992, Democratic Party leaders continued to pressure Bill Clinton to run a campaign for President. But before making that decision, Bill and Hillary focused on the upcoming Governor re-election campaign of 1990. More rumors circulated of Bill's infidelity and Hillary's blind eye, leading reporters to question the couple's marriage. As the state and national media began to home in on the Clintons, Hillary's actions were once again scrutinized as a risk to Bill's political career.

Tom McRae, a former supporter of Bill Clinton, announced he would be running against the incumbent Governor in the Democratic primary before the 1990 election. On Wednesday May 16, 1990, McRae stood in front of the state capitol building to criticize Bill Clinton's record. An enraged Hillary Clinton stepped out of the audience during the news cast and interrupted McRae by reading previous letters of support and praise he had given to Bill Clinton. McRae remained collected as Hillary asked, "Do you really want to

¹⁷⁶ Bernstein, *A Woman in Charge*, 178.

talk about Bill when the governor is in Washington working for the state? It seems to me to be a stunt.”¹⁷⁷ Arkansans were split between support for and offense by Hillary Clinton’s actions toward Tom McRae. One Arkansas legislator, Tom Robinson, told reporters, “I thought she made a political blunder for her husband’s candidacy in that she’s not the governor, even though some say she’s been the governor for the last ten years.”¹⁷⁸ Robinson was astonished by Hillary’s outspokenness and stated his wife would never act out in that way because, “she knows her role and I know mine.”¹⁷⁹ Newspapers across the state published article detailing the incident. Hillary’s outspokenness on behalf of her husband played into a gendered stereotype of “who really wears the pants?” A majority of Arkansans held the notion that the man should wear the pants, as Robinson’s commentary supports. The issue of Hillary Clinton’s role as a woman, wife, and first lady were challenged as a result. Tom McRae received nearly 40 percent of the Democratic Primary vote for the 1990 election.¹⁸⁰ The results suggested increased opposition to Clinton while the general election results confirmed this revelation. On November 6, 1990, Bill Clinton was re-elected as Governor of Arkansas with 57.49 percent of the vote. This was the lowest percentage he had received since his 1982 election. Arkansans had shown their distaste for Hillary Clinton’s outspokenness in Bill Clinton’s Governorship.

The scrutiny became national when Bill announced his intent to run for President of the United States on October 3, 1991. Reporters asked constituents their opinions and the responses showed that Hillary was viewed more as a running mate with Bill rather

¹⁷⁷ Ron Fournier, “Robinson says Mrs. Clinton erred by interrupting news conference,” *Baxter Bulletin*, May 18, 1990, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/412633724/?terms=hillary%20clinton&match=1>.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ W. J. “Bill” McCuen, “Arkansas Election Results,” 1990, https://www.sos.arkansas.gov/uploads/elections/1990_Election_results.pdf.

than a supporting spouse. Two Arkansas stated, “I feel she’s the power behind the throne,” and “I think she’s a very aggressive woman. She’s overly ambitious.”¹⁸¹ Along with this, constituents across the nation began to demand that Hillary release her list of clients at her law firm, publicize the Governor and First Lady financial records, and address the growing rumors of their troubled marriage.

The couple agreed to an interview with *60 Minutes* on January 26, 1992, to address the nation in response to the growing interest in their marriage. It was in this interview that Hillary sparked her first national headlines regarding her ideas about gender and marriage. The couple sat closely on a couch while Bill primarily answered the interviewer. Hillary stared at Bill and nodded her head each time he spoke. She explained in her autobiography that she regretted speaking at all in this interview and the uproar her few words caused. After the couple declined to admit that there had been extramarital affairs on Bill’s end of the marriage, the interviewer probed the couple, “I think most Americans would agree that it’s very admirable that you have stayed together, that you’ve worked your problems out, that you seem to have reached some sort of an understanding and arrangement.” Bill started the defense and Hillary ended it:

Bill Clinton: Wait a minute. You’re looking at two people who love each other. This is not an arrangement or an understanding. This is a marriage. That’s a very different thing.
Hillary Clinton: You know, I’m not sitting here, some little woman standing by my man like Tammy Wynette, I’m sitting here because I love him and I respect him and I honor what he’s been through and what we’ve been through together. And you know, if that’s not enough for people, then heck, don’t vote for him.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Sophie Levine, *Close Up Interview with Bill and Hillary Clinton*, 19 October 2019, YouTube video, 14:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V37rjWAAqA0>.

¹⁸² Clinton, *Living History*, 107.



Illustration 22 Hillary and Bill Clinton 60 Minutes interview 1992¹⁸³

Although her physical appearance was softened, Hillary’s feminist stance was not. Her commentary dismissed the notion that she stayed with Bill as a “submissive” little woman with a sense of blind loyalty in duty of a wife. She asserted that she was an equal partner in her marriage who made her own decisions.

Despite the fact that the majority of the interview was directed to and answered by Bill Clinton and was focused on the allegations of misconduct by Bill Clinton it was Hillary that faced the court of public scrutiny in the aftermath. Country Star Tammy Wynette took to the press immediately following the release of the interview:

Mrs. Clinton, you have offended every woman and man who love that song—several million in number. I believe you have offended every true country music fan and every person who has ‘made it on their own’ with no one to take them to a White House. I would like you to appear with me on any forum, including networks, cable or talk shows and stand toe-to-toe with me. I will not stand by

¹⁸³ Virginia Chamlee, “‘Not Sittin’ Here as Some Little Woman:’ Looking Back at Hillary and Bill Clinton’s 60 Minutes Interview,” *People*, October 27, 2021, <https://people.com/politics/looking-back-at-hillary-and-bill-clintons-60-minutes-interview/>.

and allow you or any other person to embarrass, humiliate and degrade me on national television and print.¹⁸⁴

Hillary apologized to Tammy Wynette and tried to explain that her statement was not directed at the singer personally, but the damage had already been done.

Hillary grew aggravated with constituents', continued focus on her actions rather than on her husband's upcoming political campaign. She grew impatient with an interviewer in early 1992 stating, "I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was fulfill by profession which I entered before my husband was in a public life. The work that I have done as a professional, a public advocate, has been aimed to assure that women can make the choices whether it's full-time career, full-time motherhood, or some combination."¹⁸⁵ Only the first sentence that Hillary stated was broadcasted on television and in newspapers and Arkansan homemakers and traditionalists felt outraged by her comment. The damage had been done despite Hillary's attempts to apologize and explain that she meant no ill intent toward women who chose to be homemakers. A homemaker in Arkansas told reporters, "She [Hillary Clinton] has no use for us and we have no use for her."¹⁸⁶ Hillary recalled the aftermath of her comments:

I had made an awkward attempt to explain my situation and to suggest that many women who juggle careers and lives are penalized for the choices they make. It turned into a story about my alleged callousness toward stay-at-home mothers. Some reporters merged "tea and cookies" and "standing by my man like Tammy Wynette" into one quote, as if I had uttered both phrases in the same breath—not fifty-one days apart. The controversy was a boon to GOP strategists. Republican Party leaders labeled me a "radical feminist," a "militant feminist lawyer" and

¹⁸⁴ Associated Press, "Singer stands up for 'Stand by Your Man,'" *The Kansas City Star*, January 29, 1992, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/682113642/?terms=stand%20by%20your%20man%20clinton&match=1>.

¹⁸⁵ Eleanor Sheehan, "People Freaked Out Over This Comment Hillary Clinton Made in 1992," *Popsugar*, August 19, 2016, <https://www.popsugar.com/news/Hillary-Clinton-Baking-Cookies-Comment-42252587>.

¹⁸⁶ Levine, *Close Up Interview with Bill and Hillary Clinton*.

even “the ideological leader of a Clinton-Clinton Administration that would push a radical-feminist agenda.”¹⁸⁷

Campaign strategists and close friends urged Hillary to combat the radical feminist label that was placed upon her by changing her appearance. Hillary noted, “What they understood, and I didn’t, was that a First Lady’s appearance matters. I was no longer representing only myself. I was asking the American people to let me represent them in a role that has conveyed everything from glamor to mother comfort.”¹⁸⁸ Hillary cut her hair and continued to fashion herself after Princess Diana as she continued on the campaign trail with Bill.

¹⁸⁷ Clinton, *Living History*, 110.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.



Illustration 23 Princess Diana visits Royal Marsden Hospital February 1993¹⁸⁹



Illustration 24 Hillary Clinton proposes health care plan February 1993¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Martha Sorren, “20 of Princess Diana's Most Daring Outfits,” *cafemom*, June 16, 2021, <https://cafemom.com/entertainment/princess-diana-most-daring-outfits>.

¹⁹⁰ “HILLARY CLINTON 1ST LADY OF THE U.S.A. 16 October 1993,” *Alamy*, October 16, 1993, <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-hillary-clinton-1st-lady-of-the-usa-16-october-1993-136573092.html?imageid=BAC2873E-348A-4CED-BA96-6E81363E1ACF&p=1247536&pn=1&searchId=6100d6c6cfc370e127c8738f29d8f6a7&searchtype=0>.



Illustration 25 Princess Diana at Wimbledon 1993¹⁹¹



Illustration 26 Hillary Clinton at White House exhibit 1995¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Julia Hobbs, “The Secrets Behind Princess Diana’s Predominantly Pink Wardrobe,” *Vouge*, May 12, 2021, <https://www.vogue.co.uk/fashion/gallery/princess-diana-pink>.

¹⁹² Harper’s Bazaar Staff, “Hillary Clinton’s Iconic Style Through the Years,” *Bazaar*, October 26, 2017, <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/celebrity/red-carpet-dresses/news/g6036/hillary-clinton-campaign-fashion/?slide=47>.

She felt a loss of her independence when she was referred to as “the wife of” rather than her own name. Hillary shared the story of the hardest realization of her role:

My new Status hit home over something mundane: I had ordered new stationery to answer all the campaign mail I was receiving. I had chosen cream paper with my name, *Hillary Rodham Clinton*, printed neatly across the top in navy blue. When I opened the box, I saw that the order had been changed so that the name on it was *Hillary Clinton*. Evidently someone on Bill’s staff decided that it was more politically expedient to drop “Rodham,” as if it were no longer part of my identity.”¹⁹³

On June 3, 1992, Bill and Hillary sat down for a second national interview on *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Unlike the incumbent President George H. W. Bush and Independent Party candidate Ross Perot, the Clintons chose to stray from the traditional news stations that interviewed political candidates. Bill played the saxophone and answered questions regarding the policy and plan he would implement if elected President. Hillary joined Bill for the latter half of the interview to answer questions regarding her role in Bill’s campaign. Arsenio Hall introduced Hillary by scanning the audience, referencing the Wynette comment, “Well you all know this lady—the woman beside the man, not behind anymore, but beside.” Once again Hillary was asked to comment on Bill’s infidelity. The couple initially circumvented the topic until Hall probed, “It’s hard, I mean, it’s had to think you [directed at Hillary] never at some point said who is Gennifer? You know, who the hell is she?” Hillary returned, “I know who she is. I mean I’ve known who she is. Hall asked, “And you know what her problem is?” Hillary responded, “She’s got lots of problems.” After a tense pause Hall directed his next question to Bill before turning back to Hillary to ask, “Have you [Hillary] kind of, like, and this is something I heard a political analyst talk about recently. He said you [Hillary] kind of were—I use the word

¹⁹³ Ibid., 112.

chilling out—he said you were holding back a little bit. That you have been instructed not to say as much or be as outspoken. No?” Hillary chuckled, replied, and quickly redirected the interview:

I’ve heard that but I never know who says it. I think its wishful thinking on the part of some people. I want to tell you something. I thought what you did the night after the L.A. riots was the way television ought to be. I was so impressed. It was not only a great show it was honest and it gave people a chance to connect with each other, like you and Bill were talking about earlier. It used television in a positive way—not just reporting from a distance, not just pointing fingers, but involving people and letting those of us that are at home feel that we had some role and some say too. I was real pleased.

The interview returned focus to Bill Clinton who talked until the final seconds of the show. At end Arsenio asked Hillary to close the show by telling Americans why they should vote for her husband.¹⁹⁴

Following *The Arsenio Hall* interview, Bill’s staff encouraged Hillary to pursue more exposure in print and television to avoid a controversy of her “holding back a little bit.”¹⁹⁵ It was still vital to the Clinton campaign that Hillary present herself as a fashionable, motherly figure that fit the mold of a United States First Lady. In a 1992 *People* magazine interview, Hillary agreed to pose for a cover photo and present herself in such a manner.

¹⁹⁴ Gimmieanidicanuse, *Bill and Hillary Clinton Interview w/ Arsenio Hall – 1992*, YouTube video, 24:50, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia0CS8uvegg>.

¹⁹⁵ Clinton, *Living History*, 112.

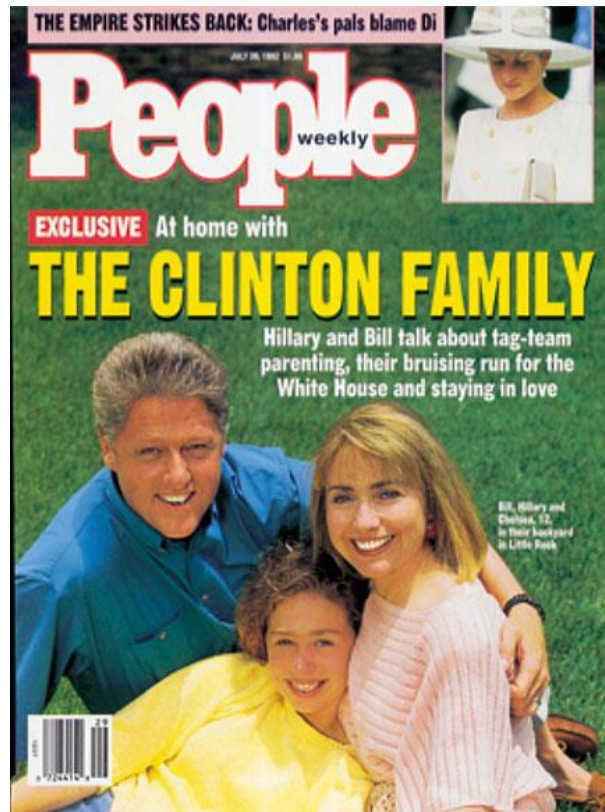


Illustration 27 Clinton family poses for cover of People Weekly¹⁹⁶

However, the socially constructed role of a first lady was challenged by the height of third wave feminism. Women throughout the United States were delaying marriage and childbirth, enrolling in higher education in record setting numbers, and joining the workforce in larger percentages.¹⁹⁷ Hillary noticed the change happening and the constituency support she could gain for her husband's campaign:

While Bill talked about social change, I embodied it. I had my own opinions, interests, and profession. For better or worse, I was outspoken. I represented a fundamental change in the way women functioned in our society. And if my

¹⁹⁶ Diana Pearl, "Inside Hillary Clinton's People Magazine Cover from 1992," *People*, September 30, 2016, <https://people.com/celebrity/inside-hillary-clintons-people-magazine-cover-from-1992/>.

¹⁹⁷ Allison Yarrow, "How the 90s Hurt Gender Equality Progress," *TIME*, June 13, 2018, <https://time.com/5310256/90s-gender-equality-progress/>.

husband won, I would be filling a position in which the duties were not spelled out, but the performance was judged by everybody.¹⁹⁸

What had hurt Hillary and Bill in Arkansas began to help the pair nationally. The incumbent President and First Lady, George H. W. and Barbara Bush represented a traditional and predictable political strategy. Barbara Bush was described in August of 1992 in a *Time* article:

Barbara Bush is America's grandmother, casual, capable, down-to-earth; she is fake pearls and real family. "I'm not a competitive person," she once said, "and I think women like me because they don't think I'm competitive, just nice." She bakes cookies, knits, needlepoints. She is funny, but mostly at her own expense. She is a woman so modest that she writes in the voice of a dog.¹⁹⁹

While Bill and Hillary represented change and a new political strategy. Hillary was young, not America's grandmother, competitive, and preferred her work to baking cookies. While the Bush's offered campaign buttons as a united front, the Clinton's utilized Hillary as an asset to the country as well. On November 3, 1992, Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States and Hillary began her role as First Lady.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁸ Clinton, *Living History*, 110.

¹⁹⁹ Marjorie Williams, "Barbara's Backlash," *Vanity Fair*, Condé Nast, August 2018, <https://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/1992/08/williams199208>.

²⁰⁰ "Presidents," WH.GOV, accessed June 3, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/>.



Illustration 28 George and Barbara Bush campaign button 1992²⁰¹



Illustration 29 Bill and Hillary Clinton campaign button 1992²⁰²



Illustration 30 Replica of 1992 Clinton campaign button²⁰³

²⁰¹ “1992 George H.W. Bush Barbara campaign pin,” <https://www.ebay.com/itm/384841967850>.

²⁰² “Presidential Political Campaign Buttons,” *Wisconsin Historical Society*, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM128498>.

²⁰³ Spencer Hurlbut, “Clinton Library Campaign Button Replica,” 2021.

V. Janet McCain Huckabee

Janet Huckabee became Arkansas' First Lady on July 15, 1996. The previous governor, Jim Guy Tucker, had been convicted of conspiracy and mail fraud which resulted in his early resignation and Lieutenant Governor, Mike Huckabee, taking his place.²⁰⁴ The media coverage of the ex-governor overshadowed the first few months of the Huckabees' transition into the Governor and First Lady's role. However, Mike Huckabee was praised across Arkansas newspapers for opting to finish Tucker's term, bringing stability to the state's government.²⁰⁵ An article published two days after Governor Huckabee was sworn in offered Arkansans a glimpse at the new first family:

“This is not Jackie Kennedy showing off the White House,’ Huckabee said as he and his wife led a small group into a parlor to the east of the main entrance. That’s as far as the tour went. ‘Considering we started out when we were first married in an apartment in Texarkana that rented for \$40 per month... this is a nice place for us to live,’ Huckabee said in a deliberate understatement. The Huckabees have been married for 22 years... The Huckabees have three children, John Mark, a student at Ouachita Baptist University, and David and Sarah, both of whom will be attending Little Rock public schools, Huckabee said... With reporters present, a worker took down the marble slab at the entrance to the grounds with former Gov. Jim Guy Tucker’s name on it and replaced it with a similar stone with Huckabee’s name. Mrs. Huckabee joked that their name had been misspelled. It wasn’t.²⁰⁶

Janet Huckabee did not hold a job outside of her role as First Lady of Arkansas. In 1997 she hosted a brunch at the Governor’s mansion for a former cook celebrating her eightieth birthday. Alta Faubus, former Governor Orval Faubus, hired Eliza Ashley as a cook in the mansion in 1955. Although the occasion was for Faubus’ former cook, she

²⁰⁴ “Former Governors – Arkansas,” National Governors Association.

²⁰⁵ Associated Press, “Huckabee drops out of senate race: He’ll finish Tucker’s term,” *Baxter Bulletin*, May 31, 1996, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/412858494/?terms=huckabee&match=1>.

²⁰⁶ Chuck Bartels, “Huckabees settle in at mansion,” *Baxter Bulletin*, July 17, 1996, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/412946259/?terms=huckabees&match=1>.

took the time to detail her impression of Janet Huckabee's appearance and fashioning of the mansion:

Mrs. Huckabee is a very gracious lady and is more beautiful than her pictures... Mrs. Huckabee helped me out the front door. She said she had fallen on the front steps since she had lived there. She had the most beautiful bed of flowers in the big circle in front of the mansion. I asked her if she had arranged them. She said she had. There were tall white wild roses in the center and each row around the roses was shorter. There was every color in the rainbow. The mansion was not as beautiful as it was when I lived in it.²⁰⁷

Although she praised the current first lady's taste, Faubus' commentary regarding the physical appearance of Janet and the governor's mansion kicked off public scrutiny of Janet's role and duties as First Lady. Little Rock elite and Mansion Commission members strongly disliked any changes to the Governor's mansion that Janet Huckabee initiated. Although floral arranging was clearly fitting the bill on feminine duty of a first lady, there was clearly a class element at play in which elite Little Rock women were used to being the gate keepers. In response, the Huckabees appointed three new members to the Mansion Commission from outside of the Little Rock elite. John Brummett, a newspaper reporter for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, published an article slandering the Huckabees and for stacking the commission members and directly attacking Janet, "I [John Brummett] wrote that we could only hope Mrs. Huckabee wouldn't tacky up those rooms the way her hubby had tacked up the governor's personal office at the capitol."²⁰⁸

Mike Huckabee recalled the interaction:

For her [Janet], one of the most difficult aspects of being Arkansas' first lady was the inevitable confrontation with some of the snobby elitists who had always been

²⁰⁷Alta Faubus, "Former Mansion's Cook Celebrates 80th Birthday," *The Madison County Record*, October 16, 1997, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/359543421/>.

²⁰⁸ John Brummett, "Janet Huckabee vs. the purists Someone please mediate this battle," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 1, 1997, https://arkansasonline.newsbank.com/doc/news/13D59802870E6968?search_terms.

on the side of the culturally correct in Little Rock. We're a little more informal, and we make no excuses for it. Janet also has to contend with nitpickers about everything from what she wears to what furniture she moves in the governor's mansion. It just goes with the territory, and she handles it with admirable grace. One of Little Rock's liberal, cynical newspaper columnists wrote a piece about Janet's doings at the mansion, so she called him up and asked, "Have you been to the mansion lately? Why don't you just come over here, and I'll show you what's going on." She spent an hour and a half taking him all over the place, even up in the attic. That's her style.²⁰⁹

Scrutiny of her personal taste and class, always gendered, followed the new first lady from the beginning as well. Regarding her physical appearance and role as first lady, one magazine columnist wrote:

The six-foot-tall governor's wife does not fit a political stereotype. A bit of a tomboy, she is more at home on the basketball court than in the State house. She prefers to sit in the bleachers at ball games rather than in the VIP box. And if she had to choose between bungee jumping and making a speech, she probably would choose the jump.²¹⁰

Clearly Janet's size and preference for being active cast her as less feminine in this viewer's eye. Political analysts predicted that the Huckabees would have a difficult time winning the 1998 election. However, the large Southern Baptist population of Arkansas proved vital to the campaign. Mike Huckabee also pointed to exit polls that revealed he secured the support of 48 percent of black Arkansan voters who identified as Southern Baptists.²¹¹ On November 3, 1998, Mike and Janet Huckabee resumed their positions as Governor and First Lady with 59.77 percent of the vote.

²⁰⁹ Huckabee and Perry, *Character is the Issue*, 79.

²¹⁰ Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Manufactured Home Requests, "Hall at Governor's Mansion named for Janet Huckabee," October 9, 2006, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²¹¹ "Ahead of debate, Huckabee's claim of black support questioned," *Arkansas News*, September 26, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150923194725/http://archives.arkansasnews.com/2007/09/26/ahead-of-debate-huckabees-claim-of-black-support-questioned/>.

Prior to the 1998 re-election campaign of Mike Huckabee, Janet announced she would launch an initiative to get every child in Arkansas immunized by 2000.²¹² Janet partnered with the Arkansas health department to gain a list of all Arkansan women who had given birth from 1998 to the early 2000s. Congratulatory cards signed by Mike and Janet Huckabee were sent to all the women on these lists. Janet received numerous newborn pictures from women who were thankful for her letter. However, there were several incorrect names on the list. Women who had lost their babies or who had given them up for adoption were included on the list in error. Distressed mothers and family members replied to Janet Huckabee directly as a woman and mother. One such letter read:

First of all, you have this family and some more families very upset about a card of congratulations. You sent to my 12-year-old granddaughter about the birth of her baby... She does not have a baby! It's hard to believe a mom in your position would send something like that to a 12-year-old child.²¹³

Another from a protective mother concerned about privacy read:

I intercepted a card addressed to my daughter, congratulating her on the birth of her child. I am glad that I opened the card first and very upset that it was sent to her at all. Yes, my daughter had a baby September 16, 1998. But through what we thought was the privacy of an attorney, she made the most honorable but difficult decision of her life and gave her baby up for adoption...I need to know how you received any information about my daughter. I have to make sure that she receives no further correspondence and that other information is stopped.²¹⁴

²¹² John Brummett, "Janet Huckabee pursuing Betty Bumpers goal of immunizing state's children," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 30, 1997, https://arkansasonline.newsbank.com/doc/news/13D595F98E099CD8?search_terms.

²¹³ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Governor Mike Huckabee, Janet Huckabee," 1999, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²¹⁴ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee "Governor & Janet Huckabee," February 19, 1999, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

Janet's initiative failed to get every child in Arkansas immunized, but the percentage of child immunizations did increase from 61.4 percent in 1997 to 70.4 percent in 2000.²¹⁵

In 2000, the Governor's mansion underwent renovations and the first family moved into a manufactured home on the property. The temporary home became a catalyst for the most public scrutiny of the Huckabees' career by far. Janet was quickly nicknamed 'queen of the trailer park. The incident made national news when *The Tonight Show* host, Jay Leno, made a jab at the Huckabee's temporary residence calling it a triple-wide. On July 19, 2000, the Huckabees were scrutinized on television stations across the nation:

NATIONAL ABC 8:00 AM "GOOD MORNING AMERICA"

FINALLY IN ARKANSAS, THE DOUBLE-WIDE JUST WON'T DO. GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE AND WIFE JANET WILL MOVE INTO A TRIPLE-WIDE TRAILER WHILE THE STATE MANSION IS RENOVATED.

NATIONAL CNN-CABLE 7:00AM "EARLY EDITION"

JOKES ARE FLYING IN ARKANSAS WHY? BECAUSE THIS TRAILER IS PARKED ON THE GROUNDS AND IS THE NEW MANSION FOR GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE AND WIFE. NOT A DOUBLE WIDE, IT'S A TRIPLE WIDDE. FIRST LADY JANET TAKING THIS ALL IN STRIDE.

SAN DIEGO KGTV-ABC 6:00PM "EVENING NEWS"

YOU'D NEVER CATCH BILL CLINTON OUTSIDE OF THE WHITE WHOSE. BUT THE GOVERNOR OF ARKANSAS IS MOVING FROM HIS MANSION TO A MORE HUMBLE ABODE. THE 50 YEAR OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION IN ARKANSAS IS ABOUT TO UNDERGO RENOVATIONS WHICH COULD TAKE YEARS. SO GOVERNOR MIKE HUCKABEE AND HIS WIFE ARE MOVING INTO A DELUXE MOBILE HOME.²¹⁶

²¹⁵"Explore Childhood Immunizations in Arkansas: 2021 Annual Report," America's Health Rankings, United Health Foundation, accessed June 25, 2022, https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Immunize_b/state/AR.

²¹⁶ Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Manufactured Home Requests, "Ward Productions," July 26, 2000, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.



Illustration 31 Huckabee temporary home during 2000 Governor Mansion renovations²¹⁷



Illustration 32 Janet Huckabee poses outside of temporary home during 2000 Governor Mansion renovations²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Celia Storey, *A section of the triple-wide mobile home that was the temporary residence of Gov. Mike Huckabee and his family waits to be removed behind the renovated Arkansas Governor's Mansion in Little Rock on Jan. 30, 2002*, photograph, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, February 7, 2022, <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2022/feb/07/remember-when-arkansas-gov-huckabees-triple-wide/>.

²¹⁸ Danny Johnson, *Arkansas first lady Janet Huckabee reacts as a triplewide manufactured home is towed onto the grounds of the Governor's Mansion in this Aug. 4, 2000, file photo, to house the governor's family during the renovation of the mansion*, August 4, 2000, photograph, AP Press, <https://www.apimages.com/metadata/Index/Huckabee-2008-Profile/fc64236a2015427f960958b26468fd9c/1/0>.

Despite the coverage and criticism of some constituents, many other constituents offered support and encouragement to Janet. One constituent wrote to Janet, “Dear Mrs. Huckabee, Subject: The Triple Wide! Good for you and the “mobile” home jokes. So what? These units can be beautiful! Home is where the heart is!”²¹⁹ Another constituent stated to reporters, “I think it’s good that the governor and Mrs. Huckabee were willing to live in a manufactured home. It shows that they are just regular people like me and you.”²²⁰ Despite the fact that the Governor also lived in the manufactured home, Janet received scrutiny and support from reporters and constituents alike. Janet responded to the scrutiny with a sense of humor and often joined in on the jokes. In response to reporters questioning the manufactured home Janet stated, “It may be difficult to move out. This is not a trailer. Trailers are pulled behind a pickup truck. It is not a mobile home—we are not going anywhere. This is manufactured housing.”²²¹

From 2000 to 2001 Janet focused her efforts as First Lady on children and families in need. Janet participated in three Habitat for Humanity builds in 2000, an outreach that she was familiar with, having participated in eleven builds from 1998 to 1999. While in the position of Arkansas First Lady, she served as a member of a committee in the Women Build Department, the International Board, the U.S. Council, and the Communications Department of Habitat for Humanity. Janet also turned her attention to the problem of underage drinking. As Southern Baptists, the Huckabee family

²¹⁹Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Mrs. Huckabee," August 3, 2000, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²²⁰ Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Manufactured Home Requests, "Arkansas sets pace with first home," 2000, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²²¹ Ibid.

abstained from alcohol altogether and did not keep it in the Governor's Mansion. In March of 2000 Janet attended a conference in Washington D.C. on underage drinking. She brought the information she learned back to Arkansas and implemented a "Keep Children Alcohol Free" initiative within the state. Janet traveled to high schools throughout Arkansas to conduct forums regarding the dangers of underage drinking.

In summer 2000, Janet was introduced to the Heifer Project in Perryville, Arkansas. She learned about the organization's fundraising methods to end world hunger. In April 2001, she joined a Women's Tour with Heifer Project traveling to Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Peru and Bolivia. Upon her return to Arkansas, Janet launched a Read to Feed program— "to help encourage young people here in the United States to read books and ask people to support their effort to read and get paid and give it for Heifer Project to use to buy animals."

She also partnered with the Arkansas Department of Human Services in 2001, to give radio and television promotions encouraging Arkansans to adopt children with special needs. She received a constituent letter that stated, "Mrs. Janet Huckabee, I hear you on my radio nearly every day. How many foster children and adopted children do you have in your home?"²²² The letter was marked with a sticky note by Janet reading, "better be nice." Janet wrote back:

The Governor and I have three lovely children. I am thankful we have been able to provide them with a stable environment where both parents reside. Not every child is as fortunate. I do not have foster children, nor have I adopted a child. I realize I am promoting something I am not personally involved with, but I do feel all children need a loving and caring family. The Department of Human Services'

²²² Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Mrs. Janet Huckabee," Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

project of helping children find a home is worthy of my support. As First Lady of Arkansas, I am called upon many times to promote projects and organizations. The promotions I do are chosen very carefully... I trust I have answered your questions adequately.²²³

The authenticity of Janet was questioned by this particular constituent. She spoke on behalf of children in need, but the constituent wanted to know if she was actively engaging in the cause she promoted. Although Janet was frustrated, revealed by her sticky note, she still chose to answer the scrutiny cast upon her.

Despite the scrutiny from some constituents, Janet received Arkansan of the Year 2001 for her work with children and families. A newspaper article explained, "The distinction was established by Easter Seals in 1986 to recognize outstanding Arkansans whose work has made a lasting impact on the state's children and families."²²⁴ In the prior year, Governor Huckabee received the award, prompting one unimpressed constituent to remark on Janet's reception, "'It's kind of same song, second verse."²²⁵

As Governor Huckabee embarked on his re-election campaign in 2002, Janet announced that she had political ambitions of her own. On March 16, 2002, Janet stood on the Capitol steps and announced to a crowd of seventy-five that she would run for Secretary of State as a Republican. Immediate scrutiny came from the audience, who primarily questioned her ability to maintain the duties of First Lady if she was elected to

²²³ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Mrs. Hudgens," September 27, 2000, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²²⁴ "First lady chosen as Arkansan of Year," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, February 16, 2001, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2001%2F02%2F16&id=Ar13200&sk=480ACA98&viewMode=text>.

²²⁵ Kyle Brazzel, "Social eyes: Arkansan of the Year First lady becomes second Huckabee to bear Seals of approval," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, March 11, 2001, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2001%2F03%2F11&id=Ar07300&sk=EF96866E&viewMode=text>.

fill a new role. She replied, "'Let me remind you that I am a woman, and women are used to doing a lot of things at one time, and doing them quite well.'"²²⁶ The political ambition and empowering statement demonstrated Janet Huckabee's feminism. She embarked on political career, while holding the role of first lady, and being a mother—it was reminiscent of the example that her own mother set. Arkansans met the possibility of electing a husband and wife to two constitutional offices with reservation. A reporter later stated, "The same people who were complaining about two Clintons being in office are talking now about two Huckabees."²²⁷ Another issue that Arkansans question was the nature of the Southern Baptist stance on the role of women—particularly how Mike's and Janet's religion would play into their politics as a couple maintaining power over the same state. A *Democrat-Gazette* article covered this concern in an article titled "First tomboy might be ready to jump or run — for office":

Move over, Mike, another question Huckabee faces with aplomb is the matter of being an admittedly submissive wife. The Huckabees' Baptist faith preaches that the husband leads and the wife follows, even if she doesn't agree with a particular course of action. "I try," the strong-willed Huckabee says of being submissive. She doesn't think that means her husband will tell her what to do if she becomes secretary of state. "I don't see a conflict there," Huckabee says. She says the governor's office is more regulatory and the secretary of state's office is more administrative. "I don't think that those two would collide in any way," she says. Nor will her husband interfere. She doesn't anticipate any disagreements. "OK," she reconsiders, "so I may have to take his parking space."²²⁸

²²⁶ Michael R. Wickline, "Janet Huckabee seeks secretary of state post," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, March 17, 2002, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F03%2F17&id=Ar01702&sk=D58F8172&viewMode=text>.

²²⁷ Steve Barns, "Is Mrs. Huckabee Hurting Governor's Race?" *Baxter Bulletin*, October 31, 2002, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/321475466/>.

²²⁸ Carrie Rengers, "PAPER TRAILS: First tomboy might be ready to jump or run — for office," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, March 17, 2002, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F03%2F17&id=Ar05800&sk=87664C0E&viewMode=text>.

While Janet acknowledged the role of a submissive wife as part of her religious belief system, she also acknowledged that her role as a public servant would not interfere. Janet also admits that she has some leniency regarding the relationship between a husband who is dominant and a wife who is submissive.

Janet's opponent in the 2002 Secretary of State election was Charlie Daniels, a Democrat and former land commissioner. Rather than rebrand her image to win the 2002 election, Janet's strategy was to be *herself*. Her campaign strategy statement explained:

Janet will run as the Arkansan First Lady voters know and trust. Essentially, Janet will be herself- possessing strong family values, sincere, dedicated, adventurous, and approachable. We will portray Janet as the right choice for Arkansas because they know her—just a normal citizen who wants to do right in the Secretary of State's office. We will portray our opponent as a career politician with a myriad of personal and professional faults who puts his personal gain before the interests of the people of Arkansas. Janet will emphasize her commitment to reform, her public service, and her strong family values.²²⁹

Janet had been described as a “natural girl in the natural state,” and she channeled this for her campaign slogan: “The Natural Choice.” The two groups that the campaign targeted to for support from were women and young Arkansans. The section of her campaign strategy document titled “Our Winning Coalition,” explained:

Our message to women is that Janet understands their problems and their conflicting roles in today's society, and while she is not a radical feminist, she represents the dream that all women can be loving wives, devoted mothers, and civic leaders. And they will be made aware of the alternative, concisely put, of an alcoholic, old-time politician who offers nothing in the way of advancement to women... Janet must work hard to become the “Youth Candidate.” Younger people represent the future- change, energy and reform. Thus, Janet will

²²⁹ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "The Natural Choice," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

continually surround herself with young volunteers and supporters, especially women.²³⁰

Janet's campaign strategy reveals traditional and untraditional feminine aspects. She also portrays a feminist stance—though she notes not a radical one. Family values, loving wives, and devoted mothers are reminiscent of traditional femininity while her sense of adventure and engagement in pursuit of a leadership position are not. She promotes the advancement of women, but like the majority of men and women at this time, loses the word “feminist” loosely and does not blatantly identify as such. Janet's choice to target women and the message she presented shows a parallel to the lessons from her own mother's experience.



Illustration 33 Janet Huckabee Secretary of State campaign logo 2002²³¹

²³⁰ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "Our Winning Coalition," Date, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²³¹ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "County Coordinator Team Leadership Handbook," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.



Illustration 34 Janet Huckabee Secretary of State campaign bus 2002²³²



Illustration 35 Janet Huckabee Secretary of State campaign bumper sticker 2002²³³

²³² Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "Campaign Bus," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²³³ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "Bumper Sticker," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

There were women in Arkansas that related to Janet Huckabee and sought her help in 2002. Several constituents wrote directly to Janet regarding what they felt she could share understanding with as mothers, wives, and women. One such constituent wrote, "I care deeply for children and this is the reason I am writing. I need help understanding the laws dealing with children in Arkansas. I will tell you my story and then hopefully you will feel compelled enough to help."²³⁴

Janet also wrote to women in leadership positions to congratulate their work in promoting equality for the sexes. Janet made it clear in previous years that she had no intentions to placate to critics who felt she did not fit the image of a First Lady. Her love for adventure and the outdoors resonated with a great deal of Arkansas women. When the *Arkansas Wildlife Magazine* published a March/April 2002 edition, one Arkansan woman wrote directly to the editor addressing that there was not a single woman pictured in the issue. Janet Huckabee along with three prominent outdoorswomen and the Arkansas Game and Fish Chief were sent copies of the letter. Janet responded:

I agree that women and children should be given recognition for their accomplishments, whether it is for something done at work, school, or in pleasure. Perhaps, as a fly fishing and fly tying instructor, you have some quality articles and photographs that you could share with the magazine. Please understand this is a suggestion and that I do not personally have the authority to get anything published on your behalf.²³⁵

Constituent correspondence to and from Janet clearly demonstrate feminism.

Arkansas women write to Janet on because they believe she has the power to help them.

²³⁴ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "To Whom it May Concern," June 9, 2004, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²³⁵ Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Ms. Brown," April 19, 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

In relating to her as a mother, wife, and woman they are demonstrating understanding that Janet wants to help women. In other words, she is a feminist. Janet's correspondence to women who are leaders and women who are challenging sexism further support this claim. However, there were women who felt no relation to Janet Huckabee. Despite her feminist appeal, some constituents did not appreciate her political ideology. One woman wrote to Janet opening with, "You are irrepressible, and people like you," and closing with, "Wake up and smell the coffee."²³⁶

As Janet began fundraising for her campaign, she told reporters, "'I don't plan to get negative, dirty and mudslinging like a lot of people say may happen and [believe] that ladies shouldn't be in that arena because it is dirty and mudslinging.'" One constituent offered advice to Janet's campaign stating, "smiling and soft spoken has won more elections than anything else."²³⁷ Janet responded to her constituents' input without placating their criticism. Her response and campaign strategy revealed two important statements that later caused scrutiny as the election day drew closer. The first is a clear statement that Janet refused to, "change her deeply held beliefs and won't compromise her principles." The second, from her campaign strategy, regarding the attack of Charlie Daniels, "we will slowly and consistently release negative information about Charlie from September through Election Day."²³⁸ The slow release of negative information

²³⁶Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "Dear Janet Huckabee," October 7, 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²³⁷Correspondence: Constituent- Letters to/from Janet Huckabee, "As a strategist I would heartily endorse the following for you," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²³⁸ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "Strategy Statement," May 27, 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

began in May of 2002, four months sooner than anticipated. Charlie Daniels offered a remark about the Huckabees' running on the same ticket, "I don't think the framers of the constitution ever anticipated a husband wife team [running for office] because at that point in time women could not even vote." Following his statement, a spokesperson for the Arkansas Federation of Republican Women, Anne Britton, published a news release naming Charlie Daniels as sexist and racist. Janet's campaign manager hand delivered a copy of the news release to the *Democrat-Gazette* the following day.²³⁹ Democratic Party leaders and constituents alike accused the First Lady of hypocrisy, because she had claimed not to intend to mudsling. She replied, "Anne Britton, like the other women of Arkansas are, is entitled to speak her mind, and if Charlie Daniels wants to make nonsensical statements, he can suffer the consequences."²⁴⁰ The damage however was done. A poll conducted the month following showed that Daniels led the race seven points.²⁴¹ Political analysts regarded a televised debate between Huckabee and Daniels as the final straw for constituents in the election. Janet brought up an incident from Charlie Daniels' past—in 1983 and 1990 he was convicted of driving while intoxicated. She told voters, "He [Daniels] says his problem with alcohol was 12 years ago, and I know that's not true. He could hardly stand up at the governor's gala last Christmas."²⁴² Janet was

²³⁹ Michael R. Wickline, "Mud hits Daniels; foes deny tossing it," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 27, 2002, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F05%2F27&id=Ar01304&sk=21E2A983&viewMode=text>.

²⁴⁰ Michael R. Wickline, "Arkansas' party leaders differ on who's to blame for criticism of Daniels," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 29, 2002, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F05%2F29&id=Ar01400&sk=484E4F5D&viewMode=text>.

²⁴¹ Michael Rowett, "Democrat poll has Daniels ahead of first lady in race," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, June 28, 2002, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F06%2F28&id=Ar01600&sk=48FAF04D&viewMode=text>.

²⁴² Seth Blomeley, "Governor's race gets even more spirited on Halloween," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 1, 2002,

advised to retract her statement but refused.²⁴³ Adversaries accused Janet Huckabee's campaign of misusing state resources. She traveled in state vehicles as First Lady and was escorted by state troopers while campaigning for Secretary of State. In response to these accusations, she told reporters, "'If it wasn't for the grace of God, I'd have shot a few people already. Jesus wasn't liked either. And Jesus was mistreated and called names."

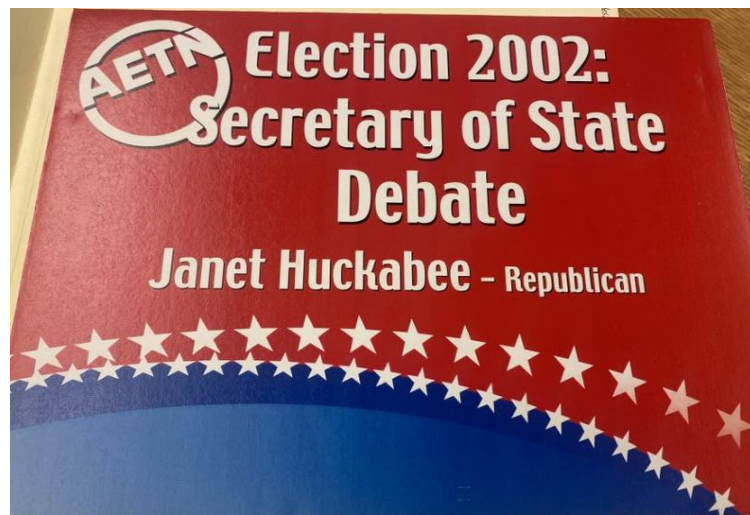


Illustration 36 Janet Huckabee Secretary of State debate name plaque 2002²⁴⁴

Speculation that Janet was dropping out of the race swirled. One newspaper columnist wrote:

I'm taking my noon-hour walk and the thought darts through my mind that Janet Huckabee is going to drop out of the race for secretary of state because she's become a drag on her husband. Then I'm speaking that evening to the Pulaski County League of Women Voters, and a woman asks if I've heard the rumors of Mrs. Huckabee's withdrawal. I knew I'd heard something. Was it a dream? The next day I inquire. "I've got about 30 seconds," the first lady, typically warm,

<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2002%2F11%2F01&id=Ar00101&sk=ECF24608&viewMode=text>.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "ELECTION 2002 AETN DEBATE," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

says into the phone from the Governor's Mansion. That's 30 more seconds that I deserve. "You're not dropping out of the race, are you?" "No, why should I?" Well, we only had 30 seconds. She needs to get to Conway to talk to the Lions Club, an appearance she actually intends to make. The day before she'd left the El Dorado Rotarians high and dry, and she hadn't shown up for a Bull Shoals group a week or two before that. "I didn't know about either of those," she pronounces with a certain ridged tone. But that seems to be her natural tone, at least with me.²⁴⁵

Janet Huckabee secured the majority in one county in the entire state. She lost the 2002 election to Daniels by nearly 25 percent of the vote. Census records reveal that the majority of voters in the November 2002 election were women and aged 45 plus. Janet's "winning coalition" of women and young voters proved unsuccessful.²⁴⁶ As both Huckabee elections came to an end, reporters probed, "Is Mrs. Huckabee hurting the governor's race?" Most Arkansans agreed she was. Scholars have also agreed that Janet's campaign directly hurt Mike's. A Republican official commented, "Janet Huckabee running for secretary of state was a brilliant idea for about four and a half minutes."²⁴⁷ Governor Mike Huckabee was re-elected by around 53.01 percent of the vote.²⁴⁸

Despite Janet's campaign loss, the Huckabees stood united to celebrate Mike's re-election. The couple danced for the first time in public at the January 18, 2003, inaugural ball at the newly renovated Governor's Mansion. At the 1999 ball, the Huckabees had not danced, which Arkansans believed was due to their conservative religious beliefs. The

²⁴⁵Janet Huckabee AR Secretary of State- Confidential Campaign Plan, "Vignettes From A Real Campaign," 2002, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²⁴⁶ Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau, *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2002*, June 2004, Report P20-552, <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2004/demo/p20-552.pdf>.

²⁴⁷ Diane D. Blair and Jay Barth, *Arkansas Politics and Government, Vol. 2nd ed. Politics and Governments of the American States*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 349, <https://libcatalog.atu.edu:2104/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=127252&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

²⁴⁸ "Former Governors – Arkansas," National Governors Association, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.nga.org/former-governors/arkansas/>.

issue with the first couple not dancing contributed to class-based criticism. Mike Huckabee later revealed the true reason, “To tell you the honest truth, we really wanted to. There’s a little problem — we can’t.” The couple did not know how to dance. He joked, “Four years from now, when we’re in our second inauguration, we’ll be ready. You might have to pull us off the tables for heaven’s sakes.” The press focuses so much attention on the first dance that the Governor declared, “I think there was more curiosity about that than there was about the unveiling of the education program in this state. Makes you wonder about the priorities of many people in Arkansas, doesn’t it?”²⁴⁹



Illustration 37 Mike and Janet Huckabee first dance at Governor's Ball 2003²⁵⁰

The criticism that Janet and Mike received while residing in a manufactured home was also silenced when the Huckabees revealed the newly renovated mansion to guests. The Inaugural Ball in the new ballroom was described in newspapers the following day as, “somewhat reminiscent of the one made famous in ‘Gone With the Wind.’ Janet stood

²⁴⁹ Michael Rowett, “Huckabees make good on vow to dance at ball: Governor beginning second full term,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 19, 2003, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2003%2F01%2F19&id=Ar02104&sk=9D32C81C&viewMode=text>.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

proudly in front of the guests and, “recited the names of the 15 types of native wood used in the design.”²⁵¹ Newspapers across the state documented Janet’s gown as well, without mentioning Governor Huckabee’s attire:

Mrs. Huckabee was attired in an elegant iridescent taffeta ball gown in antique gold. The strapless bodice and full skirt were enhanced with hand-beaded soft gold flowers in a trellis effect. Scalloped flowers encircled the hemline. A taffeta shrug framed her shoulders. She chose a delicate antique gold filigree necklace and matching earrings to complete her ensemble.²⁵²

The significance of the newspaper coverage of the inaugural ball is that it tampered down some of the class-based criticism that the Huckabees’ were “tacky.” The description of Janet’s gown bolstered her image of “natural” and “outdoorsy” to more “feminine” and “classy.”

Although the Huckabees enjoyed the mansion’s reopening, Janet endured criticism when she made the decision to enroll in college as a nontraditional student. In May of 2003 Janet graduated from John Brown University with a bachelor’s degree in organizational management. When the Huckabees were married nearly three decades prior, Janet dropped out of Ouachita Baptist University with 21 credit hours. Mike commented:

Janet was willing to interrupt her college education when she married me because we couldn't afford for both of us to attend school at the same time. Three children then came along, and she wanted to make sure she devoted all of her time to raising them. I'm very proud of her. Having put her own college education on the back burner to raise our family, she has now sacrificed a lot of her time and energy to complete her college degree. Not only will she graduate, she will graduate with honors. To do this while maintaining a busy schedule as the first lady, while overseeing an expansion of the Governor's Mansion and while

²⁵¹ Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Governor’s Mansion & Speaking Engagement, "Huckabees Host Inaugural Ball, New Space at Mansion is Source of Pride," February 11, 2003, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²⁵² Ibid.

running a statewide campaign is a tremendous example for Arkansans who are thinking about completing their college education.²⁵³

Just as Janet had told Arkansans in her 2002 campaign, Mike confirmed that she prided herself in being able to do many think at once, and do them well. Janet’s original decision to drop out of college to devote her time to her children fits her theme of traditional femininity, while her choice to later pursue her education on top of being a mother and holding a job reveals her feminism.



Illustration 38 Janet Huckabee hugs daughter, Sarah, after graduation ceremony 2002²⁵⁴

Remarkably, Janet completed three years of curriculum in 18 months. She explained her initial drive to pursue the nontraditional student route, “Then, about 18 months ago, I decided to do it out of purely personal conviction. Here I was traveling the state urging

²⁵³ “Arkansas’ first lady to get college degree Janet Huckabee graduates Saturday,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 8, 2003, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2003%2F05%2F08&id=Ar01301&sk=DA3247B3&viewMode=text>.

²⁵⁴ Associated Press, “Arkansas’ first lady graduates cum laude,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 11, 2003, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2003%2F05%2F11&id=Ar02101&sk=E66D6016&viewMode=text>.

kids to move on to college. All the while, I was praying they wouldn't ask me where I graduated from college.²⁵⁵

The speed with which Janet completed her degree raised some eyebrows. While the Huckabees celebrated Janet's graduation, one Arkansan took to the press writing:

Jacksonville Janet got a fast diploma. It is noble that the first lady of Arkansas has received her college diploma. I am amazed that she was able to accumulate so many college hours in such a short time with such a busy schedule. The only quicker way to receive a college diploma is to order one for \$39.95 from a diploma factory on the Internet. It is discouraging for those who work, or have worked, more than three years to accumulate 100-plus college hours at 15 hours per semester to see the treatment given Janet Huckabee. It would seem to devalue a diploma obtained from John Brown University. It does, however, bring up an interesting point. The best way to improve the graduation rate for Razorback athletes is for them to follow Hucklebee's example. At the rate she completed her work, some athletes could finish their Ph.D.s before their eligibility is up.²⁵⁶

Mike Huckabee demanded the author of the letter apologize to Janet. No such apology was published.

Within a few months, Janet made Arkansas headlines again. The *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* headline read, "Janet Huckabee's stint at polls draws fire from some LR voters." She signed up to work early voting as a poll worker in Little Rock. Precinct Election Judge Helen Burr offered statements to newspapers, "She's here as a Republican. I don't think it's right. She had a little funky attitude this morning, but she's better. I told her that she couldn't ask for IDs — it's against the law." One woman entered the polling center and yelled at the first lady, "You shouldn't be in here." Janet refused to leave and responded to her critics, "I'm here as is my right as a citizen. And

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Anthony P. Trotter, "Jacksonville Janet got a fast diploma," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 30, 2003, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2003%2F05%2F30&id=Ar02100&sk=A5E03EB3&viewMode=text>.

I'm not in an election myself."²⁵⁷ A executive session was called for the Pulaski Election Commission regarding Burr and Huckabee's exchange. After several hours of discussion, the commission chose to pursue no action and both women were allowed to continue their work at the poll. A newspaper reported one of the commissioner's comments:

After the meeting, Larkowski [commission member] said the spat involving Huckabee and Burr had overshadowed a smooth early voting period. "The big thing we're missing is that we've had two weeks of voting for 35,000 people with no problems," he said. "That is just wonderful. If I were in touch with my woman's side, I'd cry over this."²⁵⁸



Illustration 39 Janet Huckabee works Pulaski County poll 2004²⁵⁹

Another controversy hit in 2005 Janet began working outside of her role as first lady, a choice that had drawn scathing criticism for Hillary Clinton, but for different

²⁵⁷ Charlie Frago, "Janet Huckabee's stint at polls draws fire from some LR," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 19, 2004,

[votershttps://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2004%2F10%2F19&id=Ar00906&sk=BC1CB907&viewMode=text](https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2004%2F10%2F19&id=Ar00906&sk=BC1CB907&viewMode=text).

²⁵⁸ Charlie Frago, "Panel reviews voter complaints: Janet Huckabee, Dunbar election official subject of meeting," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, October 29, 2004,

<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2004%2F10%2F29&id=Ar01600&sk=704DE059&viewMode=text>.

²⁵⁹ Associated Press, "Beebe: Poll workers have rights if they draw election complaints," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 4, 2004,

<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2004%2F11%2F04&id=Ar01404&sk=97CC94B0&viewMode=text>.

reasons. Women in the workforce had increased significantly in response to the early years of third wave feminism. In the early 1980s, women who held jobs outside the home, like Hillary, were considered radical feminists. As the number of women who entered the workforce increased, it was not considered as radical.

The news of Janet's new job both affected and was affected by her femininity and her feminism. An article titled "Hard Sell" stated:

Sometimes the truth is indeed stranger than fiction. Like news that Arkansas' first lady Janet Huckabee is now employed with Hanke Brothers Siding and Windows Inc. — handling customer relations. She began work about three weeks ago. When I think of Hanke Brothers, I think of the everso-polite and soft-spoken Kim Hanke and the soft-sell approach he uses in his TV ads. Conversely, when I think of Janet Huckabee, I recall a woman who doesn't hesitate to climb into a professional boxing ring with Jermain Taylor and is sometimes abrasive and defensive as far as some in the news media are concerned. *Customer relations? Really?* Hanke must see a softer side that I'm missing.

Janet refused to yield to critics or public scrutiny. She had earned a reputation of confronting reporters head on rather than placating to them. In a response to the article regarding her new job, another reporter offered insight into Janet's reputation:

Charm is where you find it. In her regularly delightful Paper Trails column, Linda Caillouet noted that the state's First Tomboy has a new gig: doing Customer Relations for Hanke Brothers Siding and Windows. Miss Linda seemed surprised, recalling a Janet Huckabee who could climb in a boxing ring with Jermain Taylor and "is sometimes abrasive and defensive as far as some in the news media are concerned." Naturally we in the press corps would know nothing about being abrasive and defensive ourselves, especially if we write editorials. We have no idea where Miss Linda could have picked up the idea that Arkansas' first lady is anything but demure. Maybe she's just never seen Mrs. Huckabee parachute out of a cargo plane to pounce on a nest of surprised rattlesnakes.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ "Charm is where you find it," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, February 2, 2005, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2005%2F02%2F02&id=Ar01803&sk=3AB64657&viewMode=text>.

Janet's reputation led to the third nature center in Arkansas's name— Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Valley Nature Center. The thirteenth annual Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame inducted Janet at the 2004 banquet. In an article introducing the inductees, the report offered insight onto why the Nature Center was named after Janet:

Arkansas' first lady joined her husband on a 308-mile trip on Arkansas River to attract support for a conservation sales tax in 1996. While Gov. Mike Huckabee made the trip by boat, his wife rode a personal watercraft the whole distance, from Oklahoma to the Mississippi River. The tax passed and has been invaluable to several state agencies. Janet Huckabee also has been a key supporter of a long list of AGFC projects such as black bear research and conserving the stat's prized canoeing streams.²⁶¹

Janet was one of twelve women inducted into the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame from 1992 to 2004. Mike Huckabee had been inducted four years prior as one of thirty-eight men in the same time span. When Janet found that the center would be named after her she insisted on contributing to the exhibits within. A mounted turkey was photographed by reporters and Janet stated, "I really did kill the turkey, I want you to know that."²⁶² In the same year, a hall at the Governor's Mansion was also named after the first lady.

As the Huckabee's completed their final year in the Governor's Mansion, they purchased a half million-dollar home in the Little Rock area and renewed their wedding vows as a covenant marriage. As stated in the Arkansas Covenant Marriage Act:

The couple entering into a Covenant Marriage agrees to be bound by two limitations on obtaining a divorce or separation which do not apply to other couples married in Arkansas: The couple agrees to seek marital counseling if problems develop during the marriage; and The couple can seek a divorce or legal separation only for limited reasons, as set out in the Act and explained in this pamphlet, which outlines the consequences of entering into a Covenant Marriage under Arkansas law. Additionally, couples bound by a

²⁶¹Janet Huckabee, First Lady: Governor's Mansion & Speaking Engagement, "The Thirteenth Annual Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame Banquet," Date, Box Series II: AR Governor Files, Subseries U: Janet Huckabee, Huckabee Papers, Riley-Hickingbotham Library Special Collections, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, AR.

²⁶² Ibid.

Covenant Marriage, unless judicially separated, may only sue each other for certain causes of action.²⁶³

At the time only Arkansas, Arizona, and Louisiana offered covenant marriages license.

The purpose of the Act was to decrease divorce rates. As Southern Baptists, the Huckabees supported this cause. The Huckabees renewed their vows and entered into their legally binding contract before a crowd of 5,000 Arkansans. Friends of Janet created wedding and housewarming registries at Target and Dillard's. Constituents cast scrutiny at Janet for accepting the gifts. An ethics council was called to review the matter.

Governor Huckabee expressed his frustration:

I am saddened and I am frustrated that this is a story because it is ridiculous that this has become this continuing front page saga as if it is the most important news in Arkansas," he said Wednesday night. "I would have agreed if there was some public thing that said everyone in the state please go to the Internet, look in the Web registry and help old poor Janet Huckabee out, that would have been pretty ridiculous, utterly absurd. That's not what this is."²⁶⁴

Within a few weeks after leaving the Governor's Mansion, and the press coverage of gift registries, the Huckabees embarked on a new election campaign. On January 28, 2007, Mike Huckabee announced his campaign for President of the United States. Janet visited Republican women's groups to campaign on behalf of her husband. The Huckabees' found a large base of support among fellow conservative Southern Baptists in Arkansas. However, outside of Arkansas, national constituents who did not share Southern Baptist views expressed concern. One issue of contention was found in the Huckabee's stance on the role of woman:

²⁶³ Arkansas Judiciary, Administrative Office of the Courts, *Covenant Marriage Act 2001*, https://static.ark.org/eeuploads/pulaski/Covenant_Marriage_Form.pdf.

²⁶⁴ Seth Blomeley and Michael R. Wickline, "Gift givers: Items thank Huckabees," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, November 16, 2006, <https://digital.olivesoftware.com/olive/apa/ardemocrat/sharedview.article.aspx?href=ARDEMOCRAT%2F2006%2F11%2F16&id=Ar00104&sk=D4AF0B92&viewMode=text>.

At a recent debate in South Carolina, Huckabee was asked about his views on marriage, expressed for all to see in a full-page USA Today ad he and his wife co-signed in 1998, thanking the Southern Baptists for putting out a message that “a wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the leadership of Christ.” Carl Cameron of Fox News wondered if that position was “politically viable” for Huckabee now, given that so many women voters in both parties see it otherwise. He did not answer the question, but his response was: “First of all, if anybody knows my wife, I don’t think they for one minute think that she’s going to just sit by and let me do whatever I want to. That would be an absolute, total misunderstanding of Janet Huckabee.” That ad “really was spoken to believers, to Christian believers. I’m not the least bit ashamed of my faith or the doctrines of it. I don’t try to impose that as a governor and I wouldn’t impose it as a president. But I certainly am going to practice it, unashamedly, whether I’m a president or whether I’m not a president.” At the debate, this was a big applause line. Later, he told fellow Baptists that, yes, he still believes that’s how marriage works, but added that that belief “has nothing to do” with his qualifications as a candidate. Yet since he has so forcefully promised to put traditional marriage at the center of our society, bring government in line with God and the U.S. Constitution in line with “the Word of the Living God,” his views on men, women, and marriage are absolutely germane.²⁶⁵

Mike Huckabee offered a contradicting statement to reporters. To Southern Baptists he agreed that marriage is composed of a dominant male and a subservient wife, but constituents outside of his religion he weaponized Janet’s feminism to his advantage. Given how the article ended, it is clear that their constituents were not convinced that the Huckabees would separate their religious practices from their political practices if they were to become the first family.

Another area of contention that constituents commented on was Janet Huckabee’s femininity in regard to what was typically expected of a First Lady of the United States. She was described in the *Los Angeles Times* after making a public appearance to promote her husband’s candidacy as:

²⁶⁵ Henneberger, “Shoots Bear, Submits to Husband: The Fascinating Marriage of Mike and Janet Huckabee.”

About 2 inches taller than her husband and more athletic, Janet Huckabee cuts a nontraditional figure. When Mike Huckabee works crowds, she sometimes helps clear a path. She speaks with a stronger Arkansas twang than her husband, and more colloquially. At one rally, she described the prospect of becoming first lady as “too cool.”²⁶⁶

One critic from the same event stated, “She’s such a big old horsy woman, she has no *grace*. I’ve seen her chew gum on television!”²⁶⁷ The classism that the Huckabees faced in Arkansas was amplified on the national scale. An Arkansas reporter chimed in:

She likes her pie, is middleweight boxing champ Jermain Taylor’s biggest fan, and, with the help of her Baptist decorator, made a hash of the Arkansas governor’s mansion, jettisoning draperies to let the light in and stowing antiques in favor of faux. She slams doors, packs heat, and, like most of us, will never be confused with Jackie Kennedy.²⁶⁸

The last part of the statement recalled to Mike and Janet’s first day in the Arkansas Governor’s Mansion when Mike said, “This is not Jackie Kennedy showing off the White House.”²⁶⁹ Mike Huckabee ultimately did not secure the Republican bid for President of the United States in 2008.

²⁶⁶ Joe Matthews, “She’s Huckabee’s staunchest support,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 8, 2008, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-na-janet8jan08-story.html>.

²⁶⁷ Henneberger, “Shoots Bear, Submits to Husband: The Fascinating Marriage of Mike and Janet Huckabee.”

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ Bartels, “Huckabees settle in at mansion.”

VI. Conclusions

Through the 1980s and into the early 2000s, both Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee served as first ladies of Arkansas. Their husbands had both served as governors of Arkansas and had both ran campaigns for President of the United States. While it was these two men's names on the ballots for constituents to cast their votes for on election day, the women who stood beside them, Hillary and Janet, played a tremendous role in securing or discouraging votes. Third wave feminism flourished throughout these two decades and resulted in more women in the workforce, women delaying marriage, having fewer children, and society as a whole exhibiting greater awareness of the problems of sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

Previous works have disregarded the importance of third wave feminism and the impact of Hillary Clinton and Janet Huckabee had on their husbands political support. Hillary and Janet lived highly publicized and closely scrutinized lives in Arkansas and, for a time, in the nation. The court of public opinion judged the feminism and femininity of both women, correlating with the constituency support that Bill and Mike received. Each woman faced the socially constructed gender ideals of a woman, wife, and first lady.

Hillary Clinton initially disregarded the importance of her appearance and actions, and their consequences, during Bill's first term as governor. She kept her maiden name, held a job outside of the governor's mansion, did not cultivate the appearance of a traditional southern lady, did not have a child, and freely spoke her mind. When Bill lost re-election, analysts found that Hillary's lack of femininity and abundance of feminism turned voters away from Bill. In response, she rebranded herself to meet the socially

constructed image and role of a southern first lady in Arkansas. As the third wave of feminism gained traction, Bill announced his presidential candidacy. Hillary vocalized her feminist views but maintained the familial and feminine image that had secured Bill's re-election in Arkansas. Again, Bill won the election with the support of Hillary.

Janet Huckabee entered the role of first lady by default when Jim Guy Tucker resigned. When Mike Huckabee was officially elected to the position of Governor, Janet stood beside him holding a Bible. The couple had transitioned from a Southern Baptist Preacher and preacher's wife to the Governor and First Lady of Arkansas. Janet jet-skied, bungee jumped, parachuted out of an airplane, earning the nickname of "First Tomboy" rather than First Lady. Her femininity was questioned due to her love of outdoors and adventure. When Janet made plans to renovate and move furniture in the Governor's Mansion she was faced with massive pushback and fear that she would create a tacky mess. At one point when mansion staff refused to help her move furniture, and she rolled her sleeves up and moved it herself. Janet was outspoken and the media called her defensive and easily offended. However, Janet never rebranded or placated to public scrutiny. When Janet embarked on her 2002 campaign for Secretary of State, she aimed to meet the ideal image to secure women and young voters. However, she refused to compromise or change her morals or principles in order to do this. Her campaign proved unsuccessful and detrimental to Mike's reelection campaign. Southern Baptists across the state offered her words of encouragement and ultimately provided Mike Huckabee with enough support to secure reelection.

Overall, Hillary's and Janet's experience as first ladies in Arkansas reveal differences and similarities in the nation's politics regarding gender. Their stories show

that Arkansas politics held space for different manifestations of feminism but that the Arkansas public held a specific standard of femininity (that included a strong element of class) for Arkansas first ladies, while revealing that the public's stomach for feminism and its concepts of ideal femininity differed at the state and national level. Hillary was an active participant in the second wave of feminism. Janet was not an active participant but was raised in a household headed by a woman and thus took on untraditional roles. While the Equal Rights Amendment gained popularity, there was not enough support for it to be added to the constitution. When Hillary moved to Arkansas and became first lady, the feminist persona that she illuminated was heavily scrutinized within the state. As she softened her image to appear more feminine, she gained support from constituents. Janet faced heavily classist critiques as first lady. She was considered by many as not feminine enough in physical appearance or in her ability to manage the Governor's Mansion. Janet actively spoke out defending herself against critics. She never identified as a radical feminist, but openly supported the advancement of women on several occasions. When Hillary transitioned into the national limelight, she faced criticism for not being feminist enough because she chose to stay with an unfaithful husband. She continued to advocate for feminism and change as Bill campaigned for President. The majority of the nation favored her feminism and Bill's presidency was secured. Hillary continued to keep a feminine appearance that closely aligned to Princess Diana. Acutely aware of gendered media scrutiny, in 1995, Hillary told reporters, "If I want to knock a story off the front page, I just change my hairstyle."²⁷⁰ She recognized the impact that the femininity of her appearance played in the media and the power it held in keeping support for her

²⁷⁰ Annie Karini, "Hillary's hair: She's in on the joke," *POLITICO*, May 28, 2015, <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/hillary-clinton-hair-118381>.

husbands' political career. As Janet aided in Mike's campaign for President, she found that there was not as strong of a Baptist support base nationally as there had been in Arkansas. Despite the Huckabees' insistence their her marriage did not conform to traditionalist views of a submissive and subservient wife, Janet's relatively conservative family life and religion did not resonate with the majority of the nation.

As president, Bill Clinton was impeached but not removed from office, while Mike Huckabee ran a second unsuccessful presidential campaign in 2015. Hillary and Janet remained active supporters of their husbands' political endeavors. Hillary began her own campaign and became the first woman win the Democratic nomination for president. Janet Huckabee's daughter, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, followed in the footsteps of her grandmother and mother and by beginning her own political trail. Familiar sexism in politics continued (women remain a minority in political office), as did debates on feminism and femininity. In 2017, feminists attacked Sarah Huckabee Sanders as President Donald Trump's White House Press Secretary, criticizing her link to what they viewed as a sexist president and administration. Tweets multiplied across Twitter stating, "There's a special place in hell for women who don't support other women." Mike Huckabee quickly defended his daughter to reporters as embodying a strong woman holding her post, stating "She deserves better from other women and it just amazes me that even the women who say they are feminists are doing everything they can to discredit my daughter. My daughter stands strong and tough and walks into that lion's den of a press room every day and represents women and represents the president and

represents strength in an incredible way.”²⁷¹ Recently, the 2020 docuseries titled *Hillary* is revealing of the ubiquity of sexism and gender in American politics in its clip of Hillary Clinton preparing backstage for a Democratic primary debate against Bernie Sanders. An advisor asks, “Are you wearing those shoes on stage?” Hillary scoffs, “I’ll be honest. Do you think anybody asked Bernie Sanders about his goddamn shoes?”²⁷²

²⁷¹ Brent D. Griffins, “Huckabee: My daughter deserves better than Brzezinski’s attack,” *POLITICO*, December 13, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/12/13/huckabee-sarah-sanders-brzezinski-295478>.

²⁷² Hillary Clinton, “The Golden Girl,” *Hillary*, Hulu, Santa Monica, CA, March 6, 2020.

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