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## BOOK REVIEW

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PAVING THE WAY FOR MADAM PRESIDENT. Gutgold, Nichola D. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006, 200 pp., ISBN 0739115944.

The question “Is America ready for a woman president?” is everywhere and particularly salient given Hillary Clinton’s promising bid for the 2008 presidential election. As such, this is an apt time to explore the women who came before her. Nichola D. Gutgold does just this in *Paving the Way for Madam President*, in which the lives of five women (Margaret Chase Smith, Shirley Chisholm, Pat Schroeder, Elizabeth Dole, and Carol Moseley-Braun) who ran or explored a run for a major party presidential nomination are outlined. While this book does not shed new light on the readiness of the United States for a woman in the Oval Office, it brings together biographical information on women who have pursued the presidency in recent years and underscores the obstacles each faced in this endeavor. The relevance of this information given the 2008 presidential election is clear and makes this an important subject for scholarship.

While the cases Gutgold examines are not the only women who ran for president, the selection is quite appropriate given her aims of restricting analysis to more recent times and only major party seekers. By sheer virtue of the women meeting these criteria, these five represent a very diverse sample in terms of personal background and professional experience. Though the lives and circumstances of each clearly diverge, they all face similar obstacles in convincing the media, the public, and even their own supporters that they are “real candidates.” The difficulty of moving beyond symbols to credible contenders has been a particular adversity for female presidential

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hopefuls. Credibility, or the lack thereof, has been especially detrimental for each in raising the funds necessary to embark on or sustain a presidential election race. Although Hillary Clinton was ultimately unsuccessful in her presidential bid, she was at least not initially hindered by fundraising and her seriousness as a candidate was unchallenged. This represents a significant departure from her female predecessors.

Each chapter is organized by candidate and shares a similar structure. The lives of the women prior to their bids are important components of understanding their presidential aspirations. This is followed by a discussion of the presidential campaign trail, which, for Schroeder, ended after just a short exploratory bid. In fact, only Chase Smith and Chisholm held on through the nomination contest. Each examination concludes with an update on women's lives after the presidential race.

Some of the treatments of candidates are more successful than others. For example, Chase Smith's chapter is particularly sparse in detail while Chisholm's is both rich in description and analysis. At times, the personal lives of the candidates and their prior political experiences are focused on extensively at the expense of their presidential bids. The discussion of Moseley-Braun concentrated very little on her presidential race as opposed to her senatorial campaign against Alan Dixon and her subsequent senatorial term. Although this is interesting and valuable information, the specific dynamics of the 2004 presidential nomination contest in which Moseley-Braun ran appears an afterthought.

Gutgold's overall approach is quite interesting and distinct from other accounts in that she focuses on candidate communication and rhetorical styles throughout. This links some of the different sections together, and that is clearly the strong point of the book. She incorporates a number of excerpts from candidate speeches or various debates and opens with their own words in each chapter. A reframing of the book making the communication and rhetorical analysis of women presidential candidates the clear focus would have greatly improved the book and provided a necessary overarching framework. She also includes sections labeled *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *memoria*, which are somewhat unclear in their utility. Presidential obstacles of each candidate are given attention throughout, but the specific section devoted to this in each chapter could be better developed.

A main weakness is that Gutgold does not position her work in a way that makes her research topic, findings, and overall contribution to the literature on women and gender politics apparent. Specific research questions are lacking, as are discernable theories guiding her exploration. The introduction is disappointing and features a literature review greatly lacking in organization. A four-page discussion of Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential bid within this introduction is particularly peculiar. Though the chapters present important biographical information, throughout, analyses of findings are not as prominent as descriptions. Because of this, the opportunity of placing these individual women within a larger context of gender and presidential politics is missed. Making these connections would have been particularly appropriate for the conclusion. However, instead of using this section to discuss larger implications, a biographical sketch of all current women governors and a paragraph on Hillary Clinton conclude this work.

Overall, despite its flaws, *Paving the Way for Madam President* is a worthwhile book for scholars interested in women in politics. Given that a compilation of women presidential contenders has not yet been available, the biographical accounts are a valuable addition to the literature. Students taking courses dealing with women in American politics or a specialized course in American presidential elections would benefit from this book. A main point of Gutgold's is clear—each time a woman throws her hat in the presidential ring, she brings women closer to the ultimate political prize.

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