

DEBORAH LEFF: Good afternoon, and welcome on this day when we honor the march toward justice of Dr. Martin Luther King. I'm Deborah Leff. I'm Director of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. And on behalf of myself and John Shattuck, the CEO of the Kennedy Library Foundation, it's a pleasure to have this overflow crowd as we remember two remarkable women who shared many of Dr. King's ideals and who, like him, strive to make America a better country. I want to thank our forum sponsors: Bank of America, The Lowell Institute, Corcoran Jennison, and Boston Capital, as well as our media sponsors, WBUR, *The Boston Globe*, and boston.com.

Women in politics today are still more the exception than the rule. But I'm pleased to say that we have some wonderful exceptions with us here today. Women of color in politics are even less common. When President Kennedy took office in 1960, there were only 20 women among the more than 500 representatives in Congress -- two U.S. Senators and 18 Congresswomen. In the entire Congress, there were only four African Americans and none of them was a woman. Yet, it's interesting. Some people did understand that in the future, politics should not be only a man's world.

Listen, for example, to this 1957 NBC Interview with then Senator John F. Kennedy the week before his daughter, Caroline Kennedy, was born.

[audio]

When I said listen, I was kind of hoping you'd get video too, but my apologies for that.

For decades to come, as our panelists can tell you, it was hard for an African American woman politician to get taken seriously. But two women helped to change that, and we're going to learn about them today. I hope you all have the biographies we distributed which should offer some basic background information.

Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman elected to Congress. That was in 1968. And she was reelected six times until she retired from public office in 1983. With her slogan – “Unbought and Unbossed” -- she viewed her role as a catalyst for change. She promoted the rights of people of color, women and gays, and stressed what she saw as fundamental rights to education, employment and health care. When she announced her candidacy for President of the United States on January 25, 1972, it was national news but a bit tongue and cheek.

[video]

George McGovern won the Democratic nomination that year, but Congresswoman Chisholm had changed history forever. At the time Shirley Chisholm was running for President, Barbara Jordan was president pro

tempore of the Texas State Senate, a remarkable achievement for anyone but especially for the first African American to be elected a Texas State Senator since 1883.

In 1973, she was elected to the U.S. Congress, and her remarkable public speaking and brilliance launched her to national prominence as a member of the House Judiciary Committee during the 1974 Watergate Hearings. She keynoted the 1976 Democratic National Convention and years later, when she had left politics for a career in teaching at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, she keynoted the 1992 Democratic National Convention at Madison Square Garden. Who could forget that voice?

[video]

So we have with us today to enlighten us about these two women, it's a pleasure to introduce the woman beside me, another memorable Democratic National Convention keynoter, the marvelous former Governor of Texas, Ann Richards. [applause] After raising four children, Governor Richards first campaigned for others, and then in 1977 was elected the first female Commissioner of Travis County, Texas. In 1982, she was elected State Treasurer and in 1990 became Governor of Texas. The co-chair of her campaign that year was none other than Barbara Jordan.

Beside her is Congresswoman Barbara Lee who has represented California's Ninth District, the seat that had been occupied by Shirley Chisholm's good friend and supporter, Congressman Ron Dellums, since 1998.

Congresswoman Lee worked on Shirley Chisholm's campaign for president. It was Shirley Chisholm, she tells me, who first got her to register to vote. Trained as a social worker, the Congresswoman has forged coalitions to promote health care, housing, education, and jobs and is a key congressional leader in the fight against HIV Aids. She is co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and Whip for the Congressional Black Caucus. And as many of you know, Ms. Lee was the only member of Congress to vote against the resolution right after September 11. [applause] I didn't think I'd get through that one without the applause. That resolution authorized the President to use all necessary force in response to the 9-11 attacks.

Cokie Roberts is Senior News Analyst for NPR, where she was the congressional correspondent for more than ten years. She is also a political commentator for ABC News. The daughter of a congressman and a congresswoman, Hale Boggs and Lindy Boggs, there are few people better versed in the political and cultural obstacles faced by Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm in their careers. Ms. Roberts has won numerous awards, including the highest honor in public radio, The Edward R. Murrow Award. She is the author of *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters* and *Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation*, and is on the Board of the Foundation for the National Archives. [applause]

Moderating today's panel, it is a real pleasure to welcome back to the Kennedy Presidential Library, media commentator, Callie Crossley. [applause] Ms. Crossley was a producer of the documentary *Eyes on the Prize*, about America's civil rights struggle, a producer of ABC News "20/20," and now a weekly commentator on WGBH's *Beat the Press*. And, Callie, I turn over this vicious and unfriendly audience to you. [laughter] Enjoy! Welcome our guests, please. Thank You. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Good afternoon. What a way to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday. He would have been seventy-seven years old, and so that's a moment that we can take pleasure in. That we are here celebrating the life's work and mission of a man who really helped change America. His life's work and mission did that. And so, too, did the two women who we are honoring here today, Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan. I want to read to you something that Martin Luther King said that was so appropriate in, I think, reference to those women and their work.

"The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace, and brotherhood." And if there were ever two women dedicated to justice, peace, and brotherhood and who themselves were disciplined nonconformists those two would be Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm. [applause]

We know about some of the commonalities between the two. The first, that they achieved in the political arena. In preparing for today, I was curious about were there other commonalities between the two women. And so I found a couple. One that I am most proud to say to this group: they were both members of a great and wonderful public service sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, of which I am also a member. [laughter]

Both of them played prominent roles at Democratic National Conventions, as you have seen Barbara Jordan there. Both of them have speeches that have been named one of the 100 Best Speeches in the Twentieth Century by 137 scholars from Wisconsin and from Texas. You should hear those speeches if you have not. Shirley Chisholm's "Equal Rights Amendment" speech in support of that is wonderful. And, of course, Barbara Jordan's "The Impeachment Hearings for Nixon", and then the Democratic National Convention keynote speech. Please look them up. Watch all of them. They are just fabulous. And, finally, both of them, after leaving Congress, spent their lives working for the very issues that they thought important in Congress. And they continued to do that up until their deaths.

And so we are fortunate today to have women on this stage who knew these women as real people, not just as the icons that many of us have come to know them. And I want to spend some time this afternoon allowing these women who knew both Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan flesh to flesh, if you will, talk about who they were as women and as great Americans.

And we'll begin with Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who was encouraged to register to vote by one Shirley Chisholm. Please tell us the story of first meeting her.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Thank you very much, and let me just say that I cannot think of two women who deserve the type of recognition and the type of credit for exemplifying the struggle that Dr. King mounted on behalf of this country and the world than Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm. So today is really an unbelievable day in terms of the history of our country.

Shirley Chisholm came to my college. Actually, I was the president of the black student union at Mills College in Oakland, California. I was a single mother, raising two small children, a large Afro, [laughter] on public assistance, and one who believed that I could do something to make a difference in this world and in my community. But, of course, coming from the Bay Area, I considered myself a revolutionary and didn't believe that partisan politics could do much, just like many young people now. And so as president of the black student union, I invited Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm to come speak. Now, of course, I had a course during that time in government, where I was required to do fieldwork. And Mills is great in making sure that we have the internships and fieldwork placements connected with our courses.

So my fieldwork was to work in the presidential campaign in one of the primaries, and I told my professor, Dr. Mullins, I said, “You know, I’m not going to do this. I’m going to flunk this class. It will be the first class that I will have flunked, but there’s no way I can work for any of these candidates who don’t reflect what I think a candidate should reflect, and who should be in the White House, who would care and be concerned about, and work for real social, political, and economic change. I’m just not going to participate. And I was prepared to flunk the class so as president of the black student union, again we invited Congresswoman Chisholm to the Mills campus, and lo and behold during her talk she said that she was running for President.

Well, this shocked me because I had not known this, first of all, and secondly, I thought about this class I was taking and I went up to Mrs. Chisholm later and I said, “Well you know Mrs. Chisholm, I have this course in government and I’m about ready to flunk it, but after listening to you, maybe I’ll get involved. Tell me what to do, how to do it, and I really believe in what you say. You say you’re a catalyst for change. You say you’re ‘unbought and unbossed.’ You care about issues of equality and justice for women and people of color.” So I told her what I thought and she looked at me and she said, “Quite frankly, my dear, first thing you must do is register to vote.” [laughter] And the second thing she said is, “I don’t have a lot of money for my campaign. This is a nontraditional presidential

campaign, so if you believe in me, if you believe in what I stand for then you will make it happen at the local level.”

I said, “Oh my God, I don’t know what I’m doing.” So I went back and talked to my professor. She said, “Okay, well you have the class here. We can help.” I met then Sandra Swanson, Wilson Rawls, Jr. and Sandy Gaines who was president of the student body at Mills College. We all got together, and we ended up organizing the Northern California Shirley Chisholm Presidential Primary Campaign out of my class. Alameda County, where Oakland is, we took 10% of the vote in the primary, and I got an A in the class. [laughter and applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: From registering to vote to becoming a congressperson yourself, that’s pretty good. [laughter]

Governor Richards, Barbara Jordan supported you in your campaign against then Governor George Bush, and he said – I’m going to quote him -- “She blew me off the podium. She generated a hurricane, and I didn’t know what to do.” So I’m wondering if you can share with us just what that woman behind the hurricane, behind the stentorian voice, is all about, who she was.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Barbara Jordan and I were good friends for many years. We were friends other than being political friends. We sat together at the Lady Longhorn basketball games at the University of Texas.

Barbara was a big fan of the game, and I still am and still go to the games when I'm at home. I think the interesting thing about Barbara Jordan that is seldom said because the persona of Barbara gets lost in this enormous image of this stentorian way of speaking, of her obvious intellect, but very few people really realize that Barbara Jordan was a good politician. She said, "I am not a female politician. I am not a black politician. I am a politician, and I am good at it." [laughter]

Barbara was criticized a great deal during her life because she was not, quote, militant enough because Barbara had no patience with symbolism. She had no interest in being a symbol. She had interest only in proving herself by her effectiveness and leaving a legacy of what she had done, not just what she had said.

Barbara learned to be a good old boy, which was a remarkable thing if you're an overweight black woman [laughter] in the Texas Senate and the Texas House. You have your work cut out for you. [laughter] But Barbara learned very quickly how to be in the back room with the boys. She would, as was the tradition in both of those bodies, to go into the rooms behind the main chamber after the sessions were over and maybe have a toddy or two. [laughter] And during that time Barbara was able to prove herself as a person, not just as a black female legislator and some historic figure.

And she had a way about her because she had a sense of humor. She could laugh at herself and she could laugh at the situation in which she found herself. And one of the stories I like the best about that and Barbara was that if you are a Texan and you're in public office, or you're running for public office, it's necessary that you kill something. [laughter] And if you're not a good shot or you can't kill a bird, you still have to show up at the hunt. You understand? [laughter] Because the newspaper's going to take your picture and you can't be absent.

So Barbara was on a quail hunt one year with a bunch of good old boys [laughter] and you can imagine how much training she had in bird shooting in the Fifth Ward of Houston, Texas [laughter]. But before the evening was over, Barbara had a bunch of white good old boy rednecks singing "We Shall Overcome." [laughter] And it was that facility, that ability that she had, that uncanny working herself in, in a personable way, to the power structure that made Barbara Jordan so successful.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Let me pick up on something you said of her being accused of not being militant enough. Because often, Cokie Roberts, Shirley Chisholm made some decisions that really caught her in the crossfires of what was black enough. And one of them had to do with your father, Hale Boggs. She had an opportunity in Congress to vote for the majority leader, and she chose to vote for your father instead of Representative John Conyers, and in doing so later then your father rewarded her with a seat on

the Education and Labor Committee, which was quite a powerful committee and, as you know, would obviously have benefited her community. Talk about that. You've interviewed both Jordan and Shirley Chisholm. Let's talk about Shirley Chisholm to begin with. How could she balance that?

COKIE ROBERTS: I have to take a minute here, though, [laughter] because I covered Ann Richards primary for Governor, and the thing that her opponents were killing was people. [laughter] Remember that march through the death row inmates that one of your primary opponents had as an ad? It was charming. [laughter] So just a quail, just a quail or two is okay. [laughter] Even, even, no I won't say that. [laughter]

But I think the practicality of the question that Ann Richards has brought up, and now you have Callie, is absolutely true, and in fact my last interview with Barbara Jordan was in 1992. And it was about Ross Perot and as you know, Perot was in the race, out of the race, in the race, out of the race, and ABC did a big special on "Who is Ross Perot?" We won an Emmy for it and, you know, my basic reaction now is, who cares? [laughter]

He had been, of course, very active in education reform in Texas, and Barbara Jordan had worked with him on education reform and so I went to interview her. And she said, "Look I'm for Bill Clinton for President." She had spoken at the Democratic Convention and all that, but she said, "I think he was very effective on this, and I was very happy to work with him

because kids needed it.” And that practicality showed through and, as you say, the same was also true for Mrs. Chisholm.

I, of course, am not privy as to why she made the decision to vote in a very tight majority leader’s race for a man from the Deep South. I mean, it’s not just that she voted against John Conyers; my father was from New Orleans, Louisiana. But he had worked very hard for the Voting Rights Act, and it had been a very courageous move on his part and then for the Open Housing Bill, which almost caused him to lose his seat.

And so it was the closest election in Congress that year, and he was Majority Whip at the time. So I think that she had a certain appreciation for that, and she also wanted to move ahead in the Congress and get onto powerful committees and move up in the leadership herself. And she went with the winner.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: It seems that both of them had a kind of practical optimism about the country and the possibilities that could be brought through politics. And the other thing that they had, which some people criticize now and say leaders don’t have, particularly women and this may be unfair, is that they were not afraid to embrace their personal power as well as their political power. I wonder if you each could speak to that.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Well, with regard to their political power, I can remember, and I'd worked with the great Congressman Ron Dellums for many years, for 11 years, and didn't have the privilege to get to know Congresswoman Barbara Jordan as closely as I got to know Shirley Chisholm. But one thing I'd recognized, and when I talked to Barbara Jordan and to Shirley Chisholm was that they believed that as African American women, as citizens of the United States, now that they were on the inside, it wasn't about playing by the rules because those rules weren't made for them nor by them. But it was about changing the rules. It was about shaking up the system. And I can remember Shirley, really after Ed and Labor, she went on to the Rules Committee. She was the only African American and the only woman on the Rules Committee, and the Rules Committee is one of the most powerful committees in Congress.

COKIE ROBERTS: Very hard to explain to your constituents, very hard to take home to your constituents because they don't, there's no pork, there's nothing you can show for it. So it's very difficult to do that politically successfully.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: That's right and she did, and she was able to shepherd a legislative agenda from the Rules Committee that addressed the constituencies that she cared about: women, the poor, disadvantaged, people of color. And also Barbara Jordan always talked about the rules. Know those rules, because once you get in you have to

change those rules for the benefit of all. It wasn't for their personal benefit, but it was for the benefit of the country, and I always admired them because that was unchartered territory for women and for African Americans in terms of working within the system of the House of Representatives.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, you have to understand that these women had been excluded from the system for their entire lives. And then to be included was an important aspect of what they were to succeed in doing. Barbara felt very strongly that once she was in, the important thing for her was to use the system to the very best of her ability to accomplish the things that she wanted to accomplish. Barbara didn't want to be exclusive anymore. She wanted to be a part of a system that she passionately believed in. In fact, I was interested in the Alito Hearings this week about how nice it would have been to have a conversation with Barbara about what transpired there. Principally because there is so much conversation now about the Constitution and the static nature of the Constitution, whether the Constitution in 2006 means the same as the Constitution did, for God's sake, when it was written. [laughter]

And how these people now who are testifying to become judge appeal to the notion that the Constitution must remain the document that it was. So I went back and dug out, thinking about this panel, what Barbara said when she was on the Judiciary Committee during the Nixon impeachment, because I thought it was important in context of today.

She said, “We, the people. It is a very eloquent beginning. But when the Constitution of the United States was completed on the 17th of September in 1787 I was not included in that ‘we, the people.’ I felt for many years that somehow George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. [laughter] But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision, I have finally been included in ‘we, the people’.”

And it is significant that Barbara saw the importance of this being a moving and flexible and changeable document to address the issues of the time as the country changes. [applause]

I have to say though that Barbara was involved in a couple of things that she got so much criticism for, and it wasn’t just because she was a part of the system but because she felt there were certain things that were a higher calling for her. And a perfect example for Barbara was during the Vietnam War and the convention fight. Lyndon Johnson needed the Texans to stand together, and the last voice in the world he wanted to be against that war was Barbara Jordan’s. And so Barbara opposed the war, but she voted for the plank in the platform. Because she said it was important for Texans to stand behind, quote, their man, unquote.

Barbara was a very practical and realistic and rational politician. And she took strong stands when she thought she could win, but she was not out there leading the charge when she thought that the cause was for naught.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Let me just mention in contrast Shirley Chisholm in terms of where she was on the war, early on. She was against the Vietnam War, and I just would like to read a quote from her speech given at The National Press Club in 1972. And as I reflect on it and review both speeches I said, “How relevant this is today.”

She says, “One trembles with rage to think of all these urgent problems, any one of which by itself is critical, begging the attention of a government which has consistently responded only with lies and deceit and the monstrous ongoing sacrifice of America’s young men and the taxpayer’s dollars. The record of this nation’s leadership in Washington regarding Vietnam constitutes a wretched betrayal of the just expectations and needs of the American people. I call upon Congress to cut off all funds for this war now, and I call upon the American public to defeat those members of Congress, Democrat or Republican, who do not at long last face up to what they should have done years ago. It may take until November to end this war. If the politicians procrastinate, I am warning Congress that the public is telling you to get off of your hind legs, stop debating, and passing resolutions and prove your worth.” That was 1972. [applause]

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: And I think it’s significant and important for everyone to understand that these two women were both courageous leaders, and they came from the same stripe. They happened to

be Democrats, they happened to be women, they happened to be members of Congress, and they happened to be black. But they could disagree.

COKIE ROBERTS: Well, and they were from different places and that's very significant when you talk about something like this. The difference of representing Houston, Texas, and representing Brooklyn, New York, is very different. [laughter] And the first mission of a member of Congress, as you well know, is to represent your district.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: We've talked about how they stood out for themselves no matter what the position might have been thought to be a popular one or not. They just took a stand where they thought they needed to be. So I thought it important on this day to talk about the F word: Feminism. [laughter] And nowadays so many women politicians run from that in the opposite direction, and both of them embraced it, in fact. Shirley Chisholm, I'm paraphrasing now, said there's so much talent that has been lost in this nation because some of that talent wears a skirt. So I'd like for all of you to talk about why they so very strongly embraced feminism and how that played out in the decisions that they made, some of the political decisions.

COKIE ROBERTS: Well, as you pointed out Callie, one of Shirley Chisholm's great speeches was the speech in 1970 for The Equal Rights Amendment. Remember it? And she said in that speech, and I'm quoting

here, “That it provides” -- speaking of the Amendment – “a legal basis for attack on the most subtle, most pervasive, and its most institutionalized form of prejudice that exists. Discrimination against women solely on the basis of their sex is so widespread that it seems to many persons normal, natural, and right.” That was clearly a very firm embrace of feminism. But in 1970 that was a lot more acceptable than it is in 2005, which is just mind boggling that that is the truth, but there it is.

Barbara Jordan, at the 1992 Convention, again I’m quoting here, talking about change -- because she was talking about the difference between the 1976 Convention and the 1992 Convention -- and at the 1976 Convention, she was the first African American woman keynoter. My mother was the first woman to chair a political convention that year, so it was still very new, all of that, and by ’92 she was saying, “One overdue change already underway is the number of women challenging the counsels of political power, dominated by white, male policymakers. That horizon is limitless. What we see today is simply a dress rehearsal for the day and time we meet in convention to nominate Madam President.”

Now, I would prefer to say it with her voice [laughter]. So I think that she was reminding people those 22 years after Shirley Chisholm’s speech that this was, even though The Equal Rights Amendment was dead, that this was still a goal that women particularly, but members of that convention, needed to embrace, and it had become a lot tougher by then.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: So it was easier then than now to embrace feminism. How about you Congresswoman Lee?

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Barbara Jordan said that, “Life is too large to hang out a sign: For Men Only.” And she understood that the potential of America was being lost. Her quote, for instance, “This country can ill afford to continue to function using less than half of its human resources, brain power, and kinetic energy.” She knew that our country would never live up to its promise, its ideals, if in fact half or more than half of its population was excluded.

Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm had to deal with racism and sexism. They had that double yolk and as African American women, sometimes they had to, they were challenged by their own. I can remember Shirley Chisholm being challenged by the African American community, some African American men saying that she was embracing the feminist movement more so. I can remember in California during the campaign we had some serious issues, which we worked through with the National Organization of Women, because women in the feminist movement felt that the black community was embracing Shirley Chisholm in a way that may not be good for the feminist movement. And Shirley, though, rose to the occasion. And she said, “Look, you know we have to attack racism and sexism at the same time. These are two evils. I am a victim of oppression

based on race and on sex.” And neither one, Barbara Jordan nor Shirley Chisholm, would allow themselves to get pegged into that racism is more important to tackle or sexism is more important to tackle. And for that I tell you we learned a lesson, and I think that as we build coalitions for the future, we need to really go back and look at what Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan stood for, and how they worked with coalitions as African American women to make some significant strides and changes in our country for women and for people of color.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: But I would bring up that she did say, Shirley Chisholm at one point, of the times that she had been discriminated. She had been discriminated against more as a woman than as a black person, which as you know caused a great amount of controversy when she said that. You want to respond to that?

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: It caused a lot of controversy, but if I remember correctly it was around running for president and being involved as a candidate for the President of the United States of America. I don't believe she said that in the context of her being an African American and a woman in America in general. This was in the context of the political arena and the campaign that she was mounting.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: But it is an interesting thing to note that organizations and groups of people who have been excluded from the

mainstream, who have never been a part of power, find it much easier to fight each other than to fight the real enemy. To be able to succeed among your own inside group is in itself some sort of victory, and as a consequence, I've been to many NAACP banquets in the early days when there were more people at the head table than there were in audience [laughter] and I can certainly remember feminist meetings where, as they say, we would have been comfortable in a telephone booth. [laughter] But the fights were much greater from within because simply there was no avenue for us to be able to fight on the outside.

I think it's important to say in this discussion, though, particularly about Barbara -- and I don't know about Shirley Chisholm, about how she could get elected in the first place. And that was because the laws were changed, and in these particular times when we're talking about redistricting and Tom DeLay and the rape of Texas during this last time after the census so that it was rearranged so that Democrats would be defeated within newly redrawn lines. In Texas we had a poll tax. Some of you will remember. Kids now have no idea that you actually had to pay to vote. I can remember sitting outside grocery stores in the black community with a card table set up. Sit there all day trying to convince people to give me a dollar and a quarter to buy a poll tax to have the right to vote. When the poll tax was ruled as unconstitutional, that was one step. The second was that the gerrymandering that had taken place in mostly the urban districts guaranteed that no minority would be elected, because those neighborhoods were cut up to be inclusive,

where you could always guarantee that the white power was going to elect the people.

Well, Barbara Jordan ran for Congress twice and was defeated; I mean ran for the state legislature twice and was defeated before she was successful, because the laws were changed. And that was the guarantee that the vote would be equal, one man, one vote, that they could not gerrymander. That they must draw the district so that it accurately represented the population, and the poll tax was found illegal. Once the conditions were made so that a person of color could be elected, and for God's sake, a woman could be elected, Barbara Jordan was successful. If it had not been, though, for those courageous people who fought to overturn those laws, Barbara Jordan would never have been elected to public office.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Cokie, did you want to add?

COKIE ROBERTS: I mean, that's quite true. It was a court decision that really changed the at-large districts, and she talks about that in her oral history in the Lyndon Johnson Library at length, the Baker v. Carr decision. But I think that is something that people do forget, that the laws were changed both in terms of women's rights without the Equal Rights Amendment. The big change of course was the 1964 Civil Rights Bill where the words "and sex" were added to the Amendment, the Title Seven, which prohibited discrimination in employment, and it said on the basis of

race, national origin, or creed. And Judge Smith, the Chairman of the Rules Committee, put in the words “and sex” to kill the bill. And he figured, you know, people in Congress might be crazy enough to vote against discrimination on the basis of race, but wouldn’t be crazy enough to vote against discrimination on the basis of sex. And a couple of brave women kept it in the bill, a Democrat in the House, and a Republican in the Senate. And I was listening to the Johnson tapes the other day of the signing of the, the day that it passed in the House of Representatives. And he’s on the phone getting the news from the House, and he says, “Is there anything in there to worry about?” And he’s told, “Oh, there’s something about women, but don’t worry about it.” [laughter] And, of course, that changed all of the employment laws and made all the difference in the world. So a lot of these conversations that we’re having are in the context of the laws that were passed thanks to the dedication of Dr. King, because had it not been for him and for the March on Washington in August of 1963 and the President’s assassination, President Kennedy’s assassination, President Johnson going to the well of the House and saying, “We will overcome, we shall overcome,” these Bills would not have been passed. The 1964 Civil Rights Bill, the 1965 Voting Rights Bill, which did change everything in terms of employment and representation in the country.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: At Shirley Chisholm’s funeral, the minister said, she stood up and spoke up and that was very important. And you reference the civil rights movement and Dr. King, but there was a movement behind

him. And for these two women, they were very individual in their courageous quests. What does it take, for those of you who knew them, to stand up alone and keep going forward? There's no movement behind either one of them. They just had to do it alone, really.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Well, you just had to do that yourself. Well, I think they did what was right. Both Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan were the nontraditional elected officials, nontraditional politicians. They didn't test the way the wind was blowing. They came to Congress with a purpose, with an agenda, and with a mission. They came to Congress to lead, and I think the majority of American people were with them.

Oftentimes, we don't see the movements taking place because people, for whatever reason, are bogged down with whatever. But I believe when you look at the legislation that Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm sponsored or co-sponsored, whether it was for domestic workers receiving minimum wages and benefits, whether it was inclusion. And a lot of people don't know this, but Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm were very supportive of and wanted to see immigrant rights, the rights of immigrants included. Barbara Jordan was responsible, actually, responsible for including the rights of Mexican Americans in the Voting Rights Act. Amazing! An African American woman!

Shirley Chisholm spoke fluent Spanish. I watched her engage crowds that could not speak English. And so these women knew the American people; they knew what the needs were. They spoke out and worked for those who had been shut out of the system, and so while there may not have been a visible political movement behind them, I think they had the people with them because they did what was right. And that is what is so important, I think, with elected officials, with people who are working in whatever capacity. That when those moments come, you have to seize the opportunity, seize the time, and help move the agenda forward that helps shape a better America. And both of these women did that.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, but it's also important to say that both these women had districts that supported them. When Barbara Jordan ran for Congress, she had a really tough race against a really smart black man from her district who had been in the Texas legislature. I well remember that race, and it stemmed around that business, are you black enough? Are you outspoken enough on what should be black issues? But Barbara was successful. Barbara never had a serious question about whether or not she would be defeated once she was elected. There's a certain security in having a district that is solidly behind you. And in Barbara's case, after she had been the chairman of that committee and made that speech that turned the tide on Richard Nixon, Barbara had the support that she needed, the emotional support. She might have to take some tough

stands, and she might have to take some, speak out on issues where there was not total unanimity, but no one disrespected Barbara Jordan.

From the time she was a very young woman, Barbara Jordan had a confidence that was given her by her family, her sisters. She had an aunt who was particularly helpful to her and to her sisters. And I'll just tell one short story if I may, a family story.

Once a year Barbara used to have a singing at her house. Usually it occurred around Mother's Day. And her sisters would come from Houston and other guests who she might invite. And she had a song sheet so just in case some of us forgot the words [laughter] and her -- I can't remember whether it was her aunt or her sister who used to play the piano. And we would all gather around, and we would sing hymns all afternoon long. Of course, Barbara the loudest of all with the best voice, which is probably why she wanted to do it. [laughter]

But all of you know that there is a bond from the time you are a child that tells you whether you've got it or not. That tells you that you're smart and that you're capable and that you're able, and Barbara Jordan had that. And she had it then as an adult and a grown woman, so that there was never any doubt in her mind, really, about her ability and her confidence in herself. And I think that makes all the difference in the world, and I'm sure that's true of Shirley Chisholm.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: One of my favorite Barbara Jordan quotes, “I never intended to be a run-of-the-mill person.” [laughter] I think that’s a great quote. We talked about some of the political work that these great women have done in terms of shaping some of the policies in the country. I’m wondering from a psychological standpoint if we can talk about Shirley Chisholm’s run for the presidency.

I mean, we have *Commander and Chief* on now, on the television, and everybody’s saying, okay that’s going to put in the minds of people the fact that there could be a woman president. And I wonder if you might, Congresswoman Lee, talk about, to begin with, just the impact of her stepping out to say, “I am going to run for the presidency,” and how that in its own way began to change people’s perspective about who could be in the White House.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Just her stepping out there has opened the door now for others to run. Her stepping out there, running for president, allowed young children -- and I watched her with young kids -- believe that they could run for president. By Shirley stepping out there and running for the presidency told me and showed me. It showed African Americans, it showed people of color, it showed women, it showed all of those in our country who care about public service and running for higher office, that it can be done. And Shirley Chisholm had that level of

confidence just like Barbara Jordan did. I mean, it was like why not? It's time for a woman. And she didn't have a lot of money. She didn't have a major national organization, but she was very smart and she was very astute and she knew that she would be seen as -- sometimes people actually called her crazy. I heard that all over, over and over again. But she did not let that deter her and she knew that she probably wasn't going to win, but she knew that people who had been shut out of the political process in our country needed a voice, needed an opportunity to participate, and she galvanized people around the country for the first time, such as myself, to get involved in the political process.

And I tell you everywhere I go I run into people whose political careers have been -- were -- inspired by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm running for the presidency of the United States of America. And for that I think we all owe her a debt of gratitude because she showed us that it was not the purview of white males in America. That black people, people of color, and women could, and should, run for the presidency. And I know in our lifetime we'll see a woman in the White House as a result of that spirit and that belief. [applause]

COKIE ROBERTS: I think though that you and Deborah alluded to this in introducing the Walter Cronkite announcement of the Chisholm candidacy. There was a certain amount of ridicule of that candidacy, which I think for a woman is the hardest single thing to do -- to put yourself in a position where

you will be ridiculed. And, yet, she did it and as Congresswoman Lee said, without expecting to win. But for the purpose of making the argument both for women, people of color, and also the argument against the war, which was her mission. But I think that that is the thing that does, to have that person, the person who does it first, take the barbs, really does make it easier for the next person along the line because it's been done now. It's been out there; the jokes have been made. The bonnet in the ring, you know. And it does make it much better for the next person to come along.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Do people still remember that, though? When the *Commander and Chief* television show came on, I mean, there was so much this is fresh and new, as though there never had been a real person running for this job, and I just wonder, you know, what needs to be said so that her position in history is cemented as the person who made that pathway.

[simultaneous conversation] [laughter]

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: I mean, we can't determine what's going into the history books, obviously, or women would have more of a history now. [laughter and applause] But even the footnote is a good thing to have, [laughter] rather than it being a blank space. Some enterprising writers will put a text together for high school that will have Shirley Chisholm's picture in it, and I learned that you don't have to explain it when a young student sees a photograph like that. They get the message. They

know if she can do that, I can do that too. So it was significant that Shirley Chisholm made the race, even though she knew she couldn't win. It's always significant when someone steps out of the background and into the mainstream, regardless of whether or not they are going to win, because it does chip away at the doors and the glass ceilings that exist for us. And she did that.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: I think it should be noted that she came away with 151 delegates, which is more than Jesse Jackson had by the way in his quest. So, I mean, it's just something important that gets lost in this conversation.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Can I say, also, I think it's very important just what we're doing today, and I want to commend the JFK Library and Museum for this event, because all across the country we need to hold events and memorials and celebrations honoring these two women. In my district, for example, Shirley died unfortunately last January and we actually established a Shirley Chisholm Scholarship, a four year scholarship for a young person. I know the post office in Brooklyn has been renamed the Shirley Chisholm Post Office. Barbara Jordan has many ... there are many buildings and libraries named after her. But I think at the grassroots level, at the community level, it's up to us because, yes, the history books, you know, may or may not record history accurately. But we have the opportunity, I think, to keep their legacy alive because our young people need to know who these great women were. And they need to know how

their lives will be much better because of these two women, and how they need to learn about how these women took on the whole system, took on the country, took on the world. And they were ordinary women who worked very hard, were smart, and broke through those glass ceilings that many still haven't. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: At a time when, thank you, and this is my last question before opening it up to you all who might have questions. At a time when so many politicians are equated with just sleaziness, no offense to the two of you here, but that's what people think [laughter] that, you know, politicians just can't be trusted. And that they are, at the very least, they have no character. Speak to the character of these women, because that was never questioned with either one of them. And if you might speak to the character of both Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan, leave us with that something to think about now in a way that they were politicians, true enough, but their character was never questioned.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, I'm happy to talk about it but this is an age-old thing. Sleazy politicians can't be trusted. No character, etc., etc., etc. That's been going on in this country since the inception of the democracy itself. But in the case of Chisholm and Barbara Jordan, character was important to them. I'm not sure that that is always the case with people who run for office.

I know that Barbara Jordan had much more of a sense of her place in history and how her character would be represented as a part of that history than I ever did. I mean Barbara knew from the outset that this was a big deal and oftentimes you'd be frustrated with Barbara, because you couldn't get her to relax. You know, you couldn't get her to not be Barbara Jordan. [laughter] But Barbara had such a sense of herself and such a sense of how she was portrayed, that whether she was that all the time or not, you would never know it. I have to tell one story, since this is the last question, because it's my favorite about Barbara. And some of you have probably heard me tell it before.

But Barbara had a party annually at her house where she entertained the Lady Longhorns basketball team and the coaches. And we'd all go out there and swim and have a picnic supper, and Barbara by this time was in her golf cart. And when Barbara had first bought that place, which was kind of out in a rural area of Travis County, there was some discussion about whether this was a good idea -- that this black woman was going to buy an acre of land down there on Onion Creek. You know, just the sound of it tells you that there's [laughter] just a touch of an area that you wouldn't think Barbara would buy a place in.

And so there was a little bitty narrow lane that led up to this piece of property that you could barely get the car down. And an old woman owned some property alongside of that lane, and I was a County Commissioner who

represented that district. And my job was to pave roads and take care of little lanes like this, and Barbara called me and she said, “Ann, this is Barbara.” She said, “The old woman who owns the property next to that lane has put a fence, a gate, across this lane leading to my house and I need you to do something about it.” And so to make a long story short, it took a lot of doing but eventually I was able to get the gate down. And so I was out at this party for the Longhorns and I said to Barbara, I said, “Barbara, whatever happened to that old woman who had that piece of property up there next to the lane?” She said, “Well, you know, Ann, it was an interesting thing. That old woman died and went to hell.” [laughter] You don’t mess with Barbara Jordan. [laughter]

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: I tell you character with Shirley Chisholm was what it was all about. But let me share the personal side of her character first that really always amazed me because, as you all know, Shirley Chisholm, like Barbara Jordan, she was tough. They were tough. She was a tough politician. But she was also a woman. And she never allowed the tough politician part to take over in her private life.

Shirley Chisholm dressed impeccably. She wore high-heeled shoes, and she loved to dance. I can remember at my mother’s, I believe it was her 75th birthday party, she came out and danced the night away. She and my mother danced all night long and by two o’clock my sons and myself, we were about ready to go home, and they were still on the dance floor dancing.

And I share this because Shirley Chisholm had ... that part of her personality and her character was really very revealing, because she did not lose that side of her that made her this great woman. She helped me in all of my campaigns. I ran for the California Assembly Senate and then congress, and she came out and helped me each time.

Well, when I won my first race she came out for my victory ball and she looked at me and I still had my Afro [laughter] and I probably had a pair of jeans on. I had worked very hard that day, and she looked at me and she says, "My dear, you know when I was in congress I bought so many clothes," she says, "I just have boxes and boxes [laughter] of suits [laughter]. I think I'll send them to you. [laughter] I said, "Mrs. C." -- many of us called her Mrs. C. -- I said, "I think you're about a size three or a five, and I think I am not a three or a five." [laughter] She said, "I'm going to send them to you anyway so you can see what they look like and maybe have them altered." [laughter] And so she was just a delightful woman in terms of who she was as a woman, but she wanted to make sure though that every ethical guideline in her public life was followed.

I think that's why she was so good at rules and on the Rules Committee. She knew as an African American woman, as one who was challenging the system -- which is what she did -- that she would be under scrutiny, first of all, and that it didn't make any sense to try and play around like the rest of

them, like the rest of them could play around. And so Shirley Chisholm lived up to the highest moral and ethical standards that I have ever seen in any elected official, as Barbara Jordan did.

And I think again, in 2006, we need to go back and look at how they did it, and why they did it. And how they were able to work in an elected body and not engage in the corruption that is so pervasive. And I think they serve as role models to me, and I think all of us who are elected need to look at how they did it, why they did it, and try to live up to those moral standards that they both did. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Okay, I'm going to ask all of you [applause] while Cokie is answering, I'm going to ask those of you who have questions to come to the microphone, and here are the rules. There will be no speeches. There will be questions, and I will get the panelists to answer briefly. Go ahead, Cokie.

COKIE ROBERTS: These women were obviously women of great character, and they did both understand that they would be scrutinized. However, I do think that we make an excuse of calling politicians sleazy and dismissing them and, heaven knows, there are sleazy politicians. At the moment, we're dealing with a lousy situation in Washington with the lobbying scandals and all that. But they're so much the few rather than the many. And I think that as voters and as citizens, we use that as an excuse to

not participate and not to carry on the legacy of people like Martin Luther King and John Kennedy and these two women.

And as we have all done, we're reading through these speeches, and the part of the 1976 keynote speech that Barbara Jordan gave that I found so important for today was, first she quoted from Thomas Jefferson saying, "Let us restore to social intercourse the harmony and that affection without which liberty and even life are but dreary things. A nation is formed by the willingness of each of us to share in the responsibility for upholding the common good. A government is invigorated when each of us is willing to participate in shaping the future of this nation." And she went on to say, "In this election year, we must define the common good and begin again to shape a common good and begin again to shape a common future. Let each person do his or her part. If one citizen is unwilling to participate, all of us are going to suffer."

So I think that that message of participation is a wonderful one for them to leave us with and not a message of just saying, oh they are all a bunch of bums and I'm opting out. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Okay, starting here. [applause]

AUDIENCE: First, thanks to the Kennedy Forums and to all of you wonderful women for such a wonderful time today. Hopefully, one of the

things of the many things that you will do today is inspire all of us to go out to urge the dems to filibuster Alito. Barbara Lee, to you I want to say, you know, you're a major sharer of mine and of the world, I hope that you will consider running for Senator so that we will have two radical Barbara's in California and then heed your own words in running for President.

[laughter]

Second, let me just say to Ann Richards. Ann, I have been a voting rights activist for the last four years and I believe, Governor Richards, your race was the first of three elections that George W. Bush rigged. [laughter]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: All right, over here, please have a question.

AUDIENCE: Are we on? This has been a wonderful forum, and I clearly loved hearing the stories about one of my personal heroes, Barbara Jordan. I've got a problem, though, and it's a serious one. As we talk about how impressive a picture -- just a picture of Shirley Chisholm in a history book -- is important to children both of color and not of color, I find that the biographies are lacking some serious information about Barbara Jordan, who was a wonderful woman. Now, as the biography of Shirley Chisholm mentions her spouse, Conrad, there is no mention ...

CALLIE CROSSLEY: What is your question?

AUDIENCE: How do you feel about the fact that Barbara Jordan was a lesbian, lived with a woman for 40 years, is not mentioned? [applause]

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Barbara Jordan had a very private life to her death, and I honor that privacy. I think we all do. [applause]

AUDIENCE: Do you think that not sends a very bad message to the young gays and lesbians?

CALLIE CROSSLEY: I am going to have to interrupt you and go to this questioner here, please.

AUDIENCE: Hi. Two questions: Was there one in particular incident or personal series of events that influenced their decision to go into the study of law in the case of Barbara and then to go on to politics? And two, what would you think would be their response to the movement right now that wants to, you know, limit the role of the federal government and give all these rights and laws back to the states?

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Any of my panelists and briefly please.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: I don't know really what the question was to tell you the truth. [laughter] In turning federal responsibility back to the states, is that what you're asking about?

AUDIENCE: Well, yes, you hear them saying they want to go back 40 years where the states had rights around education, civil rights, and so forth ...

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, they continue ... the federal government has done that forever. They take on responsibilities and then as soon as it costs money, they try to shift it back to the state, [laughter] because that's one way that they can get rid of that responsibility, financially, is to ask the states to take it on. And every time there's a change in administration, you see shifts of that sort. In this particular administration, they have done the shift because, actually, they don't think that the federal government should pay attention to the social issues that you and I think are primary in this country.

I am sure that Barbara has feelings about that, as a member of Congress, but if I were still in office today I would decry the fact that the federal government shirks its responsibility to do the very things that we elect them to positions of power to do. [applause]

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: And I'll just add to that that I am sure that Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan would be terrified, but also would be fighting against our constitutional rights being eroded at this moment. And also I am certain that they would fight against states' rights as

we see now the federal government giving up their role as being our federal government. And I'm convinced, based on their life and their work, that this was something that not only they would speak out against, but they would fight to reverse.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Over here please.

AUDIENDE: My question is to all of you: If Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, do you think that she will be nominated for president, and if nominated, that she will win? [laughter]

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Why don't you do that, Cokie?
[laughter]

COKIE ROBERTS: I had a feeling that you would say that. I think that Hillary Clinton has a very good chance of being nominated. She's a very disciplined candidate, unlike some other members of the family, and [laughter] she's a very hard worker. She's very smart. She has a superb staff, and she has the ability to raise great, huge sums of money. And I think that she will be hard to stop for the democratic nomination, but anybody who predicts -- tries to predict two years out -- who's going to get the nomination is generally wrong. And so I'm not going to go out on that limb, but I think she's certainly interested, and I think she has a very good shot at getting the nomination.

And then the question of whether she can win for president or not is, again, one of those things that you just can't measure two years out. You have got to know what the circumstances are that the country is facing at that point. You have to have some idea of how the approval rating of the exiting president is, what the economic situation is, what the international situation is. And anybody who predicts that right now is just blowing smoke.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Congresswoman Lee, you care to?

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Well, I tell you, Shirley Chisholm certainly opened the door for a woman to be nominated and for a woman to win.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: I think Hillary comes from the same stripe as Barbara and as Shirley Chisholm. I think she's a pragmatic and smart politician and an able officeholder. If she chooses to run, which none of us at this point know, undoubtedly she would win the democratic nomination. I think she would be in for a tough battle. All of us, all of us who are female and have run for high office have experienced the barbs that Cokie talked about earlier.

I think she would arouse an enormous amount of enthusiasm, not just among the feminist community, but among the real core of the Democratic Party.

And we would see voter turnout for the democrats like we have not seen in recent history. Whether or not she chooses to run, though, remains to be seen. And I'm with Cokie, a lot of it depends on what the issues are at the time that she runs, if she runs, whether she can win it or not.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: General question. Can a woman be President of the United States?

COKIE ROBERTS: I think the answer to that is absolutely.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Absolutely yes.

COKIE ROBERTS: It's a question of the right woman at the right time. And the same thing's true of men; it's got to be the right candidate at the right time and the right year. The other candidates have to be the wrong ones, you know [laughter]. And I think, though, I think that the period where we were really reluctant to elect a woman is over. And I don't think that's just polling at this point; I think it's the acceptance of women in all kinds of walks of life. And I'm not saying it wouldn't be hard, it would be very hard. But I think it's completely doable.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: And let me just say we'd just witnessed the election of two great women, one in Chile and one in Liberia. [applause] And I think that bodes well for America. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Over here.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. To what extent do you think that Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan risked their congressional careers, in Shirley Chisholm's run for the Presidency and in Barbara Jordan's role in the Watergate hearings?

COKIE ROBERTS: They actually didn't. They were from relatively safe seats, or quite safe seats, and I think that in the case of Barbara Jordan and the Watergate hearings, what you had was the resignation of President Nixon. So instead of it being a political liability very fast, because it all happened very fast from July to August, it became a political plus. And certainly a plus for her Houston district. And I think for Mrs. Chisholm the same thing, that the district was a safe enough district that this was not a risky thing to do.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Okay, over here?

AUDIENCE: I am interested in how the interrelationship between leadership and grass roots movements and how we all, in the words of Jefferson, have to participate in the commonwealth. And I'm thinking about our two honorees and how they changed. How their leadership changed

over time. In your experience with them, or in your view of them historically, is it like King changing and going from equality in a racial sense to equality in the economic sense? Is it more like what happened in our time with you, Congresswoman, when you stood up and voted against the war? I can't help but think what our country would have been like today if the junior Senator from our Commonwealth had voted with you in his side of the aisle.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Care to respond?

COKIE ROBERTS: Talk about that grass roots versus leadership question. That would be ...

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Well, I think it's important ... First of all, when one is elected there is this balance representing your district but also leading. And there are moments where when one has to hope their district understands a position or a vote, but because you've been elected that moment comes that you have to lead. But, also, I think it's very important when that moment comes and when you may or may not be where your district is, that elected officials, elected leaders must educate their district, must spend time with their district, must explain why they took a position that could be contrary to where the majority of the constituency is.

And I believe each and every time people -- whether they agree or disagree - - that they will respect your position or your vote and ultimately will be with you. It's very important when any elected official, when any person is elected, that they stay very close I think to the grass roots and to their organization. The worse thing in the world would be an abandonment, and Shirley Chisholm nor Barbara Jordan ever, they never abandoned their constituency. They were honed, they were organized, and they were participating. And where there was tension or the lack of understanding of an issue or a position or their work, they were there to explain why. And I think that is the type of leadership that we need where elected officials are part of their constituency and their constituencies are part of their overall legislative agenda.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. I'm wondering if one or more than one of you would please comment on Barbara Jordan's illness. I'm interested in knowing what impact it had on her as she lived day to day and what impact it had on those who loved her. I just do a double-take or a skip a heartbeat when the wheelchair showed up in that video, and it was often that way with Barbara Jordan. It reminds me of a paraphrase, a real paraphrase of a medieval saying, "As our strength weakens, our spirit grows bolder."

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, I can talk about Barbara's illness, not with any real intelligence. Barbara never mentioned her illness. Barbara was a very private person. She kept her life private. She kept her illness

private. The only difference in the Barbara before and the Barbara after she left congress was that the Barbara after she left congress was in a wheelchair. There were, of course, impacts as a consequence of that wheelchair. It made her mobility less. She served on a number of corporate boards and a number of philanthropic boards and good causes around the country, and as a consequence her ability to attend meetings and to attend board meetings were more difficult. Transportation was more difficult. She was transported most of the time by private aircraft, but just getting Barbara out of the chair and into the automobile was a task. Barbara was not a small person, and when she became ill she got on a diet she said, "So I'd look better in the mirror."

But I think in reality the weight was a tough one for Barbara and being able to move, as anyone with a disability will tell you, that mobility is a tough, tough matter. And it was a tough thing for Barbara, but she was still energetic. She got to her classes and taught at the LBJ School. And in some senses she was even more heroic to me, because she was able to maintain and did maintain the schedule that she did and do it in a wheelchair.

Ultimately, she was diagnosed; she had a terrible accident, was found in the swimming pool because that was one thing that she could do was to be able to exercise in the water. And she was unconscious there and was brought out. It was a tough go. She was then diagnosed with leukemia. And ultimately, I don't know, I think the cause of death was leukemia. But to

hear Barbara talk, there was never any mention, there was never any complaint of, “Gee, I can’t get around; oh man, it’s so hard for me to get in the car and get back in this wheelchair.” Never did Barbara say a single word in my presence about that, which made her even greater to me.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Okay, over here?

AUDIENCE: I’m Gloria Coney, and I’m President of the Boston Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, [applause] and there are a lot of us out here in the audience today. My question has to do with Mrs. Chisholm. I had the honor of working with her in her campaign here in Boston. And she met with us in a little tiny apartment up on Columbus Ave. Now if I remember, the Black Caucus did not back her and so my question is, what was the rationale and if there’s anything in that rationale that could help us as women, black women, go forward today?

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: From what I remember ... Well, first, the Congressional Black Caucus was fairly small then. I am trying to remember. I know my boss, who I worked for for many years -- Ron Dellums -- endorsed Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. I don’t remember if any other members actually endorsed her or not, which was really a source of pain, personal pain and anguish for Shirley. I remember talking with her quite a bit about that. But she understood it, and she

understood the political realities of what each caucus member had to deal with.

She was very practical in terms of her politics. So she was not a person who harbored that as a part of a longstanding frustration, but I don't know what the other members' rationale was in terms of not endorsing her. But I do know she was very clear about it. And it had to do basically with their decision to endorse other candidates based on who they thought was the best candidate or the political realities of their district.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Thank you. Over here?

AUDIENCE: Thank you. I think in the discussion Ms. Crossley said something about no movement behind Congresswoman Jordan and Congresswoman Chisholm, and I disagree. I'm not making a speech. My question for Congresswoman Lee and Governor Richards both is whether they would like to comment on other women who were in the movement out front. And I'm remembering Ms. Fannie Lou Haymer and Ms. Ella Joe Baker and several other people I assure you. Could you comment on that?

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Well, when I meant there was no movement behind them I meant as in Martin Luther King, just to be clear. So, you know, I meant that they were not leaders of the civil rights movement in the way that he was. That's what I meant.

AUDIENCE: Well, not leaders, but I'm old enough to remember and had slightly been part of it myself and there were a lot of women involved.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Oh, listen, I covered this for *Eyes on the Prize*, [laughter] so you don't have to tell me. [laughter] I know there were a lot of women in the civil rights movement, but if you all want to speak to that you certainly may.

GOVERNOR ANN RICHARDS: Well, you know, there's a difference in being a leader in a movement and an elected official. And sometimes you have to make a choice. I don't think Barbara Jordan or Shirley Chisholm made a conscious decision. I think they assumed that people took it for granted they were a part of the civil rights movement, because you know they were. My God, there were black! [laughter] They were female! They were champions of the very thing that Martin Luther King fought to achieve. [applause]

I thought when I came here today how appropriate it was that we do this on Martin Luther King's birthday, because one thing those three people had in common -- other than being black -- is that they were all very good politicians. You know, when Rosa Parks died, I was surprised that there were a number of people who said to me that they had no idea that it was planned for Rosa Parks to move up there to the front part of the bus. They

just thought that one day Rosa Parks just got up and walked to the front of the bus! [laughter] And that all those photographers were there to [laughter] take pictures of it and report it, and you know, what a great circumstance! [laughter]

And how naive the public is about the kind of crafting ... I think in this administration certainly we shouldn't be naïve about the amount of crafting that ... [applause] And so in reference to who they were, they were, first and foremost, courageous, fabulous, smart, black women who were elected to public office. And that was their job. And they had to be that first. And they were a part of the civil rights movement as a whole. It was really and truly after they got elected, it was not the principle focus of what we discussed. Because if it hadn't been for the civil rights movement, we'd have never had a women's movement because that's where we learned how to do what we did later. You know? [applause]

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Barbara Jordan and Shirley Chisholm took the civil rights movement, and I think this is one of the creative -- their creative -- genius; they took the civil rights movement into a legislative body. And they began legislating the goals of the civil rights movement and increasing the minimum wage, protections for domestic workers, health care, funding for day care centers -- all of the issues that the civil rights movement embraced: equal pay, voting rights for minorities.

All of the goals of the civil rights movement they took inside the United States House of Representatives and began to legislate. So I saw them as a continuation of the civil rights movement on the inside of the House, and that's a very difficult place to be. And I think it took someone like ... it took Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan and their boldness to be able to step inside of this institution of congress and legislate a civil rights agenda, an agenda for human rights and an agenda for peace.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Okay, we have two last questions, and we have to do them quickly panelists so that we can get out on time. So I will start here.

AUDIENCE: I hadn't planned on saying anything, but when there were questions about Barbara Jordan. I happened to know both of these women. I was appointed by President Carter to be on a program called Presidential Commission on Educational Programs for Women. It's kind of interesting because I traveled through for at least one year of that with 17 white females and myself [laughter]. But it was a very interesting one. But I remember we made a decision in our budget that we would dedicate the Barbara Jordan Library in Texas Southern.

And I had known Barbara because we had been on a panel together on education in which we traveled across the country together. But at that point we did not know that she was ill. And so we set up the room so that she would be standing, and she told me to close the curtain because she wanted

to talk to me. She said, "I'm not going out there in a wheelchair, and I can't walk out there. So what I want you to do is do something so that I won't have to appear to be an invalid." So we set up the table where she sat on the side of the table inside, and we opened the curtain and there she sat and she signed people's autographs. I understand what she was going through, but she was a great woman. And I don't care what anybody says, having known her and having known Shirley Chisholm, boy we all should be just thanking God that we had those two women who stood up for the kinds of things we believe in. Thank you.

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Thank you very much. Last question. [applause]
Last question. [applause]

AUDIENCE: Thank you, Mr. Parks [name of previous questioner].
Congresswoman Lee, you are the unique inheritor of Congresswoman Jordan as well as Mrs. Chisholm's legacy. In September, you had the unique opportunity to be the only Congresswoman, only Congressperson, to vote against the resolution to give the President all the necessary force in response to September 11. Could you talk about your thinking, your thoughts, your feelings? What about that resolution drove you to be the only person to vote against the resolution?

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE: Well, first let me say that was two days after the horrific attack on America. So many people died. The

pain, the suffering, the anguish, the frustration over 9-11 we all were dealing with. And certainly that was not the time to pass a resolution authorizing the use of force against ... and the way the resolution was written, it was a blank check. It was a resolution authorizing the use of force. And the way it was written, it said against any individual, organization, nation the President deems responsible for or aided in 9-11, in perpetuity! I mean this was a resolution to authorize the President to wage war against any country at any time, at any place, any organization, any individual. And I felt that that was not an appropriate way to respond to a terrorist attack, first of all. Secondly, Congress needed to deliberate the appropriate response so that it would not lead to more violence and put our country in more danger. Thirdly, I believed they would misuse that authority. You know, I thought they would misuse that authority to do what they wanted to do anyway and say that they had the authorization from Congress to do that.

And for the life of me, I couldn't vote for that. And had it come up today with the same circumstances, God forbid, I would not vote for it again. Because you do not ever want to give away the authority of the people of our country through the Congress [applause] to declare war! And I couldn't do it. Thank you. [applause]

CALLIE CROSSLEY: Thank you. [applause] If I may [applause, standing ovation] ... Thank you. Martin Luther King said, "A genuine leader is not a seeker of consensus but a molder of consensus." And I think

we have seen both on this panel and the two women that we honor here today: Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan some genuine leaders.

Our thanks to Governor Richards, to Congresswoman Barbara Lee, and to journalist Cokie Roberts. Thank you and good afternoon! [applause]