

On the Chisholm Trail – Chisholm '72 Unbought & Unbossed at the DNC

Taking part in any political convention is in itself a “once in a lifetime” experience! Taking part in the Democratic National Convention in Boston in Summer of 2004 -- presenting an exceptional independent documentary film, “**Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed**” to thousands of people -- epitomized what “once in a lifetime” meant! This summer I had the distinct experience of accompanying filmmaker, Shola Lynch, “On the Chisholm Trail” as National Outreach Coordinator, presenting her groundbreaking documentary to several organizations via *The White House Project*, Marie Wilson’s unique program designed to encourage young women’s involvement in the political process with a leadership training program dubbed “*Vote, Run, Lead*”! You’ve recently seen the effort promoted on television with the advent of “Barbie for President.” The first stop on the DNC trail was a gathering of 5000 *Revolutionary Women* at the Boston Expo Center. This event was so overwhelming in its scope, it actually felt like its own mini Convention. There we were privy to a most impressive gathering of scores of women legislators and elected officials from across the state of Massachusetts. Who knew there were so many women in politics in the state where I went to college? I truly didn’t! It was quite a spectacular site and the emotional response it evoked for me was reminiscent of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s when as a youngster, I wanted hang out with my older sister at the infamous DNC in Chicago – yes, the one where Mayor Daley literally “let the dogs out!” Fortunately, with the amazing staff of *The White House* project doing all the prep work, we were whisked from one event to the other with nary a crinkle in the frenzied scheduling. The first event was breakfast at The Charles Hotel-- “*Pipeline to the Presidency*” -- with some of the most influential women in politics today – Madeline Albright, Carol Moseley Braun and Patricia Schroeder to name a few. Needless to say, it was truly an honor just to be in the room, and to have the film previewed as the culminating highlight of the morning was a great tribute indeed. Next, it was onto *The New England Aquarium*, transformed into an election headquarters where we saw Mrs. C truly “on the big screen” – IMAX in its full glory! Congresswoman Barbara Lee introduced the film, and we witnessed her, along with many other audience members, plainly in tears by the end of the film. The film has that kind of impact on many of us who feel that something has been lost in the vibrancy and the leadership of the political process that kept us all involved and action oriented back in our college days. Our final event of the day was at *The Brattle Theatre* in Cambridge where Shola wowed an audience of young women who were in Cambridge for a *Vote, Run Lead* training at Lesley College. Many of the participants were first time voters -- young and enthusiastic-- but not too young to realize that witnessing Mrs. C’s run for the Presidency on film was something that they’d never witnessed before. What the feeling in the room that evening did was made them realize that maybe, just maybe, it was truly possible that they could see a woman President in their lifetime! Again, the value of social issue documentary is evident – it renders emotions, enthusiasm and action! What **Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed** does is show young people what is possible, for if Mrs. Chisholm had the determination, intelligence and *hutsps* to go all the way to the DNC, then possibly they can too! All in all, it was truly an inspirational, whirlwind day that reminded me why I do the work that I do.

-- Michelle Materre