

PRESIDENTIAL FEMINISM?

by ELLIE POBIS

I thought I would be writing this article as an ode to the first woman to ever clinch the presidency. That is not the case. I can now no longer scroll through the images of “I voted” stickers placed with anticipation on Susan B. Anthony’s gravestone without a twinge of what could have been.

Despite her faults, Secretary Clinton would have made history had she won. Her campaign encompassed exactly what feminism stands for: the equality of men and women, the idea that being a female doesn’t make you any less capable. Intentional or not, Clinton served as a reminder of how far the country has come, and how far it still has to go. Importantly enough during this election, she respects that women’s bodies belong to themselves.

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President-elect Trump’s brazen attitude toward sexual assault, among other things, served as a stark contrast to Clinton and has been particularly difficult to overlook. Sexual assault in this country has become so prevalent, though it is always spoken about with a lowered voice, seemingly behind closed doors, that the visceral reaction I had upon hearing Trump’s comments on the subject, so inappropriate that they cannot be repeated here, caught me off-guard. Perhaps it was his candidacy for such a highly respected position or his offhand dismissal of what he termed “locker-room talk” that upset me most.

Either way, I certainly expected the release of the tapes to be detrimental to his campaign. That was not the case. While at first many of his supporters seemed shocked, the shock receded, and the tapes faded into the backdrop as election day neared. To me, this was unconscionable.

Even more difficult to reconcile was the number of female votes Trump garnered. How could women vote for him? How could Clinton, an ardent supporter of closing the wage gap and someone who could be an icon for young girls, lose out to someone who seems to be the antithesis?

Regardless of the feminist symbol that Clinton has become, and the roadblock to progress that Trump may prove to be, I hope to continue toward breaking the “glass ceiling” and maintain some hope that this election clarifies what really matters in our political system.