

## *Documentation*

### IN NOMINATION FOR THE PRESIDENCY THE NAME OF CONGRESSWOMAN SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

SPEECH BY BOROUGH PRESIDENT  
PERCY SUTTON  
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, MIAMI, 1972

**M**<sup>R. CHAIRMAN</sup>, fellow delegates . . . *If my mouth dries up on me. If my tongue becomes large in my mouth. If my voice becomes quavery. If by my appearance, I am nervous, please know that I am. I am tense. I am nervous, and I am excited.*

*It seems almost a century ago—but it was 1942—in the November of that year—that I was part of a contingent of Air Force enlisted men that arrived here at Miami Beach to enter the Air Force Officer's Candidate School.*

*1942 was one of many years of shame for America. It was one of those many years when Black people, people of my color and my candidate's color and culture were kept separate and apart from persons of the white culture.*

*Those were the days when Black people in America had no rights under the law which a white man was legally obliged to respect.*

*Those were the days of separate schools, separate school buses, separate water fountains, separate toilets and separate hotels; all separate.*

*Those were the long days. Those were the cruel days. Those were the days of indignities, injuries and cruelties to the Black spirit and to the Black body. Those were the days when America was without its nobility. Those were the days before change began.*

## *The Massachusetts Review*

*Those were the days when Black men and Black women could not get hungry, could not get sleepy, could not get thirsty as they travelled about this country to view the beauties that this country had structured on the backs of, and over the dead bodies, of their enslaved ancestors—ancestors of the lady whose name I have the honor of placing in nomination tonight.*

*Those were the days before change.*

*Those were the days when the tents of the military were pitched in the park nearby—today there are tents there for the poor and the protestors.*

*In the days of November 1942, people with faces the color of mine here on Miami Beach were required to march on the inside ranks as we prepared to become officers to go forth to a foreign land to fight a war for Democracy.*

*We were required to march on the inside ranks, lest our visible presence be offensive to those who observed. And, my fellow Democrats, those were the days when your speaker and that other handful of persons who were Black and in the Air Force Officer's Candidate School, here at Miami Beach, were required to have special identification cards to explain our presence on the streets at night.*

*Those were the days before EMMETT TILL, MEDGAR EVERS, MARTIN LUTHER KING, MALCOLM X, WHITNEY YOUNG, SCHWERNER, GOODMAN and CHANEY, ROBERT and JOHN KENNEDY. Those were the days before Blacks and whites joined hands together and brought down the old structure of separate but not equal facilities and opportunities here in our nation.*

*Those were the days that preceded the sit-ins, the wade-ins, the freedom rides, and the change of status.*

*Those were the days before 1968 and the coming of the "new politics" that have brought new hopes to this, the Democratic Party—that has brought young people, old people, white people, Black people, Indians, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, poor people and new people to this place, at this Convention, to contemplate the condition of America under the man called Nixon.*

*We have come to get ourselves together "to bring about additional changes, to chart a new course and to heal old wounds."*

*I stand before you at an historic moment for the Democratic Party and for the American people.*

### *In Nomination for the Presidency*

*I stand to present to you the Presidential candidacy of a very unique individual—an individual who by her very presence, action and conduct suggests change. An individual who by her action hastened the opening of the doors of the political process and the corridors of power, so that Blacks, browns, women, young people—and old people—indeed, all Americans—might begin to share meaningful input into the halls of power that control our lives.*

*The candidacy of this courageous individual has served as a catalyst to bring together the forces of dissatisfied women, struggling minorities, the poor and the young, who saw and see in her candidacy, new hope for, and from, the American political system.*

*All Americans are indebted to this tiny lady whose tireless efforts to inject new life-blood into an ailing and unresponsive political system are to be crowned by the submission of her name to you tonight.*

*The service that this lady has provided the Democratic Party in the process of submitting her candidacy to the people of our country has been immense. The rapt attention and devoted following which she has aroused, nurtured and maintained as she charted new paths for the Democratic Party has been a thing to behold.*

*This candidate, this lady of courage, in the course of her candidacy, has launched a direct and unyielding attack against all forms of human prejudice and all causes of human suffering.*

*This candidate, in her candidacy, has outspokenly unmasked hypocritical authority, self-righteousness, and callousness, which feed the wrongs of our society. She has challenged irresolution and drift, deceit and conformity. And she has challenged it forcefully and articulately.*

*This candidate, this lady of determination—in the course of her candidacy, and often in the face of scorn and ridicule from many sides—resolutely continued in her passionate demand for freedom of spirit and human dignity—for all Americans, of all conditions of life.*

*This candidate's candor has made many Americans look deep within their hearts and souls for that which is generous, honest, and noble.*

## *The Massachusetts Review*

*In taking on and sharing the deepest passions of the distressed and forgotten or ignored Americans, this candidate, this lady of valor, has won the love and admiration of millions of people around the world.*

*This candidate, this lady of unusual ability, by her candidacy has opened a new and dramatic phase in the struggle for racial equality. But . . . my fellow Democrats . . . in addition to her unshakeable resolve to help to heal the long lingering open sores of our American society, this candidate has, in the course of her candidacy, dared to raise and discuss many issues to which other candidates have not yet addressed themselves.*

*This candidate, this unbought and unbossed lady, has, by her candidacy, invited the locked-outs, the left-outs and the dropped-outs to recognize that they too have a stake in political and social reform in this nation and they too, the disenchanteds of the system, ought to work together for responsible and sweeping change.*

*This candidate, this trumpeteer of change, in her candidacy, has cried out again and again for a halt to the unending war in Southeast Asia.*

*This candidate, this unique candidate, has in candidacy appealed for new and fundamental steps to end the inflation, the unemployment and the tax inequities which block this nation's quest for economic stability.*

*This candidate, this dynamic personality, has in her candidacy vigorously protested the disproportionate and unfair role of the privileged in our society while the needs of the poor go unmet.*

*This candidate, this lady of candor, has in her candidacy argued in state, city after city, campus after campus, ghetto after ghetto, for new initiatives in housing, health care, education, women's rights, consumerism, changed foreign aid, and the need for greater responsiveness of government.*

*In political campaigns, some candidates discuss great issues one way, one day, in one part of the nation and in another way on another day in another part of the nation. Some candidates hedge or fudge, equivocate, compromise or manipulate their answers to the important issues. Not this candidate.*

*This candidate calls upon us to stop the merry-go-round of wars fought in far-off places—the support of dictatorships which repress the coming of the very Democracy for which we allegedly fight.*

### *In Nomination for the Presidency*

*In the broadest sense, fellow Democrats and fellow Americans, this candidate is sounding a new trumpet—summoning each of us to march towards change, to bring out the best in ourselves—to overcome our racial fears and differences, to discard our labels, to forget our old myths and our old slogans.*

*And so a new, dynamic figure thus emerges on the American political scene.*

*Some candidates falter and disappear along the way. But in 1972, one woman kept on, honestly treating the critical issues in exactly the same way everywhere with honesty, conviction, intelligence and compassion.*

*From underdog in a three-way race, in the 13th Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York, four years ago, this candidate has become one of our nation's most attractive leaders.*

*In a presidential campaign without much money, without glittering endorsements, and without a powerful political organization, she has revealed a selfless dedication to spreading the gospel: that EACH AMERICAN INDIAN, EACH BLACK, EACH CHICANO, and EACH POOR PERSON'S WELFARE is as precious as that of the WEALTHIEST INDUSTRIALIST or the MOST INFLUENTIAL FOUR-STAR GENERAL.*

*This candidate has given a voice to the voiceless. She has brought hope to the hopeless.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Americans, fellow Democrats, I am deeply honored to place in nomination for evaluation by this Convention as its nominee for the high office of President of these United States . . . The Honorable SHIRLEY CHISHOLM, Congresswoman from the State of New York.*