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## Women reflect on Clinton's historic run for presidency

By Jamie Malernee

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Marsha Shapiro Rose is accustomed to giving lessons in feminism, not getting them.

But that's exactly what happened to the director of Florida Atlantic University's Women's Studies Center during the campaign of Sen. Hillary Clinton:

With female friends and colleagues, Rose, 62, felt excitement over the prospect of having the nation's first woman president. But then there were the students, younger women equally energized — by Sen. Barack Obama.

"The idea of helping a quote 'sister,' is just not in their repertoire," Rose said.

Clinton now acknowledges Obama has enough delegates to secure the Democratic nomination and plans to announce an end to her campaign.

For many older women, the end of her quest for the White House kindles feelings of "resignation and sadness," Rose said. But "with the young girls, it's, 'Oh well, if not this year then maybe next.'"

"There is more to a candidate than her sex," said Iris Febres, 20, an Obama supporter and vice president of Florida International University's College Democrats. "Yes, it's great and important that she's had a tremendous amount of support. But she's used the same old tricks."

Throughout the grueling primary process, women who voted in the Democratic contests tended to support Clinton, statistics show. But that generalization evaporates when other factors, such as age and race, are considered. Among younger voters, political priorities of the Gloria Steinem/Betty Freidan generation gave way to concerns about the Iraq war, the power of Washington lobbyists and partisan politics — areas where Obama was seen as a greater agent of change.

Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, said older Clinton supporters often recalled when "their career options were teacher, nurse and secretary," and their personal battles with sexism.

"They connected with the tenacity [Clinton] has shown not only in this campaign, but in her lifetime," Walsh said.

Corinne Miller, 77, who was born only 11 years after American women got the right to vote, resents people who claim Clinton got where she was because of her husband.

"She's brilliant," said Miller, of [Boca Raton](#), who recalled being the only girl in her high school physics class.



"She almost broke the glass ceiling and I wish she had, because I probably won't live to see the next one."

One source of comfort: Miller was impressed by the "gracious" way Obama recognized Clinton during his Tuesday speech claiming the nomination, and his promise she would play a key role in his fight for issues such as universal health care.

Clinton is expected to formally concede the Democratic nomination to Obama this week.

"It's a bitter pill, and it takes a while to put yourself back together, but she'll do what is right," Miller said.

Of course, millions of women who vote Republican or prefer McCain feel no such disappointment at Clinton's failure. To Anne Ogden, 33, an undecided independent voter from Sunrise, Clinton is part of a political machine.

"I don't want to vote for Hillary Clinton just because she is a woman, or just because she's a Clinton," Ogden said. "We treat our political families ... as if they are royalty and political office is an expectation."

Jane Caputi, 54, a professor of communications and women's studies at FAU, thinks it is important to recall the sexism Clinton's bid for the presidency revealed. During the primaries, Caputi collected political gear attacking Clinton based on her gender, including hats, T-shirts and a bumper sticker reading, "I Wish Hillary Had Married O.J."

"That this much material would be generated shows that there is still a backlash going on of people unwilling to change their definition of power, that someone other than a white man can be a leader," Caputi said. On the flip side, other South Florida women were disappointed to see Clinton's campaign sometimes employ racially coded arguments against Obama.

"It was negative and divisive and unnecessary," said Lisa Panzer, 47, of Pembroke Pines.

Panzer, who is black, is one woman whose vote can't be predetermined by gender or race. She said she'll vote for McCain because he is strong on national security and favors businesses like the law firm her husband runs.

"I would hope all voters will vote with their heart, instead of by color or sex," Panzer said.

Lake Worth resident Heather Boyer, 24, follows that creed. She supported Clinton, she said, because she agrees with her policies.

Though the math is on Obama's side, Boyer is unfazed about the bright future of women in American politics.

"This has been an amazingly close race," she said. "If it's not Hillary Clinton, maybe some other woman will be inspired to run for school board or state Senate. It gets people involved and that starts history."

Jamie Malernee can be reached at [jmalernee@sun-sentinel.com](mailto:jmalernee@sun-sentinel.com) or 954-356-4849.

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