

The President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History

Minutes from the November 15, 2000 Meeting
George Washington University, Marvin Center

Commission members present at the meeting were:

Ann Lewis — Co-chair
Beth W. Newburger — Co-chair
Gloria Johnson
Irene Wurtzel
Barbara Goldsmith
Anna Eleanor Roosevelt
LaDonna Harris
Johnetta Cole
Ellen Ochoa

GSA staff members: Eleni Martin, Renee Fossett, Cindy Gilbert and Martha Davis

Beth W. Newburger: I'd like to call the final meeting on the President's Commission on the Celebration of Women in American History to order and note that we have with us Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, LaDonna Harris, Gloria Johnson, Co-chair Ann Lewis and Co-chair Beth W. Newburger. Others will join us and we will put it into the record as they arrive. Note that Irene Wurtzel and Barbara Goldsmith have just joined us.

The meeting today, because it is a wrap-up, we have not invited outside speakers. Our meetings of course are public. They are always open. We do have some guests with us today but we have not invited specific people to come and testify because the work that we have to do today is dealing with the draft report for the President that was circulated to you earlier in this week. I thought we could have a very frank and open discussion on that report because tonight at the dinner that President Tractenburg is hosting for us here in this building, we will publicly announce whatever our recommendations are. Normally, I would have tried to get hold of all of you and do this individually and on the phone ahead of time. I thought that didn't make a lot of sense since we're not gonna publish this until after we have this meeting anyway. We can discuss it right here and given the fact that some of us were very occupied, I didn't think we would get very much done if we tried to do it in this last couple of months or weeks. Let me tell you that I have gotten some comments back. Have all of you had a chance to take a look at the report? I have gotten some comments back and all of the comments I have gotten so far deal with the name of the award as the First Lady Awards. We have been talking with White House Council about how one establishes a Presidential rank award, and White House Council did not turn us down for an award that would be called the President's award honoring women of history or whatever name we decide to come up with that has the President in

the title. But what White House council did say to us was it is much harder to get that kind of an award through and so they said to me why don't you call it the First Lady Awards. There are no First Lady Awards and that would be for this President, something that he would probably be very happy to sign off on. So I submitted it to you with heart and throat knowing full well what I was going to get back because my initial reaction was and then what do we call it when it is a First Husband instead of a First Lady. I just want to give this to you because this is the way council presented it to me. What they said was an award can be named, it doesn't have to be given by the First Lady and the report that I sent to you specifically says that it was chaired by the First Spouse not by the First Lady but that it would be a really a neat thing to have a First Lady award so that was coming from council at the White House. We don't have to live with that, we can call it whatever we want to call it. The good news is that I think we stand a very strong, very good chance of having this done by the end of December if we make the recommendation. The other piece of the good news is that I think we also have a good chance of establishing a permanent Commission as we have in this. The discussion if you remember that we had in June really talked about how we keep the momentum that we have begun with this Commission in the two years that we have been meeting. There are precedents for having permanent Commission's established that are appointed each time the President changes and some of those terms even go beyond the term of the President and into the next President so those things can happen and councils office felt that we would have a good shot at that recommendation if we made it strong and made a good case for it. I think that's also a good piece of news. The third recommendation that we talk about in here is specifically the pop up book, or what is now the historic artifacts books that Marie Salerno has proposed, and we are very far along with the Millennium Council and having them designated as a Millennium project and that's going to happen. And Marie and her publisher, Charles Mier of Rizzoli, will be here with us tonight so I think were pretty far down the road on that one. I just wanted to give you some sense of where we are on three out of the four recommendations. Now, the fourth recommendation is the one on the foundation partnering with a foundation, which we talked about at the June meeting. And that could be a foundation that already exists, or one that is created to fill this need. That is something that we can discuss off-line or on-line as we wish here but that came out of that June meeting when we all agreed that there is a great deal of work that has to be done to support a Commission like this. It is very unlikely that we would get Federal funding that there going to create another NEH or NEA, which exists and does wonderful work nor do we want to take anything away from those two organizations. We all agree that, I think, that this Commission needs to have the support of professional historians, professional researchers, who can help us gather or help our successors gather the kind of information that would be required to make a decision on women that should be honored. So, it would be envisioned, as a partnership that could both raise the money for that event and do the academic work that would support it. That's my report. Ann, I turn it over to you to continue.

Ann Lewis: I will come back to the report except to say that I think you did a wonderful job while I was off gallivanting, enjoying myself and other wise hanging out in New York. I just wanted to take a minute though and I do have some Hillary buttons for anyone who doesn't have one.

Beth W. Newburger: This is a bi-partisan Commission that has nothing to do with anything we are passing out right now.

Ann Lewis: It strikes me sometimes that someone who collects suffrage and women's history artifacts that I was sitting in the midst of it and that all of you might enjoy this and for Barbara and Irene to we should just take a moment to note in this historic election there were bits about this election we just assume not see repeated. We have just elected at least we saw the election of three women Senators last week one incumbent, Dianne Feinstein, easily reelected, no contest, two new ones, Hillary Clinton and Debby Stabenow. And people who watch these things keep telling us that we will have Maria Cantwell and Jean Carnahan come to the Senate. That would mean if all of those happen that we will have the same level of women in the Senate that we got in 1992 which was dubbed the year of the woman. We will have elected four new women Senators and reelected one incumbent. That's really an extraordinary change. We would go from nine that we have right now to thirteen. I spent a lot of time this year as I went around talking to people about why they should make supreme sacrifices of one kind or another for Hillary's campaign. The United States Senate was our most unrepresented body. If you thought about it with nine out of a hundred. I mean even on the Supreme Court we had two out of nine, which was better than 20% and here was the body that appoints not just Supreme Court judges, but every lifetime Federal judge, ratifies treaties, and passes on every bit of legislation. So it was really important that we move up on this. I just I think this is gonna be not just a qualitative change but a large change in the Senate for which we can all take some pride. This election clearly is very much about making history. Not just because we had a candidate who uniquely cared about women's history who even before she knew she was going to be a candidate was traveling to Seneca Falls and to the Gonandagen Long House and talking about, as Barbara Goldsmith who has been a wonderful friend and sponsor of these events knows, helping to raise the visibility of the wonderful heritage there but also because one the base of her support very much as our friend Ellen Chessler said was like the old progressive movement of Lillian Wald and Jane Adams would have recognized the women who rallied early for Hillary. The role-play by Union women was just marvelous. They were out there early for her, they were strong, enthusiastic, always among the best supporters and volunteers and eventually as the votes show, she got 60% of the votes cast by women. Which was really a very positive showing and finally that's all on the good side because the opposition to her was so gender based. I did think you could take almost every argument made against her and find a version of it from the 19th century. It was very much this "who does she think she is", she is an aggressive woman, she is too ambitious, this in a State that just elected Chuck Schumer and

before that had Al Damato. The idea that Hillary Clinton was ambitious was somehow seen as a step backward. Watching the way language that is taken for granted or is even validated in men was used to attack her. A State party chairman who sent out letters which consisted roughly of strings of adjectives attacking her and nothing much more and found by the way that on that you could raise quite a lot of money. So a women who stands for what I think are the kind of values we would all want to see in public life being attacked around many of the same arguments that have been historically used to keep women out of public life may have been in so many ways a larger than life election, and I think that we showed at the end of it that women can go on making choices throughout our lives, which is something we would all want to see. Nobody could say that you can't do that because its never been done cause its never been done was a reason not to do it, we would all still be home in some cave somewhere I suspect waiting for the dinosaur bones to be flung in but because women working against now we can do better than this and we did it. So again, historic election, its one I'm proud of and I'd say second, I'm fascinated thinking about women voters and this is something when we all get our eyes of the television sets and CNN and listening to the latest voices from Florida, we should think about one of the arguments against women voting, you may remember, was that we were going to be too emotional and that we would be carried away by emotion. I look at this election and think well one, between a candidate who offered a lot of substance and not much style and a candidate who had a lot of style and not much substance, it was women by large number who went for the candidate of substance rather than the Gore emotional appeal. Secondly, in a campaign and Hillary was the one I saw most closely but there were others that were at the Presidential level, State and local level where attacks were made against women candidates against issues we care about. Women voters really came through and understanding that there interest was in electing other women not allowing ourselves to be divided. And third, I got to say that the fact that Ralph Nader —A— didn't do well, which I was very glad of but that did even worse among women and that women consistently showed this did not approve of this campaign I thought was showing a lot of good sense all the way around. So again, when we finally have a winner, when Beth's agency can finally hand over the keys to somebody and a transition can begin, I think there is a lot to be done in looking at the votes cast by women. All the hopes perhaps that our foremothers had I think we are living up to.

LaDonna Harris: Last night Barbara invited me to the woman's forum at the Press Club and we had a Republican and a Democrat pollster. He gave pretty much what you said and with some detail. And I can't think of the Asian woman who is chairman of the floor who gave a publication, and I'm sorry I didn't bring it, but they have done some work and I think that's something we might maybe ask them to work with us for to document that but they apparently have done a great deal of work and it was exactly what you said with a little more detail in certain areas. The whole behavior of pollster is one of the subjects. How unprofessional

it had become. You're analysis was right on the spot and they did a little more in depth. Something we might want to get the impact of.

Ann Lewis: Why don't you give us one and I think it's worth looking at.

Gloria Johnson: The one thing I found so interesting is sitting there watching the returns. After she had been declared a winner suddenly every male was giving her advice. How to do what when you get in the Senate. I would suggest that she does not go in da da da da, that she should just stay back because automatically you know there's gonna be the assumption she is gonna run for President.

I said to myself I've looked at this year after year after year and I have never seen anybody come on and tell a man what to do. Everybody had the advice, just interesting. That goes way back too.

Ann Lewis: There was one other piece that the assumption that women will always be rivals which I guess is a male fantasy. That they have a hard time letting go of but there is a piece referring that, well how are these other women Senators going to feel? How is Barbara Milkulski going to feel? So, having gotten up at five in the morning to read Barbara Milkulski at 6:30 in the morning at BWI so she can fly to Buffalo to campaign for Hillary we can at least say you know they really wanted her to win. People will I think again will be a little surprised to see but Barbara, the women Senators are thrilled that they are going to have more memories and were friends and allies. That will also set the calendar.

Gloria Johnson: They will have to write another book.

Ann Lewis: I guess that's right. Yes they will. Accounting will have grown quite a bit.

Eleanor Roosevelt: Even bipartisan.

Ann Lewis: Yes, yes, she told Debby. Yes. I'm going to go back to the report for a moment. I have no business talking about the activities of the Commission. As you noticed I was otherwise engaged but I did as Beth heard it seems to me impossible for us to say First Lady awards. I can understand why council might prefer something like that but we can't use a title that suggests we limit what women can do. We may want to call it if they finally don't want to say President's Awards we can call it

It's okay. If they finally don't want to say President's awards we can call it White House Awards.

Beth W. Newburger: I think we can call it presidential awards. What the sense that I got from it was that we need to come up with a title that is going to inspire

the President to take quick action on this and they would like a title that, the comment that was made to me was "gosh the title of your commission goes on forever and none of us can remember what it is so can't you give us a shorter title". I think if we can sit here right now and just do it. Let's come up with the title we want and that's what we will call it and that's how we will propose it. And I don't have any problem with it at all and it can be presidential or The Presidents whatever either of those are acceptable.

LaDonna Harris: Would the Eleanor Roosevelt group have any objections if we made the title?

Anna Roosevelt: It needs to be a categorical title not a person.

Beth W. Newburger: Yeah. Yeah. I think it should be something like The Presidents Women in History awards, the presidents or Presidential. If you start fooling around with this it will get done.

Ann Lewis: Why can't you just call it Presidential Women's award? Can't you call it presidential women's awards?

Beth W. Newburger: No, you have to get history up there. You gotta get history. They won't play with it if it's not history.

Ann Lewis: Women's History Award, Presidential Women's awards. It should be short.

Beth Newburger: Presidential Women's History.

Ann Lewis: President's history.

Beth W. Newburger: The President's Women's History Award.

Barbara Goldsmith: I think Presidential should be first cause that gives a little heart.

Beth W. Newburger: Right.

Anna Roosevelt: Yeah, I think I agree.

Beth W. Newburger: It's not easy.
The Presidential award is too long

Beth W. Newburger: The example that they kept throwing back at me was the Congressional Medal of Honor. You know, easy to remember. They would like a Presidential da, da — da, da.

If you have to get the word history in there.

Beth W. Newburger: Women's History award would be okay.

Irene Wurtzel: How about the Presidential medal for Women's history or for Women in History.

Beth W. Newburger: Presidential medal would be good.

Anna Roosevelt: Why don't we go with the Presidential medal, I kind of like that so that gives a stamp of

Beth W. Newburger: Presidential Women's History Medal?

Anna Roosevelt: Presidential Women's History Medal.

Beth W. Newburger: Why don't you all write it down and sort of look at it for a while and see how it plays for you. And I agree with you Barbara that Presidential has to come first.

Barbara Goldsmith: You don't have a lot of choices. Presidential and History

Beth W. Newburger: You could think of another word for history. It should have some connotation I think because the clearer you can make it, the easier it is they tell me.

Irene Wurtzel: The only problem I have with history in there is it sounds as though we're giving a medal to somebody in the past but it's really for a contemporary. It's both.

Irene Wurtzel: We're not going to award any medals posthumously.

Beth W. Newburger: Yeah, well if you look at the draft report that's, what we're proposing. What we're proposing is 4 categories where you would award one posthumously and one contemporary and then the contemporary would accept for both. The idea there is to give the continuity and show that what went before is going on now. It's a different way of doing things, but it also allows us to bring some of those women that we really want to get out in the front out into the front. So you have both elements there. If you agree with that. This is all subject to your approval.

Barbara Goldsmith: Well, if you don't have to use the word history, you could call it something like the President's or Presidential Women's Medal of Honor.

Irene Wurtzel: I think we do want to um honor the notion of the history commission if this was a commission based on history.

Barbara Goldsmith: Anytime you put history in there people are going to think it only applies to people in the past. So it's kind of a catch 22 situation. I have no idea of how to get around it. Maybe someone will think of it.

Anna Roosevelt: Presidential Women's Medal of Honor.

Beth W. Newburger: I don't have any problem with that.

Ann Lewis: My guess is if we try to do Medal of Honor we would bump into people who

Irene Wurtzel: Just medal.

Gloria Johnson: President's Recognition of Women in History.

Barbara Goldsmith: Women who made history.

Beth W. Newburger: I like women who made history.

Barbara Goldsmith: That could be past and present. That would work.

Gloria Johnson: President's recognition of women.

Beth W. Newburger: History making women.

Ann Lewis: I like women making history. It's long but it does give us both.

Gloria Johnson: Say that again.

Ann Lewis: President's Award for Women Making History.

Beth W. Newburger: How about President's medal. I like medal.

Beth W. Newburger: Now you want President's or Presidential?

Gloria Johnson: Presidential I would think.

Beth W. Newburger: We came up with a tag line for GSA that's spell ass.

Barbara Goldsmith: Is it going to award or medal? Do we say medal for women's making history or award? Which one did we decide?

Beth W. Newburger: President's medal.

Gloria Johnson: I don't like the idea of it being medal. Everyone gets a medal. We don't know what this is going to be.

You could give them a medal and call it an award.

President's award for women making history.

Beth W. Newburger: Okay.

Barbara Goldsmith: It's the only thing that gets around the past and the present.

Beth W. Newburger: How about the Presidents women making history award?

Ann Lewis: Sounds good to me.

Beth W. Newburger: We have the President's Women making history award.

Yeah.

Beth W. Newburger: You like that? Is everybody comfortable with that?

Everyone agreed.

Gloria Johnson: Lets see, after 7.

Beth W. Newburger: That's pretty fast for us. Let me tell ya. It's good. We really learned to do this. So it's the President's Women making history award, right? I like that women making history award is a great one cause that gets you both ways. That's very active. That's very now. Thank you Barbara. We do good work together. Everybody got something in that one. Can we talk about the elements of this award to make sure we're all on agreement on it? Just to run through some of the key elements there. So we're talking about dual awards in four categories. Why four categories you might ask? In checking, we are on page 9 where it says First Lady, we'll take that out and it's now President's Women Making History Award.

My pages aren't numbered.

Beth W. Newburger: I'm sorry, it's in your folder. The left-hand side of your folder is the report and they are numbered there.

Ann Lewis: I have it.

Beth W. Newburger: Right there. No, the one that came off the computer is not.

Gloria Johnson: These are numbered.

Irene Wurtzel: I have the old one.

Anna Roosevelt: The paragraph above the established annual First Lady's award there is a First Lady Award notation. Go to the previous page

Beth W. Newburger: You mean page 8?

Anna Roosevelt: Yeah.

Beth W. Newburger: Well, we have to go through the whole thing on that. Good. Thank you.

Anna Roosevelt: I like the dual notion because I think that it's ah, first of all it's unique. I think it might get a little more attention because it says here's a person in history and here's a person who sort of reflecting them. So I like the way that that's presented. And yet, there will be plenty of room to describe each as individuals.

Beth W. Newburger: The reason that I'm suggesting the four categories and the eight is that it makes an excellent 1-2 hour award presentation. With four categories it gives you a lot of flexibility and what we tried to do was come up with categories that were encompassing for what we might think about for the work of women, the work of everybody. Now, Ann had a comment that I liked about the family values. Ann, do you want to talk about that?

Ann Lewis: I think what I suggested was that we turn this to valuing families. Instead of historical trends and I do have my □. I'd rather say and maybe not so much about historical trends as recognizing women for their contributions and leadership and valuing families.

Irene Wurtzel: I also wondered about the naming of category one: social action? Is that trying to sum up what those women are talking about?

Beth W. Newburger: No, I think you can name them anyway you want to name them. I think what I was trying to get at here were really big categories that you could put a lot into and I specifically when I was talking to the White House, I specifically gave examples that were very broad under each one so that it doesn't say oh well this is all political activists or these are all the suffragists or this is where that would go. Again, I'm not particularly in love with the word social action either so I think those categories are important though.

Anna Roosevelt: Irene, would you feel better if it was termed civic and social action?

Irene Wurtzel: Um that's a possibility. I think social action is not what we're talking about here. I think we're talking about something beyond that.

Barbara Goldsmith: It could be something like contribution to society or societal contribution. Social action the way I understand it is when I get out there waving the signs or joining marches and this is you want to make it really broad.

LaDonna Harris: Say that again.

Barbara Goldsmith: Well like contribution to society or societal contribution.

Anna Roosevelt: Toward a just society is what we're talking about. That's a little long.

Barbara Goldsmith: Leave it open just sort of legal and this sounds like real activist.

Anna Roosevelt: It's also services.

Barbara Goldsmith: How about service to society? Service like Anna said. How about service to society?

Irene Wurtzel: But it's more than service.

Gloria Johnson: It's community activism and service. That's in that paragraph which I allude to.

Barbara Goldsmith: Yeah, that's wrong but it's good community activism and service.

Beth W. Newburger: Do you all agree that's what it ought to be called?

LaDonna Harris: I think we should put it down and think about it again that's closer.

Gloria Johnson: Social action. Let's drop down to category four, the new Americans.

Barbara Goldsmith: I thought of one more thing. Why don't you just call it activism and service? I mean it's implicit that it be in here.

LaDonna Harris: Activism and service.

Beth W. Newburger: Barbara, did you have something in that first category that you wanted to add? There she is our hostess with the mostess. How did you Allida? Let me just break in to tell you that Allida has just returned from the

White House history conference that is going on where she spoke today. So here timing is wonderful. Somebody wanted to drop down to four?

Gloria Johnson: I just have a question why did we site the only Chinese children adopted by American black families.

Beth W. Newburger: Because that was something I thought of but it certainly doesn't have to be.

Gloria Johnson: When I read this, I think all of the examples you've shown up there and this is my favorite category. Okay. I'll be very candid until we get to the Chinese children adopted, unless we can expand that.

Beth W. Newburger: I think that's fine. I think you can say whatever. You want to say foreign-born children adopted by American families?

Gloria Johnson: Yes, absolutely.

Beth W. Newburger: Okay. No problem.

LaDonna Harris: Is there a better word than foreign?

Barbara Goldsmith: You don't need born, you could just have foreign.

Beth W. Newburger: You could leave that whole thing out if you want. Well, because children, what you're trying to do here is focusing on the new Americans and the contributions of the new Americans this country which I should really think back through our history. That's such an important piece of who we are. It's just an example of something that I thought of. We can leave that whole thing out.

Gloria Johnson: Of course the large immigrant population now, that has to be brought into this as well.

LaDonna Harris: I would add that to the sentence like if we're going to be giving examples.

Irene Wurzel: It should say something about the children adopted, I know what to say I'm not sure it's .

Beth W. Newburger: It doesn't go with everything else you got there? Okay, so let's take that out and let's talk about the immigrant and today's immigrants?

Irene Wurtzel: Today's immigrant is good.

Gloria Johnson: I don't like short categories because it leaves there open-ended which affords opportunities to bring in you know people whose category is not listed.

Beth W. Newburger: So, we would take out the children and we would say today's new immigrants? Okay.

Gloria Johnson: Let me ask a question on your valuing families category. We have women living in poverty who managed to raise college educated children which is great but I don't see a reference and I think there should be one to that huge single heads of households who are women. Who are maintaining families that may or may not go to college but they have that full responsibility. There are some outstanding examples. I would just like to suggest that.

LaDonna Harris: Look at the race in college educated children.

Barbara Goldsmith: No, you could leave that and just add single women raising families.

Gloria Johnson: I'm not talking about women living in poverty. I'm talking about women who are raising their families.

Barbara Goldsmith: We should just add it.

Beth W. Newburger: Add that.

Barbara Goldsmith: I think these categories are great. You could put almost anything in.

Beth W. Newburger: This was so hard.

Irene Wurtzel: Raising families is sort of neutral but raising citizens, raising, do we want to do that?

Barbara Goldsmith: It sounds a little propagandist. You know raising citizens.

Irene Wurtzel: I don't like citizens but the notion of something positive about raising families.

Well if we are honoring them?

Gloria Johnson: Well, if there is a woman, I mean we all know these women, who are raising their families alone then that's a story right there.

Barbara Goldsmith: But if you say single it applies a lot.

Gloria Johnson: No, we're not changing it.

Irene Wurtzel: I just wondered if we wanted to add something positive to the kinds of families that we are embracing?

Beth W. Newburger: I got a single mother in my family with only one child and let me tell you it was easier with my seven than she got with her one. You can think about that one as we go on. Okay, anything else in there that you see that we need to work on? So the four categories just to review this will be first one will be activism in service, the second one will be creativity, the third one will be valuing families and the fourth one will be new Americans. And the examples that we've added in the valuing families it will say "women nominated in this category, it should be this category recognizes women for their contributions and valuing families", period. Then continues on to the last sentence that will add who advocate a reform family law, comma, single women raising families, comma, and women living in poverty, etc. In the next category, women the new Americans we will take out the children and we will add and today's immigrants and we will correct the title all the way through. It's all right? Good. Okay, should we go back to the Presidential Commission? Lets start with that one.
Page 8.

Anna Roosevelt: The quote on the first page.

Beth W. Newburger: Essentially what I've done with the draft here is to take what we had originally recommended as you all saw and update it saying these are the things that we've actually done or accomplished and I have to tell you and I want to say this on the record and officially as I was going back through the activities of this Commission and looking at the accomplishments and the things that we have been able to inspire over our two years I think we owe each other a terrific round of applause because we have really done stuff. This Commission I went through the Federal Advisory Commissions are managed by the General Services Administration the secretariat for the Commissions are located or housed in our agency. I asked the head of that, James Dean, if he would give me some sense of what Commissions accomplish and what they generally do and how much they get done because I was very curious when I put all of this together. I wonder how we stack up against others and what they do and he said well, "they're really very good. You know they give good advice and they obviously serve an excellent purpose and he started to tell me some of the things that some of his favorite Commissions had done and I said "I wonder if you'd take a look at our report and tell me if you think its gonna pass muster because I really didn't know. And he came back to me and he said, "I've never had a report that the recommendations come in and say we did it all. So, I just thought you'd like to know that we have done some good work. That's what we have here. We have the recommendations, we have the next steps, we have a general outline of the findings that came from the things that we heard and then we have the final

recommendations that we want to make to wrap it up. If there are things there that aren't there that should be there, we should get them in.

Ann Lewis: Let's take it step by step, we recommend to the president that an 11 member bipartisan commission be established. The form is that it goes in our report, that report goes to the President and then, what happens next?

Beth W. Newburger: We will submit this to the President and as soon as we make these corrections here we will go to press on it and we'll have it by the first of December. But in the meantime I will take back to Counsel the final wording and all of things we have agreed upon here which they've already seen in its preliminary stages. They will then prepare, as long as we get it through them and I'm relatively confident we will give what they've told me, they will prepare the documentation for the President to sign and he would have to sign two different things. One will be for the Presidential Women making history Awards declaring that which would be they think a separate proclamation from the establishment of the Commission. They feel the commission, part of the mission of the commission to reference these awards but the awards should be established independently so that if he decides he doesn't want to sign for another permanent commission but he will be willing to sign for the awards given the short period of time that is left to get this done they would rather have it in two different pieces. So, I said okay fine. Originally the way I wrote it just so you know was that the Presidential awards were part of the work of the Commission and they suggested that I split them out. What happens is I have to keep pushing.

Ann Lewis: But in form, goes to the Counsels office, Counsel's office to the President and President to

Beth W. Newburger: That's the way it works.

Barbara Goldsmith: I had a couple of little things or findings. Page 3, is that okay? They're really mostly questions, um, I thought that it got a little murky, for example the third paragraph where it says "the commission was also asked to create an official endorsement mechanism that could be used to lend credibility to funding requests. Now, I couldn't figure out if we've done that until I got to the last page and realized we've given out 56 certificates of recommendation, which I assume is the official endorsement? Is that it?

Beth W. Newburger: No, not really.

Barbara Goldsmith: See, I'm terribly confused about that.

Beth W. Newburger: We should rewrite that sentence.

Barbara Goldsmith: I don't know what its saying.

Beth W. Newburger: Here's what it really is attempting to say, as we went back through the records and almost every meeting we were asked by people who testified before us to help them get funding to get them into the Parks Service or into the NEA or the NEH or someplace. Or for us as a Commission by ourselves to get funding for them and we kept saying that's not what we were here for that's not what we do and you all remember those painful moments when we had to tell people that isn't what they could expect. What they came back and said to us in those meetings from the records that we have in off-line conversations was just having the stamp of approval from a Presidential commission that says this is a good project and this was particularly true after we published our first report and we sited several different projects in the report that we recognized and we have a section in that first report that says we recognize we gave them enough imprimatur if you will to go to their own funding sources and say here something that is recognized by this Presidential commission as being important and you should fund it. So that's what they were looking for and it's a very long explanation for one sentence for this murky nondescription.

Barbara Goldsmith: Okay, so we were asked to create, what we did was like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.

Beth W. Newburger: That's right. Credibility a Good Housekeeping Seal.

Barbara Goldsmith: We did do that?

Beth W. Newburger: Yeah, we did.

Barbara Goldsmith: So, it doesn't say anywhere in the report that we did that.

Beth W. Newburger: That's a good point. You're right, it doesn't.

Barbara Goldsmith: If we did it.

Beth W. Newburger: Yeah, we did. If you go back to the first report.

LaDonna Harris: Examples of successful community projects.

Ann Lewis: The archives.

Barbara Goldsmith: We implemented somewhere.

Beth W. Newburger: Should in the findings, we need to make that a clearer statement of what we're talking about first of all, right?

Barbara Goldsmith: Yeah, I think so. I don't know if it was only me that was confused.

Beth W. Newburger: No, I was confused when I wrote it. I couldn't figure out how to say it.

Barbara Goldsmith: You know what it reminds me of, that Robert Browning would have lined in his poems and he said "When I wrote that only God and Robert Browning knew what it meant." And now only God knows what it meant.

Beth W. Newburger: Well, I can't aspire to Robert Browning. I'll tell ya only God knows at this moment what that meant. We need to do that and we need to get it somewhere in there that we did.

LaDonna Harris: It wasn't that we gave them a stamp of approval as we just pointed out all the actions. We didn't give them, laying our hands on them, we just these are examples of all the activities.

Beth W. Newburger: Actually, we did give them a stamp of approval. So you all have a copy of this and can refer back to our . I want you to know this is the last of them so treat them preciously. There it is in the we recognize section. And that kind of recognition apparently was extremely useful particularly, you know the women, the women's history museum in Dallas was so excited with it that when they did their press releases for the opening of their museum they actually referenced the Commission and it was carried in the Dallas papers. I don't know if you all saw that but we got terrific recognition in there and by the way that is where it got picked up for "West Wing", yes. Do you know that we made it to the West Wing? There you go.

Gloria Johnson: And the West Wing President was in Pittsburgh with about 15 thousand folks along with the African American fellow that plays on West Wing and Julia Dryfus and Ron Reiner and I was like a kid with all these wonderful celebrities. It was just wonderful. They were all there for Al Gore.

Irene Wurtzel: Oh, terrific.

Beth W. Newburger: They should have been out there feeling like they were a celebrity with you.

Irene Wurtzel: They also came out for hand gun control.

Gloria Johnson: Absolutely, absolutely.

Barbara Goldsmith: Maybe we could say the Commission was also asked to create an official recognition of projects that could be used to

Beth W. Newburger: Oh that's good. Recognition,

Barbara Goldsmith: Official recognition

Beth W. Newburger: of projects

Barbara Goldmith: Then we will put it in we implement. In our report.

We recommended in our report.

Barbara Goldsmith: We implemented much later on in the report.

Gloria Johnson: With each finding, so somewhere were going to have to find a spot for that.

Beth W. Newburger: We could get that into the community agenda.

Yeah, That's the place.

Barbara Goldsmith: Would you clarify for me what the 56 certificates of recognition are?

Beth W. Newburger: Yes, if you remember we asked people to register their women's history projects on our webpage. We said if they would register them by the 1st of April and then report on them by the 30th of September and if the projects were 75% complete by the 30th of September which would give us some sense that they had actually done what they said they were going to do that we would award them a certificate of recognition from the President Commission and where is Martha? Cindy, do we have any of those certificates here? Where's Martha?

Barbara Goldsmith: Maybe we could then put

Beth W. Newburger: Were going to actually attach the . Certificates are in the "How to Community Handbook". Its page 6 where it says we implemented 27 GFWC partner clubs completed 75% of their project. An additional 7 organizations and 4 individuals completed the projects by the deadline. So it's not 56 that's

Barbara Goldsmith: We could at least say 56

Beth W. Newburger: Yeah, well that's the wrong number we need to change that. It may have been a typing error.

Barbara Goldsmith: I may be remembering it wrong cause

Beth W. Newburger: This is what it looks like

Gloria Johnson: It might have been, you said the figure, the number 56 or 36 or some

Barbara Goldsmith: My thing wasn't here.

Beth W. Newburger: 36 or 38 but we need to find that number. We will list all, a synopsis of each of the activities that each of these clubs submitted at the end of the appendix and they range from things like, they had a history of their 98 year old club that was a jumble and they actually elected a historian to organize and another club decided they would organize their papers and donate them to the local public library and create an archive which they are in the process of doing. One club which I love most of all, it's absolutely wonderful

Barbara Goldsmith: It's the very last page. List of projects for which we have awarded certificates of recognition for 56 projects.

Beth W. Newburger: Right and that's the wrong number

Barbara Goldsmith: Well maybe we could put under you know we implemented, you could lump these two things together? We implemented things together, we implemented an official recognition of projects in our report and we gave out whatever number of certificates to the project.

Beth W. Newburger: That's a good idea.

Barbara Goldsmith: We could just put them together and it because they're very closely related.

Beth W. Newburger: Say that again slowly Barbara.

Gloria Johnson: I'm trying to get the connection or the need for what she's saying. That's all, if you could just help me.

******(I believe some text is missing because the tape had shut off)*

Barbara Goldsmith: Under findings we were asked to create official recognition of projects that could be used to lend credibility to funding requests. We did that by putting those projects in our report. In addition to that, we gave out certificates of recognition to 56 or 36 or some number that had completed and registered their projects by the December deadline.

Irene Wurtzel: Particular area when the woman's commission endorsed the project or gave recognition. I think there's more of that going on then we know at this point and I think the commission has acted by its very existence and by its

activism in trying to do some of these things as a catalyst and a spur are to words that occurred to me two actions throughout the country which perhaps we can't define specifically but as an overview. I don't know whether we want to say that because it struck me that this is nice and its specific but overall I do believe the impact was greater than we know at this point.

Beth W. Newburger: Greater than the sum of its parts. I think that's a wonderful point. Would you put that in the findings?

Irene Wurtzel: Maybe an opening.

Beth W. Newburger: As the conclusion to the findings?

Irene Wurtzel: I'm not sure where it would be. Maybe in the findings?

Johnetta Cole or Gloria Johnson: And there's one point that might go with Irene's, someplace if the sister commissioners agree and that is to try to say that this whole process has also affected us. We have changed in the very act of doing what the President asked us to do and if we could find some language that might even be a little rhetorical but I'd like to see something where it says a little more. This was not an ordinary process was not an ordinary thing for the President to do, was not an ordinary thing for us to come together in the diversity in which we came together which was another point that is here but maybe doesn't stand up in quite the way it could and then finally that like all of those with whom we interacted, we too have changed. That our appreciation of the role of women in American history has deepened and hopefully our responsibility to continue to do something about it.

Gloria Johnson: It seems to me that the two points that have been raised should be in the initial part, not in the back with the findings or the implementation but in the overview either as a preface to the overview because I think they both they both are so very very important. You're right on target. But I had a question in connection with this, what will be the format of this final report?

Beth W. Newburger: It will be very similar to that. That's what I'm envisioning unless you have a different way of presenting it. I like the idea of having three books that are very consistent.

Gloria Johnson: The reason I asked about it was because going to your point Irene, I'm sure all of us have heard stories like Barbara's.

Yes

Gloria Johnson: None of them are documented. Is it possible to have a segment of this report of testimonies of I don't know if my church is coming, my that's what

I'd be doing, my church as a testimony to the effectiveness of this and I think we ought to have that segment in here.

Beth W. Newburger: Yes

Irene Wurtzel: It will lend a lot of color in an International kind of way.

Beth W. Newburger: Oh yeah, that's great. So to the overview we should add the expression of our own feelings of change about the work that we've done as a result of the work that we've done and I have you on tape Johnnetta.

Johnetta Cole: This is not what most Presidents have done.

Ann Lewis: I think I'm gonna go on that Johnetta and ask, maybe we should also send him a letter. I think what you said was quite right and this will be if you would help us, why don't we all send him a letter that we all sign.

Beth W. Newburger: I think that's a great idea.

Johnetta Cole: I'm sending mine around for everybody to sign. I believe in that. I think we all should do that.

Beth W. Newburger: I think that is such a great idea.

Johnetta Cole: Celebrate where our names are. You can give it to your grandchild.

Anna Roosevelt: I think we should send one around to the archive too so nobody takes away that we can actually have for an archive.

Martha Davis: Most definitely one for me.

Johnetta Cole: How about it systematically. I'm gonna get um all here and then were gonna all go around and you sign everyone that comes to you. How's that?

Beth W. Newburger: Okay.

Beth W. Newburger: Spoken like a leader. Then add a section.

Johnetta Cole: One for Elaine and for our missing brother.

Beth W. Newburger: The missing, very missing brother. Michael Cook, we've never laid eyes on him. But he does call occasionally. He actually does. He calls and he says I'm really sorry I can't be there and I finally said to him we just don't expect you to be there. I'm mean you know, whatever. He retired in the meantime. He's had a whole life change there. Actually we can solicit some of

those tributes from people who have talked to us and I think that is a great idea. With a whole section of what they've said about us or what we've done.

Johnetta Cole: At this point it's so critical, I'm wondering if we would want to have it as an appendix? I mean if we get too big because we all got chill bumps when we were hearing the testimonies. We just were. So good point Gloria.

Ellen Ochoa: I wonder if you can put it in the report like we put the quotes in this one, you know where we kind of send it off.

Beth W. Newburger: Where will you bring the quotes in?

Ellen Ochoa: I think it's an opportunity for a good dozen of them, which would give you a flavor of different types of activities.

Beth W. Newburger: Which is what those quotes are all about on the first one.

Ellen Ochoa: It would kind of parallel the first report anyway but instead of us saying what is important to us it's now more the results of what the community. That's a great idea Johnetta.

Beth W. Newburger: That is great. Okay

Gloria Johnson: Well that will cost you five thousand dollars for the coalition.

Ellen Ochoa: Beth are we still collecting things you know I brought a visitors guide to the women's museum it told a little bit about all the different exhibits and then I wanted to show people that NASA had put out this poster that supposed to include the women in air space careers that shows the whole history of women in air space. That's available to schools and everything else like that.

Beth W. Newburger: Oh yeah. Isn't that wonderful?

Gloria Johnson: Where do you get that? Where do we order it if you don't have copies?

Ellen Ochoa: I can probably get more. There is a website here that's sponsored by NASA. I was.

How many of those are they willing to distribute?

Ellen Ochoa: I'm sure, you know NASA will provide as many as people want.

Beth W. Newburger: While you're all signing are there any more thoughts on the report?

Johnnetta Cole: Yes, that it's good and thank you.

Beth W. Newburger: Thank you

Beth gets a round of applause.

Gloria Johnson: Under next steps, You can tell me if I misinterpreted here. The second sentence the section exhibited both peaceful and excellent investment of a corporate sponsors. Does corporate cover every possible sponsor or are we talking?

Ann Lewis: Take out corporate.

Beth W. Newburger: Take out corporate, goods catch. I have to tell you, having you sit around the table and edit this thing is the best thing that's ever happened to us. Do you remember the first one how many times we had to go around with thing until we could actually get it done? It went on forever. While you're doing that, let me tell you about this. These are the rough drafts of the reports that came into us. Some of them are wonderful and some of them are sort of not wonderful. We are in the process and I have actually already done this, I think I have now gotten to every single one of the nominees in here and gone through the kind of editorial changes and also expanded on what they told us so that we have more substance than is appearing in the rough draft. For example, there is one in here that says I started to tell you about. It is just my favorite. They are organizing their history and what they've decided to do is buy a cupboard for the local library to put it in. So I called and I said this is really wonderful but you know I don't think you just want to say that you bought a cupboard for the library. Did you put anything in it? Did you do anything with the cupboard? What did you do with it and they went on for 25 minutes without a breath. I mean I couldn't get them to stop telling me about how there organizing, how they're making their files, what they're doing with this cupboard but the cupboard was this big shopping expedition into their attics but they literally went into their attics because they decided they wanted something of history in itself. So there is all kinds of enrichments. So when you read this, understand that this is only the first touch of it. This is the way we got it out and you'll see the difference between what we got and what we publish.

Johnnetta Cole: This format is clearly what we want to guess. I mean there is something that so brings out the most anal parts about me I mean I would like to just the consistency of this.

Beth W. Newburger: If you would tonight thank the people who have been knocking themselves out to put it together for us, Andy Black who is the Artist who actually put it together and Jill Newburger, a name that might be familiar to you, is the designer who created the whole quilt pattern and they will both be at the dinner tonight.

Johnetta Cole: At some point you were gonna run to us the format. Can you tell us what you expect of us? You are gonna get one official picture of us?

Beth W. Newburger: Oh yes. If we're done with the report we can through tonight's event.

Ann Lewis: Yeah, why don't we do that.

Beth W. Newburger: Allida, are you there? You want to come up here and why don't you gals move up here and join us. Okay are we pretty well caught up now on your comments on the report? Let me tell you what's gonna happen next. I will put in all of the changes that you have given us. I will attempt to get the quotes and I've already asked Allida, Barbara and Molly to please send us what were gonna need here and we'll go back through the testimonies that were presented. I'll also contact Cathy Bonner because I think that's a great idea. I'll contact the producer of West Wing. I'll contact Mary Dixon at Lifetime Television because I think she has been at several of our meetings and she can speak to this so that we have a good representation and if there are others that you think of that we should have

How did that get into West Wing?

Beth W. Newburger: They read in the Dallas, at least what I was told is the producer said they read about the women's history commission when they read about the women's history museum in Dallas. Somebody picked it up and decided to look into it and find out what it was all about and found out about us and got a copy of our report off the web and there it was. We know we've had some influence and we might as well have the good work. Why not? I will get all of that stuff together and then I will send you one more draft. This is gonna have to really turn around fast because I have to have this in Andy Black's hands by next Tuesday which is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and he would really rather have it this Friday because its gonna take us some time to do it.

Anna Roosevelt: Do you feel its pretty close?

Beth W. Newburger: I think its very close and but I just want to make sure you're all comfortable with it because I don't want to have to go through what we did the first time which is published and then we had to say we published a rough draft because we don't have time to publish a rough draft. Nor do we have the money to do that. I will get it out to you and please read it through and anything you see get it right back to me and then Andy will put it in concrete Tuesday and we will have it by the first of December which is when we want to have it because if I get it there by the first of December then counsel tells me I've got a good shot of getting these other two pieces done before the 20th of January.

Gloria Johnson: Given that it's a lot of pressure on you very frankly, it seems to me everybody at least those of us here have an opportunity to express opinions or changes or recommendations if I don't feel the need to through the second step of getting to check on do you have this or do you. I would certainly recommend that we eliminate that step.

Beth W. Newburger: That's fine. You know something Gloria I'm thrilled that you have that confidence in me and I appreciate it but I don't want to take that responsibility. I would just feel happy if you look at it and you say its fine just send me a note and say I don't need to look at this again I'm happy with whatever it is. You will get his tomorrow.

Johnetta Cole: Beth gives us a drop dead that says if you do not hear from us by such and such, we have signed off.

Beth W. Newburger: Okay, well today is Wednesday so if I have it in your hands tomorrow and I say to you, I'd like it Monday, drop dead otherwise that's it.

Beth W. Newburger: What you will not have are those quotes, the testimonial quotes because I can't do that by tomorrow. Okay? Now we should go through tonight's exercise. It's the final dinner and before we do that I just want everybody here to thank Allida for the incredible amount of work, devotion, support and for getting Steve Trachtenberg to do this. I mean, I can not believe that Allida came to us a year ago and said I've got this great idea for you're final evening and actually made it happen, so, we thank you.

Allida Black: Trachtenberg gets a lot of credit too and so does Betsy Cartler who is a Saint, so when you meet Betsy tonight you just all say we love you Betsy because she pitched in and she sold it. We really owe her for that. Basically the way it's gonna work is cocktails are at 6:00 PM, its gonna be on the fifth floor upstairs, my sweet students who work on the Eleanor papers are going to be there, they're all dressed up. They can't stand it. I have never talked fashion more in my life. They are 18 and 19 and they are driving me crazy. I get calls from Pentagon City saying should I wear this color or that color. I said I don't care as long as its not denium. They will meet people on the H street side when the valets come to take their car and then they will walk them to the elevators and other students are in the elevators to chat them up as they come up to the fifth floor. There will be cocktails form 6-7:00 PM then President Trachtenberg will lead us into the dinner and his fashion and then we eat and then we have a program which is Trachten berg welcoming people, the President's video, (you guys have to tell me who wants to intoduce the video), then my most, well one of my most wonderful students , you have to understand that I have this plateau of most and so Jessica Posnick who is a Sophomore who is my student last year in Women in Power and Ann you met her at the Rye dinner, is gonna speak for about 5 minutes to talk about what working on the Eleanor papers has meant to her and what women's history means to her in general as a tribute to the

Commission. Then, she is going to introduce me and I get to introduce Beth. Then Beth and Ann talk about the recognition because Trachtenberg's introducing you. Then you guys do your thing and present it to Lauren and then we all love each other and do whatever we want to do. We have at last count, 92 people coming to the dinner. The people from the university are Steven Trachtenberg and Francine Trachtenberg, his wife. The chair of the history department Ed Berkowitz who has no social skills whatsoever but is a man for whom I would put my body in front of a train. When I got to GW, there were two women in the history department there are now 11. Ed has just, he gets it. He doesn't know how to talk it but he gets it. We're doing a major African American search this year. We have and the women that are in the department are dispersed throughout there not just concentrated in women's history and/or American studies. There in strategic planning, there in American studies, there in Diplomacy, there in Peace studies, there in Labor studies, so we have a big cross section. Two of the vice presidents are coming and two of the Deans are coming as a way to show support. I told everybody if they wanted Eleanor they had to come or I would kill them. So they're coming and Diane Bell, who is an anthropologist, who I got for you okay who is head of the womewns studies department and she is Australian and she involved in this major suit in Australian that's involved with indiginius people especially recognizing the testimony of an indiginius women in sacred spaces. So she is rewriting development law and housing law in Australia based on Anthropoligical evidence. So she's coming. Then Beth put together this great guest list of people here and that's it. I hope ya'll have a good time because I want to thank you a lot because with out you we would'nt have done Eleanor and I know it and its in my heart and I appreciate it.

Beth W. Newburger: Honey, you have a great way of paying back. Let me tell ya. Can I add some of the other folks who will be here tonight? Louise Slaughter who is the Congresswomen who sponsored the legislation for the other women's commission will be with us. Thank you.

Allida Black: While you're doing that, I can tell you people who gave us money and could give us more. Peter Cobler and his wife Judy Cobler are coming for cocktails they can't stay for dinner but he is so sweet he changed his schedule to come. I love him to death.

Irene Wurtzerl: What's his role, is it for the University?

Allida Black: No, he's just a donor to the Eleanor papers. He is the other junkie in town. We talked everyday before this proclamation was issued. Sometimes three and four times a day. Then a wonderful woman who's name is Joy Watson, who I think would be interesting for the commission to know in a whole lot of reasons. She is from Jackson Hole, WY, she is psychologist. She and her husband invested and designed some stuff in the Internet and they have made a fortune. So what she did was set up her own small foundation called the Pursuit of Happiness Foundation and what she did was pay off her friends' mortgages,

their children's college tuition, and she's got this big plan for three years to complete that and then she is going into women's projects and the Eleanor papers is the only nonpersonal project that she is committed to and she committed money to us for three years. She flew out from Jackson Hole. June Hopkins who is Harry Hopkins granddaughter who is a fine historian in her own right in Savannah. She does women's history, who if we match the Ford money we will come join the Eleanor papers as our other historian. She's gonna be here. Ann Newhall, just called and said she didn't know if she would be able to come or not but she is head of the Archives. I'll remember later. I swear I'll wake up before this thing is over.

Beth W. Newburger: We have something here to help you remember. Marsha Greenberger, who is the co-President of the National Womens Law Center will be here. Josie Fernandez is coming. We all love Josie. Mary Lou Beatty from the National Endowment for Humanities and a great supporter. Sally Kranz from the General Federation of Women's Clubs will be joining us. Helen Thomas is coming. Marlis Majerus who is the WTOP federal reporter will be in the audience. Betsy Griffith from the Madera School, head mistress, from the Madera School is coming. A poet from Chicago who's flying in on the art field. We have Lisa McClain and George Casey who are supporters of the National Womens History project and of course without Molly we wouldn't get a lot of things done either so we want to thank her. Dolores Tucker who is the National Chair at the National Political Congress of Black Women will be here. Marie Salerno and Charles Mier just called to say they won't be here which is unfortunate. Lauren Supina who's head of the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach will represent the White House for us. Virginia Williams the mother of the Mayor of the District of Columbia will be coming. She really loved our trails and she's coming to tell us again how much she loved the trails so I suspect whether or not she's on the program I think will probably hear from her. Wilma Vaught who's been a wonderful supporter for us is joining us. It goes on and on and on. Linda Aker who is a great supporter of the Eleanor papers and someone we know and love. Bobby Green who is the Director of Save Americas Treasures and Patrick McCarthy her friend will be with us.

Allida Black: Could I add one more person with save America's treasures? Claudine Baker is coming. She is from New York and she does the Val Kil Park for saving America's Treasures and is really quite an extraordinary women.

Johnetta Cole: Beth would you mind passing it around so we can see who is actually going to show up?

Beth W. Newburger: Your son-in-law?

Johnetta Cole: I got a son and brother-in-law and one of my students from Spellman.

Beth W. Newburger: Oh, really. Who is that?

Johnetta Cole: Jacqueline Hould, she is a first year law student.

Beth W. Newburger: She is on this list and but if those I have the Robinsons at your table but I'm not sure I have Jacqueline. What I tried to do with this is both acknowledge President Trachtenberg's request for his table and so we've done that and then I put each of you at a table so that you hostess a table. So you will be the hostess for your tables.

Gloria Johnson: Let me just respond to something I just heard. The names I heard Johnetta ask about the names that were suggesting and she suggested and um I'm sorry I never suggested any names because I don't ever remember being asked to submit any names. None at all and I'm very sorry about that because we have had a conversation.

Gloria Johnson: I'm really sorry because there were several women that Pat Fran knew that have been very actively involved.

Beth W. Newburger: Gloria I'm so sorry.

Gloria Johnson: Well, maybe its me, um, my fault. We moved during this period and

Beth W. Newburger: Did you change your email?

Gloria Johnson: My email hasn't worked. So if you don't see some other labor people there I hope you understand why. Really sorry about John Sweeney because we were gonna talk.

Beth W. Newburger: Anybody else?

Johnetta Cole: Do we need to give an hour downstairs? You all have been there and left your luggage, right?

Beth W. Newburger: At the hotel.

Johnetta Cole: At the hotel what's the hour when we should be ready to go?

Beth W. Newburger: You know, you can walk over but it's a little bit cold out and it's a little windy so maybe what we should do is I should come by in the van and pick you up.

Allida Black: How many people are there? I've got my rodeo tank and the car. I can put five people in the car.

Beth W. Newburger: If you can put five people in the car you got four. So could you pick them up?

Allida Black: Sure.

Johnetta Cole: LaDonna, you're some other place?

LaDonna Harris: No, I'm at the hotel but I've got a ride.

Johnetta Cole: Okay.

Johnetta Cole: What time do you want your group there?

Beth W. Newburger: About 5:45. You think.

Allida Black: Sure, I'll pick you up at 5:45 in front of the hotel.

Beth W. Newburger: Black tie. Allida, there's been a lot of question about this black tie optional thing. I've had some people who have called me and said my husband went out and rented a tuxedo for the night so I think we better have some people showing up in black tie.

Allida Black: I went out and bought something. It's not a dress but I went out and bought something. So if I'm doing it and I can't control President Trachtenberg and we have asked him three times to wear a tuxedo.

Ann Lewis: Is our meeting adjourned?

Beth W. Newburger: Excuse me ladies, excuse me, we are about to close this meeting and then you can have any partisan discussions you want. We are on tape with a bipartisan presidential commission and we are about to move for closing this meeting.

Irene Wurtzel: Before we do, I think we should have some mechanism for staying in touch before we end and I think it would be nice if we had maybe a date set where we could just or send an email around or get in touch.

Beth W. Newburger: I love it.

Irene Wurtzel: I think it would be sad to just never make contact again.

Beth W. Newburger: I will take the responsibility for putting together a list and making sure that everybody gets it before the 20th of January and at that time I will send a date around in which we can do a conference call and I will be happy to sponsor the first conference call. We can do that. Okay.

LaDonna Harris: We should have closing statements before we leave.

Beth W. Newburger: That's a nice idea LaDonna, Ann our eloquent co-chair?

Ann Lewis: I have not to this moment thought of it but I think the fact that we are having a hard time closing it suggests something of the experience we have all had which as Johnetta Says we have all learned as much about ourselves and about history. I think each of us is stronger and wiser and more committed to making sure women's history is told and recognized. We will never know what we're capable of until we know what women have done. I would hope that this Commission in whatever form, we continue. Whether there is a permanent commission and books and events and all the wonderful ideas that have come up from the museums we've heard of and the, I would hope the projects that we have encouraged we have really made a permanent change in the way Americans think of ourselves and the way we think of our history. It has been my absolute pleasure to work with all of you.

Beth W. Newburger: Following Ann as always, a delight. One can never aspire to that eloquence and it is appropriate to follow Ann because without Ann as I have said on many other occasions this Commission would not have existed. It was Ann's dedication to what women's history can mean to all of us that brought the message to the President and stayed with it to encourage his understanding and to expand his vision and to in fact see to it that this commission was dually authorized under Executive Order 13090 and so we have to thank you for creating history Mrs. Lewis and make that a very official part of this record. For me it has been an experience that certainly surpasses any that I have had and has inspired me for those of you who have asked what my next steps are I am in total awe of all of your credentials and have been accepted for a PHD here at George Washington University. That will be my next step into the future because I really do believe in what we have been trying to accomplish and I think that each of us contributes in our own way. Your inspiration has contributed greatly to finding my way into the rest of my life. So I thank you for all of that.

Barbara Goldsmith: Well, its very difficult to follow Ann and Beth. Very difficult. I've served on several boards; I've never served with a group where I felt I was given so much. So much more than I could possibly give back and that's certainly the nature of this experience. I feel that the sisterly friendships that we have established will be with me for the rest of my life. In a world where much is dedicated to image instead of reality, the reality of what we have done at this table and the feelings we've established and my conviction that when you are with the best people things become the simplest, not the most complicated has been so reinforced by this experience and also as a historian, I become very discouraged because we live in a nation where most of the school kids can't put within a century when Lincoln was born. They don't know when World War II began and when it ended. That's the kind of country we live in and the fact that women are so hungry for their history and so willing to learn about it and

celebrate it has taken away a lot of my cynicism and I really can't thank all of you enough. This has been probably one of the best experiences of my entire life.

Anna Roosevelt: Certainly all of those things that Barbara said but one of the opportunities that this commission has been to be humble by the vision and commitment and energy of people not on our commission but who have joined our commission like Molly and Allida who have joined us as sisters if you will in the enterprise. It has been a real wonderful eye-opener a learning process for me and very valuable. As you say for the rest of your life. Rest of our lives.

LaDonna Harris: Just to say to Molly those all of those people who testified to us which you felt a real sisterhood connection with and the bonding of this group was extraordinary especially on a presidential commission. I have never served, I mean I've served on many but I have never served on one that felt this close to me. I have a friend who is an astronaut, just the feeling of friendship and closeness that we all have here and then extending it. It's just been wonderful.

Gloria Johnson: Um, when you decided that each of us was going to express our own feeling, I was reminded of something that Sojourner Truth wrote many many years ago and I hope I quote it properly, "if the first women God ever created turned the world upside down certainly all women working together could turn it right side up again" and and I I thought about that and as it applies to this Commission and the hundreds of women that we have met as a result of our work. For me, it's been wonderful; it's been remarkable. Last week I celebrated my 53rd wedding anniversary and as we were talking here it occurred to me that I feel in love 53 years ago but I have fallen in love many times since then and certainly this feeling of love right now is here because I have fallen in love with all of you. I thank you for that. I thank you for your sisterhood and I thank you for support. As a Union person too frequently, my experience is been that we've been stereotyped. You talked about history and you know better than I, it's nothing in there about women nor about Unions nor particularly African American women and others but the Union woman is left out too often those stereotypes creep in relationships and I fought that for over forty years because I've been in the Labor development for over forty-six years. To come into this commission and feel as if number one, I have made a contribution and number two, to have had the opportunity to reach out to my Union sisters to be a part of this and number three to develop this sisterhood with all of you has been a blessing and I thank all of you for it.

Irene Wurtzel: Coming on to this commission as the newest member, I really felt some awe and a little reserve when I first came in but it was very very very shortly thereafter that I began to feel the warmth and the abilities and the wisdom of the people who have been the root and I felt so much warmth and the need to do the work that we were doing and the shared goals of all of us. There was never a question as to whether we were at lockerheads over the main goals and that's unique. In many boards that I have served on in community activities you

always find factions and we really did not have any of that and it was remarkable that just the opposite was true. There was bonding but beyond the insidiness of this group and the bonding that we felt there was the inclusion of every group that we saw and it extended from maybe not from the group out but maybe from the group that was not on the floor out to us because you could feel their needs you could feel their concerns, you shared their aspirations and in every room we went into I wanted to say hey, we can't lose this feeling. We've got to stay with this because it was so important to everybody there and to us and that's why when we went through our little what do we do next I just feel as though we need to keep some of this going. I feel as though it's a beginning rather than an ending. Because the kinds of feelings that we felt and the kinds of emotions that this group, the commission unleashed I think needs to be part of what we do as Americans and part of what we do as women. I was thinking how quickly women can make this bond. How quickly in a group there needs and aspirations become apparent and appreciated by the other members of the group. So I thank you and it's been a wonderful experience.

Johnetta Cole: I think I need to make a confession and pay a tribute. It's two years now since I received a call as each of you received a call from Beth and from Ann. I remember struggling not to be combative as I said in my most professional language. What I couldn't say out of my heart so I put it in professional language but I really wanted to say listen I'm not joining another group of white, straight, middle class women who live between New York and Boston. I remember very well the patience of Ann I think in that particular conversation and I had one with Beth as well. Who gave me an assurance, which they lived up to, and that assurance was that this would not be that kind of Commission. That it would begin in the most inclusive way representing the extraordinary array in which women are cast. And that the commission itself would then be reflected in who would speak with the commission in what we would create and I have to really say that you made a promise and you kept it. It's because of the inclusiveness that I am convinced our work is as good as it is. We sometimes get very mechanistic about this and insist that women of all means and ways and ideas and colors should be here but it's not out of that mechanistic we gotta have this that and a partridge in a pear tree. It's that the work is enriched by the diversity. I really want to give thanks in particular to Ann and Beth because without that initial insistence I'm convinced we would not be where we are now. Then I would certainly say Amen and A women too to all that has been said around the table particularly to lift up the very special feelings of friendship and sisterhood and the ways in which we now connect with each other's work.

Ellen Ochoa spoke to the Commission members about her feelings on the commission.

Meeting Adjourned