

A woman's place is in the White House

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Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa, Oct. 28. (Andrew Harnik/The Associated Press)

The historic aspect of the first woman running for president as a majority party's nominee has been eclipsed by a difficult, scorched-earth race.

My dad collected coins his whole life. On occasional Sundays, Dad would spread his coin collection across the dining-room table, his books of Mercury dimes and wheat pennies and uncirculated sets from the different U.S. Mints.

Every time, he would make a point to show me his early century silver dollars, which all had Lady Liberty in full silhouette. He then would plop down the 1921 silver dollar with only Liberty's head in profile — her lips parted.

Noting that was the year after women won the right to vote, he would cock his head, wink and say, "And they haven't shut their mouths since."



A 1921 silver dollar

Ninety-six years after the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, a woman finally is running as a major-party nominee for president.

This especially momentous aspect of Tuesday's decision is overshadowed by the fraught and complicated history of the candidate, Hillary Clinton, herself, the revelations about her ill-considered private email server during her years as secretary of state and the frequent, mortifying statements of Clinton's opponent, Donald Trump.

It is disappointing and utterly predictable that gender and the complexities of sexism bedevil her campaign.

Trump, who seems stuck in a gear that immediately diminishes a woman only to her physical appearance, even commented that, when Clinton walked in front of him, "I was not impressed." The "Access Hollywood" tape speaks for itself.

On the other hand, many women are empowered by the Neanderthal stylings of the Republican nominee.

Recently, Mona Lee Locke, Washington state's former first lady, bravely shared [disturbing stories of sexual harassment](#) from her days as a local broadcast journalist and her silence to protect her career. Former Gov. Chris Gregoire recounted how, early in her career, an opposing lawyer said [she had no business in court](#) and asked the judge to find a man for the case.

They, and others, overcame, but they didn't forget. And in some cases, they shook it off and raised hell.

In recent interviews with The Times editorial board, U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and state Supreme Court Justice Barbara Madsen shared that they were inspired to seek higher public office by the plight of a famous victim of sexual harassment: Anita Hill. Her outrageous treatment in 1991 by the all-male Senate Judiciary Committee during Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court confirmation hearings was recently depicted in the HBO movie "Confirmation."

Both running for their fifth six-year terms, Murray and Madsen each said Hill's treatment pushed them to do something. In 1992, Murray was one of four women elected to the U.S. Senate. She has been a champion for women's health, including fighting against defunding of Planned Parenthood. Madsen has worked to ensure gender equity in the court system.

Eight years ago, Dad called me up and proudly told me he had cast his primary ballot for the first woman president, only to be foiled by Obama's candidacy.

This die-hard Democrat voted for Hillary Clinton again this year — *again* without hesitation. Recently, I reminded him of his old joke, and he bust a gut just like he used to at our dining-room table.

Tuesday, Dad and other American voters might just put the first woman in the Oval Office — in her own right. It is a shame that America's first female attorney general, Janet Reno, passed away Monday and did not live to see the day.

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Indeed, Clinton is a flawed candidate. She deserves criticism for her email server mistake and lack of transparency, among other things.

But she is the clear choice in the race for president. Tuesday's election will affirm what kind of country we are, what kind of people we are and how we treat and take care of each other. Clinton has plans to do that. We can do better than we have during this uneven recovery from the recession.

But we could do so much worse. And the worst is what a Trump presidency promises.

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