

WASHINGTON WOMEN

LIBRETTO

for SATB, Cello and Piano
by David Chase and Judith Clurman

Washington Women is collection of choral songs of iconic texts taken from speeches, opinions, and interviews of sixteen remarkable women from across the political spectrum, all of whom spent part of their lives associated with Washington DC: First Ladies, Senators, Congresswomen, Supreme Court Justices, Secretaries of State, Vice President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I. THE ESSENCE OF AMERICA

Condoleezza Rice (Secretary of State)

"The essence of America - that which really unites us - is not ethnicity, or nationality or religion - it is an idea -and what an idea it is: That you can come from humble circumstances and do great things."

—Condoleezza Rice: *Republican National Convention Speech, August 29, 2012*

II. FOR CENTURIES NOW

Elena Kagan (Supreme Court Justice)

"For centuries now, people have come to this country from every corner of the world to share in the blessing of religious freedom. Our Constitution promises that they may worship in their own way, without fear of penalty or danger, and that in itself is a momentous offering. Yet our Constitution makes a commitment still more remarkable - that however those individuals worship, they will count as full and equal American citizens."

—Elena Kagan: *Town of Greece, New York Petitioner v. Susan Galloway, May 5, 2014*

III. FREEDOM

Eleanor Roosevelt (United Nations Diplomat, First Lady)

Hillary Rodham Clinton (Secretary of State, Senator and First Lady)

Betty Ford (First Lady)

"Freedom makes a huge requirement of every human being. With freedom comes responsibility."

—Eleanor Roosevelt: *This is My Story, 1939*

"Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights once and for all."

—Hillary Rodham Clinton: *Remarks for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, China, September 5, 1995*

"The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women."

—Betty Ford: *International Women's Year Conference, October 25, 1975*

IV. THOSE OF US WHO SHOUT

Margaret Chase Smith (Senator and Congresswoman)

"Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism: The right to criticize; The right to hold unpopular beliefs; The right to protest; The right of independent thought."

—Declaration of Conscience, June 1, 1950

V. IN THE FIELD OF EQUAL RIGHTS

Shirley Chisholm (Congresswoman)

"In the field of equal rights ... laws can be used to provide protection for those who are most abused, and to begin the process of evolutionary change by compelling the insensitive majority to reexamine its unconscious attitudes."

—Shirley Chisholm: *Rights for Women Speech - Address to The United States House of Representatives, May 21, 1969*

VI. WE PRIDE OURSELVES

Laura Bush (First Lady)

"Americans pride ourselves on being a moral nation... We pride ourselves on believing that people should be seen for the content of their character, not the color of their skin. We pride ourselves on acceptance."

—Laura Bush: *The Washington Post*, June 17, 2018

VIII. WE NOT ONLY DREAM

Kamala Harris (Vice President and Senator)

Nancy Pelosi (Speaker of the House of the US House of Representatives)

"We not only dream - we do. We not only see what has been. We see what can be. We shoot for the moon and then we plant our flag on it. We are bold, fearless, and ambitious."

—Kamala Harris: *First Speech as Vice President of the United States*, January 20, 2021

"In all that we do, let us be For The People - recognizing the beautiful diversity of America, so that no one is left out and no one is left behind."

—Nancy Pelosi: *Speech on the house floor after being re-elected as Speaker of the House*, January 5, 2021

VIII. IT IS NECESSARY

Sandra Day O'Connor (Supreme Court Justice)

"In order to cultivate a set of leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry, it is necessary that the path to leadership to be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity."

—Sandra Day O'Connor: *Grutter vs Bollinger*, June 23, 2003

IX. REMEMBER THE LADIES

Abigail Adams (First Lady)

"Remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands."

—Abigail Adams: *Letter to John Adams, Braintree, Massachusetts*, March 31, 1776

X. IT TOOK ME QUITE A LONG TIME

Madeleine Albright (Secretary of State)

"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent."

—Madeleine Albright: *Spoken at various times, including The Huffington Post*, June 15, 2010 (updated December 6, 2017)

XI. BELIEVE

Barbara Bush (First Lady)

"Believe in something larger than yourself... Get involved in some of the big ideas of our time."

—Barbara Bush: *Commencement speech at Wellesley College*, June 1, 1990

XII. I AM EVER HOPEFUL/I WANT A PRESIDENT

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Supreme Court Justice)

Michelle Obama (First Lady)

"I am ever hopeful that if the court has a blind spot today, its eyes will be open tomorrow."

—Ruth Bader Ginsburg: *National Review Interview with Katie Couric*, July 31, 2014

"I want a President who will teach our children that everyone in this country matters - a President who truly believes in the vision that our founders put forth all those years ago: That we are all created equal, each a beloved part of the great American story."

—Michelle Obama: *Speech at the Democratic National Convention*, July 25, 2016