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## UNH Historian Pens Book on Women's Quest for the American Presidency

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*UNH Media Relations*

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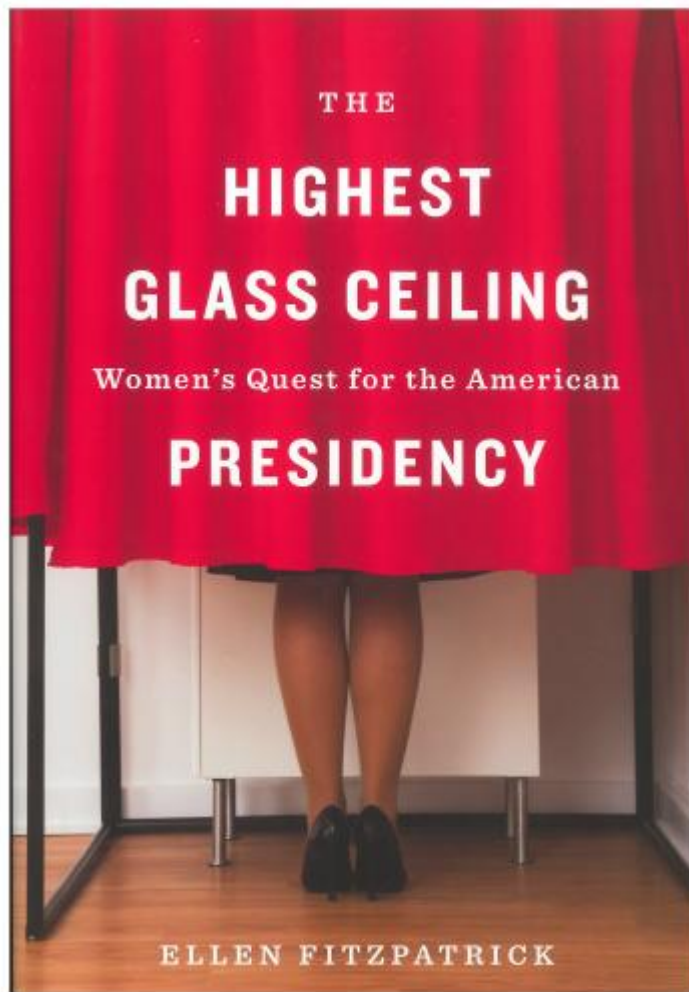
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UNH Historian Pens Book on Women's Quest for the American  
Presidency

## Media Relations

February 24, 2016

### UNH Historian Pens Book on Women's Quest for the American Presidency



Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, has written a book, "The Highest Glass Ceiling", which gives context to Hillary Clinton's current race for the White House and shows how her quest is part of a longer journey for women in the United States.

DURHAM, N.H. – In "The Highest Glass Ceiling: Women's Quest for the American Presidency," Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, has written a book that gives context to Hillary Clinton's current race for the White House and shows how her quest is part of a longer journey for women in the United States. As "The Highest Glass Ceiling" reveals, women's pursuit of the Oval Office, then and now, has involved myriad forms of influence, opposition and intrigue.

Fitzpatrick tells the story of three women who set their sights on the American presidency, Victoria Woodhull (1872), Margaret Chase Smith (1964), and Shirley Chisholm (1972). Each woman challenged persistent barriers confronted by women presidential candidates. The tale begins during Reconstruction when the radical Woodhull became the first woman to seek the presidency. Although women could not yet vote, Woodhull staked her claim to the White House, believing she might thereby advance women's equality.

According to Fitzpatrick, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith came into political office through the "widow's mandate." Among the most admired women in public life when she launched her 1964 campaign, she soon confronted prejudice that she was too old (at 66) and too female to be a creditable presidential candidate. She nonetheless became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for president by a major party.

The third woman featured in the book, Democratic Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, ignored what some openly described as the twin disqualifications of race and gender in her 1972 presidential campaign. She ran all the way to the Democratic convention, inspiring diverse followers and angering opponents, including members of the Nixon administration who sought to derail her candidacy.

"The New Yorker" recently ran an excerpt from the book focused on Senator Smith:

<http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-unfavored-daughter-when-margaret-chase-smith-ran-in-the-new-hampshire-primary>.

Fitzpatrick, who specializes in modern American political and intellectual history, is the author and editor of eight books, including The New York Times bestseller "Letters to Jackie: Condolences from a Grieving Nation," which was the basis for the widely admired documentary film "Letters to Jackie: Remembering President Kennedy," released in 2013. She has appeared on PBS's The NewsHour and has been interviewed as an expert on modern American political history by The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Boston Globe, Washington Post, CBS's Face the Nation, the BBC and National Public Radio.

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Images to be downloaded:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2016/02/images/img-2FitzpatrickGlassCeiling.jpg>

Caption: "The Highest Glass Ceiling" written by Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, reveals women's pursuit of the Oval Office, then and now, has involved myriad forms of influence, opposition and intrigue.

[http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2016/02/images/img-8Fitzpatrick\\_07N2741.jpg](http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2016/02/images/img-8Fitzpatrick_07N2741.jpg)

Caption: Ellen Fitzpatrick, professor of history at the University of New Hampshire, has written a book, "The Highest Glass Ceiling", gives context to Hillary Clinton's current race for the White House and shows how her quest is part of a longer journey for women in the United States.

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