

Steinem holds intimate session with reporters

BY ASHLEY E. KING
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Gloria Steinem spoke at a small press conference on Thursday, Oct. 22 in the Carnegie Guest House, a few hours before she would deliver her speech to a sold-out Love Auditorium.

Taking the microphone from the podium and sitting down at a table with the reporters, Steinem and those present formed an intimate group who could discuss Steinem's views in a rather informal setting. The topics which surfaced at the conference ranged from the role of women in today's society to Playboy bunnies to the effects of aging.

When one of the reporters asked Steinem whether she thought they would see the complete equality of men and women in their lifetimes, Steinem's answer was brief: "You or I?" she asked. "No." (The reporter who had asked the question was young.) "Where is the relevance of the women's rights movement today?" one reporter asked Steinem. In response to this question, Steinem said that she feels that women today basically face "two kinds of crises": "the one that comes from success" and "not enough success."

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about women have constituted what Steinem called a "backlash" against the feminist movement. About the second crisis, Steinem said the public espouses the major tenets of the feminist movement, and yet, it has not yet acted upon these beliefs.

"We have majority support for equal pay," she declared, "but we don't have equal pay." Because of these two crises that women face in society today, Steinem believes that the women's liberation movement still has a "distance that is yet to go."

Along with her views on the progress of the women's rights movement, Steinem also offered her views on the current political scandal that has swept the White House. Commenting on Monica Lewinsky, Steinem said, "It's been interesting to see that by and large what the feminists have said is what the public

condones." She then went on to explain that feminists have said since the relationship between President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky was consensual, it was not sexual harassment. Steinem believes that Clinton's opponents have "succeeded

ceived the worst treatment of any woman in the public eye and pointed to the fact that Lewinsky was forced to divulge intimate secrets about her life under the threat of imprisonment even though she had, in Steinem's words, "committed no crime."

Touching a subject that affects women on campus, Steinem also spoke of the obstacles that younger, educated women will face now and later in their lifetimes as they try to succeed in the business world. "Most campuses are an experience of equality that women won't experience again," Steinem said. In Steinem's opinion, because the women in a college or uni-

versity are consumers, they are treated rather equitably. Once they enter the real world, however, Steinem feels that this equality between men and women will become less prevalent.

Steinem also worries that young women in college will lose their self-esteem as they learn more about the absence of influential women in a his-

tory which features mostly men. It has been shown, Steinem pointed out, that "in general, women's self-esteem goes down with every year of higher level education."

The final problem that Steinem sees for young women who are attempting to excel in the business world is that women are expected to fulfill what she called a "double role." Not only are women expected to prosper as businesswomen, they are also still expected to perform on their own their traditional role in society of raising the children and taking care of the home.

Although Steinem admitted that women who choose to be homemakers are successful in their own way, she said, "I would call it an even greater success for a man to stay home and raise a family," because she feels that he is going against the current of society.

After having discussed the hurdles which young women today must overcome, Steinem also offered some advice to young women who are about to enter the adult world. She said that they should "spend time with people who make them feel good about themselves, not bad."

Finally, her advice to young women was to "listen to their own inner voice and refuse to let themselves be limited."

Steinem said that she feels that women today basically face "two kinds of crises": "the one that comes from success" and "not enough success." Feeling threatened by the success of women who have liberated themselves from the old social norm, a minority of people with traditional views about women have constituted what Steinem called a "backlash" against the feminist movement.



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