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Nancy Pelosi promotes book at Lyman

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Referred to as the most influential woman in American politics by CNN, Nancy Pelosi is the first woman to ascend to the most powerful legislative position in the country.

From 2007 to 2011 and most recently 2019 to2023, Pelosi served as the 52nd speaker of the United States House of Representatives.

Pelosi can now add being the author of two books to her extensive professional history.

On Aug. 6, Pelosi released her new book "The Art of Power," which shares her immense transition from a housewife to the House Speaker.

On Sept. 22, the university opened its doors to the trailblazer. Hosted by RJ Julia Booksellers at the John Lyman Center for the Performing Arts, history unfolded.

Pelosi gave the audience an exclusive look at some of the most monumental events from her nearly four decades in Congress.

"I wrote the book to set the record straight because other people were writing about these things, and I thought 'That's not how it happened," Pelosi said, "but they wrote their book. I'll write mine.'"

The event commemorates the power of women's leadership in all forms, as women initiatives are engraved in not only the nation, but the university as well.

"Speaker Pelosi's qualities resonate deeply within the baggage we hold here at Southern Connecticut State University," Interim President Dwayne Smith said, "since our founding more than 130 years ago by three educators. Two, by the way, were women."

Smith also said that the university championed women's education.

"Suffolk's first women's studies course was offered in 1971, making Southern one of the first institutions in the country to offer such courses in this discipline," Smith said.

The event was moderated by none other than Rep. Rosa DeLauro.

DeLauro is a long-standing advocate for working families representative of Connecticut Third District since 1991.

Her unwavering commitment to securing benefits for veterans, promoting education, ensuring equal pay, and raising the minimum wage is the epitome of public service.

DeLauro and Pelosi became the "Dream Team," as they paved the way for female representatives and inspired girls and women worldwide, creating a powerful legacy.

"In this powerful sisterhood, we have two women who certainly have the wounds, who have taken the punches, who have punched back, and who together are making the world better," Roxanne J. Coady, the founder of RJ Julia Booksellers, said.

Pelosi, the master legislator, reflected on the reason behind her most notable legislations.

"It's about justice in our country, and in those negotiations, it was about, 'What does this mean to the kitchen table of America's working families?'" Pelosi said. "It's about being respected for what you do, and fair wages, and working additions, and pensions and the education of our children."

Pelosi said that she is a firm believer in the youth and their future.

"I keep bringing it back to the children, the children, the children, their education, their families, the safe neighborhoods where they can thrive, and that means free from gun violence, as well as a world of peace in which they can thrive," Pelosi said.

With American families in mind, Pelosi worked alongside Barack Obama in the passage of the Affordable Care Act, or ARA. The speaker said that was the biggest investment to date in legislating.

"It enabled 10s of millions more people to have access to quality affordable health care. But in addition to that, over 150 million families have better benefits, including getting rid of the obstacle of a pre-existing medical condition," Pelosi said.

Despite the drive and benefits to pass ARA, Pelosi said that faced many obstacles.

"If there is an obstacle, we'll push open the gate," Pelosi said. "If that doesn't work, we'll climb the fence. If that doesn't work, we'll pole vault in. If that doesn't work, we'll parachute in, but we're not letting anything stand in the way of our passing this legislation."

Pelosi said that the gate was pushed open; however, she credits that to the community.

"It was all of you. People from the diagnosis community, anybody, any illness that was out there which was a pre-existing medical condition, all of those people, those grassroots people, the outside mobilization, made all the difference," Pelosi said.

The trailblazer is also an advocate for women taking up space in high positions and being able to have their voices heard.

Coady said that women traditionally set the table, but having a seat or managing the table was what mattered.

"When Nancy Pelosi entered Congress in 1987, she was embarking on totally changing the dynamic," Coady said.

Pelosi had a mission of inviting more women to occupy roles in Congress. Pelosi said that while there were 435 members, only 23 were women; 12 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

When Pelosi was elected as the first female House Speaker, she said an encouraging realization flooded her mind while sitting at Bush's cabinet table.

"He's talking, and I'm squeezed in. I never had that sensation since or before," Pelosi said. "I was there, and all the suffragists, they were there on the chair, and I could hear them say together: 'At last, we have a seat at the table,'" Pelosi said.

Due to that disproportionate demographic makeup, Pelosi said that she and DeLauro decided to recruit women to join Congress.

"We want more. We want more women, but we want more diversity," Pelosi said, "more representation of what America is about, so that our decisions reflect the people we represent."

Along with fighting for women, Pelosi is also a fearless advocate for the youth. With the election creeping up, Pelosi said that she encourages the community to vote and preserve democracy.

"What I say to young people is, the future belongs to you. You have to shape it. You, because you're going to be living in it," Pelosi said.



PHOTO | LILY RAND

52nd House Speaker Nancy Pelosi engaging with the audience about her career and new book.



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Interim President Dwayne Smith beginning to introduce former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Rosa DeLauro.



PHOTO | LILY RAND

The audience getting ready for the arrival of Nancy Pelosi.