

We the Interns

Inside the East Room of the White House not an inch of tile was left untouched by the taps of stilettos, pumps, and penny loafers. Three hundred guests

And then there was me, an intern in a borrowed suit jacket, hemmed inside the crowd by the rest of the Concerned Women for America (CWA) staff. I was



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Interns with Concerned Women for America's Ronald Reagan Memorial Internship Program are given a unique taste of Washington, D.C.

stood in honor of President Bush as he made his way through the cheers to the podium. The crowd was peppered with big names like Mike Leavitt, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Senator Norm Coleman of Minnesota and Representative Trent Franks of Arizona.

welcomed along with CWA, as influential leaders in the grassroots movement, by President Bush to celebrate his veto of the bill that would have allotted federal funds for destructive embryonic stem cell research.

I listened as President Bush once again honored the sanctity of life and

the American conscience: the government cannot fund embryonic stem cell research because it is an unethical science which destroys human embryos and holds little promise for medical research, despite what the media has argued. CWA had educated me on the alternative, adult stem cell research, which for decades has been saving the lives of people like those who stood on the platform with the President: Carol Franz, who “whipped” cancer twice, and Kaitlyne McNamara, who was born with spina bifida. Being invited to the President’s speech was a high honor for CWA, and because of CWA’s investment in me, I appreciated that moment in the East Room not as a tourist but as an informed American citizen.

Good citizenship is the American way

Average Americans often see themselves as D.C. tourists with cameras rather than citizens with voices. We scuttle through streets and museums to snap pictures and scan plaques, but for most the government remains an abstract institution and each politician an acclaimed, or proclaimed, celebrity. But as I have realized at CWA, thanks to the emphasis on the influence of grassroots, “we the people” are the intended government. “We the interns” have not only been taught but also experienced the evidence that the grassroots are

effective: the calls I dial and letters I write are to the actual movers and shakers of legislation.

From day one, we knew that CWA was truly concerned that we do more than file and shred everyone else’s work. We are invited to panels and conferences and hearings on a weekly basis. We actually spent an entire day on the Hill lobbying against socialized medicine. CWA staff volunteer hours of their time to invest in our Bible studies, world view classes, and progress meetings. For us, this internship is designed to affect more than just our résumés. It has been a lesson in leadership, in citizenship, and in truth. With the projects given to us by the CWA staff, we are completing much more than we ever thought ourselves capable of accomplishing.

My status had not changed, but at that moment in the East Room I finally saw the intended purpose and potential of my voice to demand justice. I stood with the President of the United States along with Congress and some of the most influential leaders in the conservative movement in support of justice. In this mighty company, I finally saw my own significance as the individual American citizen that the staff at CWA encouraged me to recognize. Whatever I am able to accomplish in the future, I shall always view my internship at CWA as the catalyst. ■

By Corrine Porowski, Intern with CWA’s Ronald Reagan Memorial Internship Program