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Black Women and Political Leadership

Eva Clayton Podcast Write Up

Final

As a child, I moved from a diverse neighborhood in the Bronx to a small town not too far from Warren County. North Carolina was predominantly white, and it made it difficult to understand the power of womxn and people of color. I often questioned my understanding of race and ethnicity. During a history class in elementary school, I learned about Congresswoman Eva Clayton, born in Savannah, Georgia in the Jim Crow South. Despite institutional barriers Eva Clayton managed to become an advocate for underprivileged communities and an agent of change. Congresswoman Clayton acknowledges the importance of representation in Congress as well as the importance of education in communities of color. Eva Clayton like other black women leaders such as Toni Morrison redefined intersectionality. I attempted to reach out to Congresswoman Eva Clayton now the Assistant Director-General of the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) but unfortunately was unable to schedule an interview. Fortunately, Eva Clayton has completed a series of extensive interviews for CSPAN and PBS that document her childhood and political career.

Eva Clayton managed to overcome fundraising and other institutional barriers that often hinder womxn of color from entering politics. In addition, she acknowledges the difficulties that motherhood can impose on a womxn career path in comparison to its impact on males. In Congress, she overcomes the learning curve and instantly becomes a powerhouse as the President of the 1993 freshman class. Among this her major accomplishments include increasing black voter registration, expanding government aid to qualifying immigrants, and focusing on infrastructure.