Groups won't support Paula Jones

Women's organizations ignore harassment claims against Clinton

Thomas of sexual harassment.

'We all believe her story,"

The Fund for a Feminist Majority Women, the National Women's Political Caucus and the head of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

Five years later, none of these prominent, politically active women's groups offer a supportive word for after weeks of media focus on the ethi-Paula Jones. Their collective silence is an intriguing political subplot to her charges that President Clinton sexu- legal and ethical questions hanging ally harassed her in a Little Rock, Ark. over the Democratic president. hotel room in 1991

ington and stirred a remarkable national debate about sexual conduct.

"It's the height of hypocrisy on the part of the women's groups," Joseph Cammarata, a Jones lawyer, said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

"They rallied to the cause of Anita Hill, but in our case, never a whim-

Today, the Supreme Court will hear

WASHINGTON (AP) - Judith arguments about whether Clinton Lichtman, president of the Women's should have to answer Jones' allegawhen Anita Hill accused conservative consider the merits of her assertions Supreme Court nominee Clarence that Clinton propositioned and fondled

Lichtman said then, speaking for a whether presidents should be immune handful of prominent women's from civil lawsuits while in office. Jones' lawyers want the case to proceed immediately, or, in the alternastood with Hill, too, demanding an tive, for the justices to order pretrial immediate Senate hearing. So did the depositions and other activity so the National Commission for Working trial can open soon after Clinton's term ends in 2001.

The Supreme Court arguments revive a case that has received little attention since Jones made her allegations in 1994. It also is a reminder, cal problems of Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich, of the many

At a minimum, the hearing guar-A few months after that, Hill's ac- antees a highly embarrassing spectacle cusations about Thomas rocked Wash- for Clinton as the White House tries to engineer a week of favorable publicity leading up to the Jan. 20 inaugural festivities.

And if Clinton's lawyers lose before the high court - a decision is likely to come in four or five months - the kansas governor.

Legal Defense Fund, didn't hesitate tions at a civil trial. The court will not It's the height of hypocrisy on the part of the women's groups. They rallied to the The issue before the justices is cause of Anita Hill, but in our case, never a whimper."

> JOSEPH CAMMARATA Jones' lawyer

ficulties because I'm going to do my the Thomas nomination would tion about the case's ramifications.

Clinton aides bristle at questions rassment. about Jones and grumble about the timing. At a time of endless inaugural planning meetings, among those visiting the White House this week was Robert Bennett, a \$475-an-hour lawyer representing Clinton.

'The, quote-unquote, 'legitimacy' of that story will depend, of course, on what happens in a court of law," White House press secretary Mike McCurry said last week.

president could be required to answer choice but to answer questions asked terviews about the Jones case. Nor groups that rushed to Hill's defense money hungry "trailer park trash."

"It's not going to cause me any dif- and predicted that public debate over ob," Clinton said Friday to a ques- embolden more women to come forward with complaints of sexual ha-

> There has been a heightened sensitivity and consciousness about the sexual harassment problem and the way in which women are viewed in society, Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said after Hill came forward.

But Michelman, Lichtman and several other women's group leaders involved in the high-profile effort to block Thomas' confirmation did not Clinton and McCurry had little respond this week to requests for in-

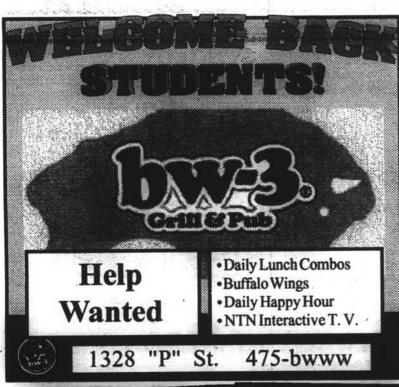
"One result of this case already is that it has exposed the galloping hypocrisy of the left in America," said Craig Shirley, a Republican activist and an organizer of the conservative conference where Jones first publicly detailed her allegations in 1994.

"I don't think these groups would be missing in action if some woman had made the same allegation about a Republican president," Shirley said.

Speaking privately, activists in several liberal women's groups that joined in the anti-Thomas effort acknowledge internal anguish over how to respond to Jones' allegations. Several said her appearance at the 1994 Conservative Political Action Committee gives them cover - enough evidence to raise the question of whether her allegations were motivated by politics.

Some Clinton allies also point to the political aspirations of a Jones attorney, Gil Davis, who in addition to arguing her case before the Supreme Court is a GOP candidate for Virginia attorney general.

"In hindsight, maybe it would have been better if she had chosen a different forum," Shirley said. "But no one seemed to have a problem with Anita Hill being supported by all these libquestions under oath about alleged at public forums. In striking contrast have any of them objected as male eral groups. In any case, it was not indiscretions during his tenure as Ar- has been the silence of women's Clinton supporters portrayed Jones as entirely unsuccessful — Paula Jones is getting her day in court."





wo female cadets leave Citadel

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) won't return to the military college.

rough but safe were critical to me," Jeanie Mentavlos of Charlotte, N.C., said in a statement released by her at- nior cadet who helped bring the alletorney. "Because The Citadel broke its gations to the attention of authorities, promise, I cannot return.'

to take steps to assure the women's safety "it is apparent to me ... that campus. I would not be welcome," Kim Messer of Clover said in a simi- to campus.

Two female Citadel cadets who said vestigating allegations that, among school dropped its all-male admissions they endured freshman hazing that other things, male cadets set the policy, following a U.S. Supreme included having their clothes set afire clothes of the women on fire, sexually Court ruling that a similar all-male The school's promises to me and their mouths. Authorities were also my family that knob life would be looking into whether death threats were made against one woman.

Mentavlos' brother, Michael, a se-While a federal judge had offered plete his degree requirements else-

Two other female cadets who enwhile I might be physically safe on rolled last summer, and who have not made any hazing allegations, returned

The women were among the first

The FBI and state police were in- four admitted to the college after the harassed them and put cleanser in policy at Virginia Military Institute was unconstitutional.

Citadel spokesman Terry Leedom said the school would have no comment on the departure of the women until Monday.

A federal judge met privately with also announced Sunday he will com- the families of the two female cadets Thursday and said he was prepared to provide "reasonable measures" to protect the women's safety.

He did not say what those measures were, but the U.S. Justice Department had asked the judge to send U.S. marshals to campus.





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