



Shirley Chisholm Quotations

On Sexism...

"The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says: It's a girl."

"Tremendous amounts of talent are being lost to our society just because that talent wears a skirt."

"One distressing thing is the way men react to women who assert their equality: their ultimate weapon is to call them unfeminine. They think she is anti-male; they even whisper that she's probably a lesbian."

"Prejudice against blacks is becoming unacceptable although it will take years to eliminate it. But it is doomed because, slowly, white America is beginning to admit that it exists. Prejudice against women is still acceptable. There is very little understanding yet of the immorality involved in double pay scales and the classification of most of the better jobs as 'for men only.'"

On Racism

"Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep seeded, that it is invisible because it is so normal."

"My God, what do we want? What does any human being want? Take away an accident of pigmentation of a thin layer of our outer skin and there is no difference between me and anyone else. All we want is for that trivial difference to make no difference."

"We Americans have a chance to become someday a nation in which all racial stocks and classes can exist in their own selfhoods, but meet on a basis of respect and equality and live together, socially, economically, and politically."

"I am not anti-white, because I understand that white people, like black ones, are victims of a racist society. They are products of their time and place."

Other...

"I was the first American citizen to be elected to Congress in spite of the double drawbacks of being female and having skin darkened by melanin. When you put it that way, it sounds like a foolish reason for fame. In a just and free society it would be foolish. That I am a national figure because I was the first person in 192 years to be at once a congressman, black and a woman proves, I think, that our society is not yet either just or free."

"The United States was said not to be ready to elect a Catholic to the Presidency when Al Smith ran in the 1920's. But Smith's nomination may have helped pave the way for the successful campaign John F. Kennedy waged in 1960. Who can tell? What I hope most is that now there will be others who will feel themselves as capable of running for high political office as any wealthy, good-looking white male."

"There is little place in the political scheme of things for an independent, creative personality, for a fighter. Anyone who takes that role must pay a price."

"In the end anti-black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing—anti-humanism."

"I don't measure America by its achievement but by its potential."

"Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth."

"... Rhetoric never won a revolution yet."

"When morality comes up against profit, it is seldom profit that loses."