

NYTimes

4/29/92

After She Made Specter the Issue, Newcomer Will Face Him in Fall

By MICHAEL deCOURCY HINDS

Special to The New York Times

PHILADELPHIA, April 28 — Lynn H. Yeakel, a fund-raiser for women's charities, sprang from virtual anonymity a month ago to become the upset winner of today's Democratic Senate primary in Pennsylvania.

With two-thirds of the votes counted at 11 P.M., Ms. Yeakel had 45 percent to 32 percent for Lieut. Gov. Mark S. Singel. The remainder was divided among three other candidates.

The outcome turned on Ms. Yeakel's criticism of Senator Arlen Specter in the hearings last year on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, and it set up a confrontation over women's issues for the fall election.

Mr. Specter, a two-term incumbent, handily defeated his rival for the Re-

publican nomination, State Representative Stephen F. Freind. With two-thirds of the votes in, Mr. Specter, who is seeking his third term, had about 65 percent of the vote to 35 percent for Mr. Freind.

Ms. Yeakel's apparent victory over Mr. Singel, who was the front-runner until last week, was termed "a stunning upset" by G. Terry Madonna, a political analyst who is director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Millersville State University in Lancaster. "There is no corollary for this in Pennsylvania politics," Mr. Madonna said. "She is the complete outsider. She will be formidable against Arlen Specter. I think this is the year of the woman in politics."

'We Did It!'

Shortly after 10 P.M., Ms. Yeakel appeared at the Philadelphia Hilton to thank a large gathering of supporters. "We did it!" she said. "We did it! We did it!" She went on, "This was a hard-earned victory; it was not a miracle."

Mr. Singel had conceded a half hour earlier, saying he had called Ms. Yeakel to tell her that she would be an outstanding Senator. "I'm just proud to go back to continue my work as Lieutenant Governor," he told his supporters.

Pennsylvania has never elected a

Continued on Page A11, Column 1

woman to the Senate; it has elected three widows of incumbents to its delegation in the House. Only 7 percent of the members of the state's General Assembly are women.

The other Democratic candidates were Robert E. Colville, 56, a five-term District Attorney in Allegheny County, who had a sixth of the vote in the survey; Freddy Mann Friedman, 47, a psychologist from Ardmore, a suburb of Philadelphia, who had less than 1 in 20 votes, as did Philip Valenti, 42, a follower of Lyndon LaRouche who lives in the Philadelphia suburb of Upper Darby.

Percentage Point a Day

Ms. Yeakel, 50, was virtually unheard of in statewide political circles when she began campaigning Feb. 6. Her support climbed by more than a percentage point a day, due partly to her television advertisement reminding voters of Senator Specter's aggressive questioning of Anita F. Hill in the Thomas hearings.

Ms. Yeakel also got help from newspaper endorsements, which generally praised her positions on women's issues, the economy and education and

Setting up an unusual confrontation on women's issues.

dismissed the 38-year-old Mr. Singel as a career politician lacking conviction.

Mr. Singel's position on abortion was particularly unclear because he said that he personally opposed abortion but that it should be legal in most circumstances.

Neil Newhouse, Mr. Specter's poll taker, played down the threat that would be posed by Ms. Yeakel in the general election. "Arlen Specter is no Mark Singel, and he has a very solid record on women's issues," Mr. Newhouse said.

A survey of voters leaving the polls, conducted by Voter Research and Surveys, showed that Ms. Yeakel's largest bloc of support was coming from educated, high-income voters as well as voters under age 60. Voters with only high school degrees were more apt to support Mr. Singel.

Ms. Yeakel, who lives in Rosemont, a suburb of Philadelphia, won about two-thirds of the vote in Philadelphia and its suburbs; Mr. Singel, who lives in Johnstown, in the western part of the state, won a third of the vote in the Pittsburgh area. More than half the women and 4 in 10 men voted for Ms. Yeakel. By contrast, Mr. Singel was

backed by a third of the male and female voters.

More than half of Ms. Yeakel's supporters said in the survey that Justice Thomas should not have been confirmed. Ms. Yeakel's supporters also included more than half of the two-thirds of the Democratic voters who said that abortion should remain legal.

Possible Ominous Sign

In the Republican primary, the survey found that a quarter of the voters opposed the confirmation of Justice Thomas. But 6 in 10 of those same voters still backed Mr. Specter, who had voted in favor of Judge Thomas's confirmation.

More than half of the Republican voters said that abortion should be kept legal as it is, and about three-fourths of these voters supported Mr. Specter. Mr. Specter also won the votes of about 6 in 10 of the Republican women.

In a possibly ominous sign for Mr. Specter, only 6 in 10 of the Republican voters said they would vote for him in the general election if he was running against Ms. Yeakel. One in four Republicans said they would vote for Ms. Yeakel. Democrats were not asked this question in the survey.

Ms. Yeakel's rapid rise from underdog to electoral victory matches that of Senator Harris Wofford, who won last November's special election to fill the seat of Senator John Heinz, who died in an airplane crash.

Gov. Robert P. Casey appointed Mr. Wofford, who had served in his cabinet, as interim Senator in the spring. But going into the fall campaign for the three years remaining in Mr. Heinz's term, polls showed Mr. Wofford trailing Dick Thornburgh, the former Republican Governor and former United States Attorney General, by more than 40 percentage points. Mr. Wofford, calling for new leadership and national health insurance, defeated Mr. Thornburgh by a margin of 55 percent to 45 percent.

Just as Mr. Wofford's victory sent shock waves through the Republican Party and gave Democratic candidates some powerful campaign themes, Ms. Yeakel's showing is likely to catch the attention of the male-dominated structures of both political parties.

Second Woman in 2 Months

Political analysts say that female politicians, who have had limited electoral success in the past, may have come into their own this year, when voters are saying in surveys that the country is on the wrong track and that they want all new people in government.

Ms. Yeakel is the second woman in two months to surprise the Democratic establishment. In Illinois, Carol Mosely Braun, a 44-year-old Cook County recorder of deeds, ran a primary campaign that was also fueled by outrage over the Thomas hearings, and she defeated the Democratic incumbent, Senator Alan J. Dixon, a Thomas supporter.

In the Republican primary in Pennsylvania, voters had a stark choice between the incumbent Mr. Specter, 62,

who supports a woman's right to abortion, and Mr. Freind, 47, who is the author of the Pennsylvania anti-abortion law that is pending before the Supreme Court. "The Freind campaign was about pornography, crime, abortion and drugs — important issues, but he didn't make a case that Specter was weak or soft on these issues except

abortion," said Mr. Madonna, the political analyst.

Mr. Specter took no chances because of concern over the anti-incumbent mood of the electorate and the uncertain size of Mr. Freind's political support. Mr. Specter outspent Mr. Freind more than 4 to 1, including a \$1 million television advertising campaign.

Pennsylvania Democratic Senate Race

Total		Robert E. Colville	Mark S. Singel	Lynn H. Yeakel
49	Male	16	36	41
51	Female	10	32	52
38	Liberal	9	26	60
46	Moderate	14	39	42
16	Conservative	20	42	27
75	Democrats	13	36	44
24	Independents	11	28	55
7	Not high school graduate	16	48	29
33	High school graduate	14	44	33
23	Some college	19	33	42
20	College graduate	11	28	57
17	Postgraduate education	3	20	72
25	Blue-collar workers	17	40	36
26	White Protestant	10	36	49
51	Catholic	17	40	36
6	Jewish	7	9	79
29	Philadelphia area voters	2	23	67
32	Pittsburgh area voters	30	28	37
22	Oppose the death penalty	12	26	56
21	Want Tsongas in race	13	32	52
Voted in Presidential primary for:				
26	Edmund G. Brown Jr.	11	23	58
55	Bill Clinton	13	41	41
13	Paul E. Tsongas	14	30	51
Choice in November				
10	George Bush	17	39	27
57	Bill Clinton	10	38	47
25	Ross Perot	17	27	50
Senate vote on nomination of Clarence Thomas to Supreme Court				
34	Should have confirmed	17	42	33
51	Should not have confirmed	10	27	59
14	Not sure	13	44	34
Opinion of Roe v. Wade				
67	Keep abortion legal as it is now	10	30	56
29	Supreme Court should overturn	20	44	26

Based on a survey conducted by Voter Research and Survey of 1,801 voters leaving polling places in 40 randomly selected precincts throughout Pennsylvania in Tuesday's Democratic primary. Of them, 1,655 said they voted for the Senatorial nomination. Some categories may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding, votes for others, or no opinion. Two candidates, Freddy Mann Friedman and Phillip Valenti, are not shown.