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SUMMER 1997

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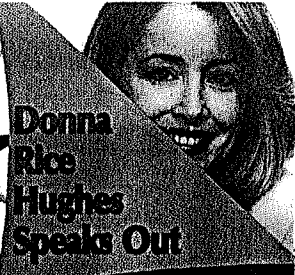
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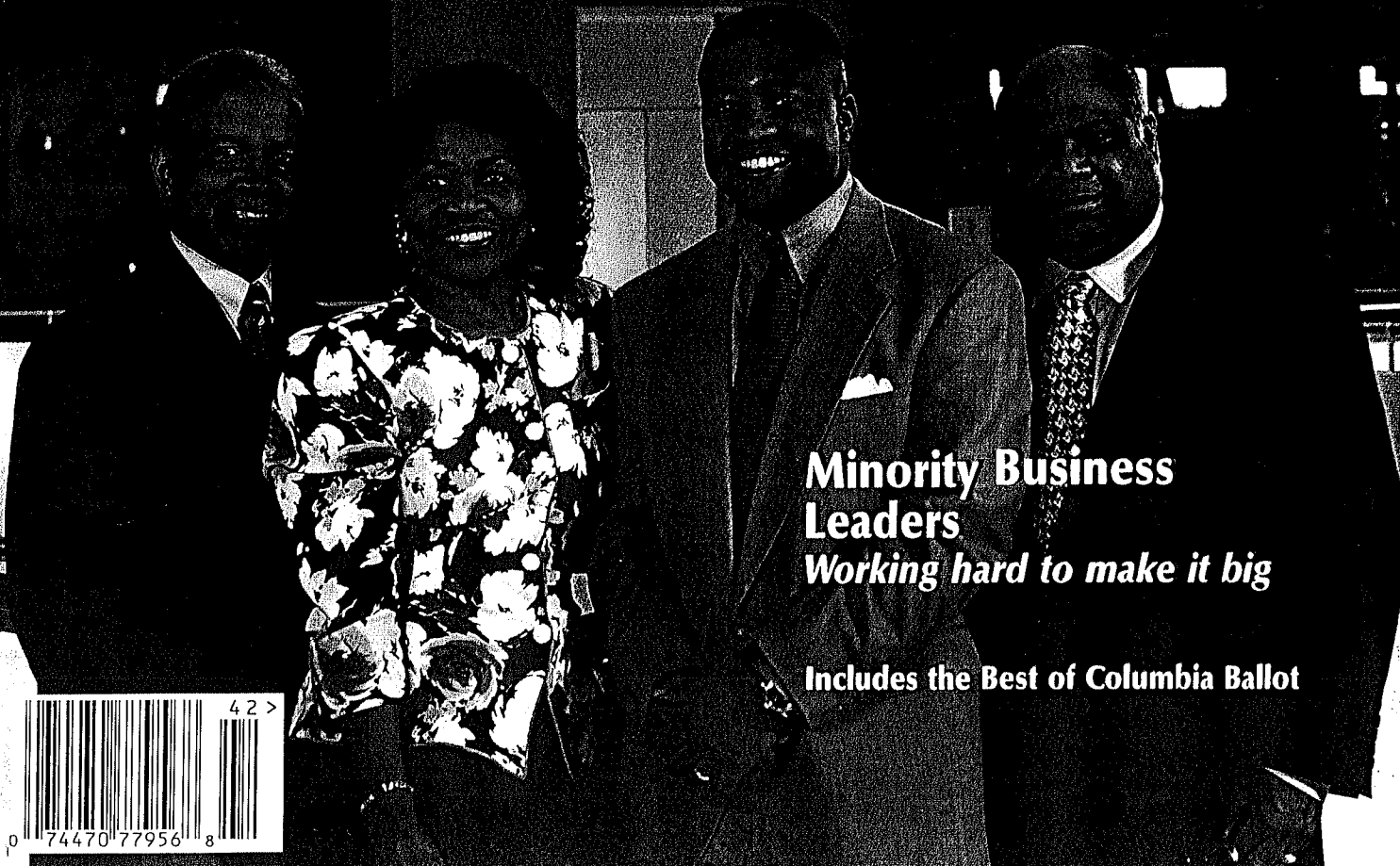
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Donna
Rice
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Speaks Out



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In reflecting how she overcame the scandal that brought the name Donna Rice into international headlines, Donna Rice Hughes says, "God is the great Restorer. I learned that although God loves us, he doesn't grant us immunity from the consequences of our choices. However, when we mess up, if we ask His forgiveness He'll redeem those choices, using our mistakes as a 'door of hope' for other people."

Coming Out of the Dark

Donna Rice Hughes visits Columbia to fight pornography on the Internet

BY SAM MORTON

DONNA RICE. GARY HART. In 1987, few people mentioned one name without the other. By her own admission she was inextricably linked to the sex scandal that ended Hart's 1988 bid for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States. Today she is Donna Rice Hughes, married, stepmother of two teenagers and a woman on a mission.

Following the scandal that broke over her brief association with Hart, Donna was hounded by the press — and endured the onslaught of her liaison being blasted over newspapers and magazines worldwide.

Donna says she spent years "underground," but she has found a cause worth surfacing for. She is director of marketing and communications for Enough Is Enough, a secular nonprofit organization aimed at eliminating illegal pornography, particularly that available over the Internet to any child of any age who knows how to click a computer mouse.

Her new position put her back in touch with Capitol Hill and again in the worldwide media spotlight. "I didn't think I could do it. I'm a person with a sexually stigmatized past, and this organization which deals with a controversial sexually stigmatized issue wants me to come work with them? The last industries I wanted to work with were media or politics. I guess this is an example of God's sense of irony," Donna says.

It has been a strange and taxing journey for the Irmo native. The fact that she was graduated from the University of South Carolina Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude often got lost in the mainstream media's rush to brand her a harlot. Yet somewhere



Sam Morton interviews Donna on her recent visit to the Midlands.



In June 1995, Donna delivered a speech on Internet porn before members of Congress and the media in the U.S. Senate Russell Caucus Room.

also quickly felt the pain of literally being sold out by friends. "In one instance, a 'friend' of mine sold a photograph of me to a magazine for \$250,000."

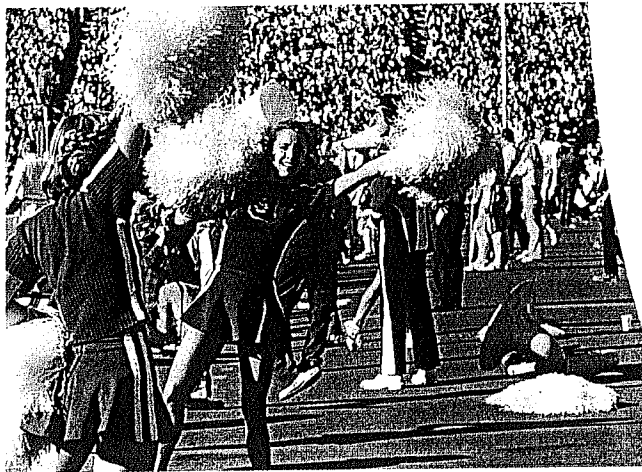
Offers, some outlandish and most quite tempting, for her to profit from her sudden notoriety came pouring in. *Playboy* offered her a blank check, not to pose, but simply to tell her story. "They said their largest selling issue to date was one with an interview with Jimmy Carter, and they thought my story would out sell that. They told me to name my price," says Donna.

Publishers and studios offered book deals and movie contracts. CBS network executives said she could have any on-air position she wanted from news anchor to actress. But Donna remained steadfast. "I called my mother and my friends. My mother and grandmother told me not to make any decisions until I got my life right with God. The choice was to take care of myself by making money or to trust God's way for me which was to walk through the fire and keep silent."

After disappearing to California for a year, Donna moved to northern Virginia. She had already begun to make significant changes. "I wanted all that pain to count for something bigger than me," she says. "I chose to drop out of the spotlight and to live with a Christian family. It was a time of healing and restoration that lasted almost seven years. It was after that time that Donna was introduced to Dee Jepsen, wife of a former U.S. Senator, who enlisted her to come to work for Enough Is Enough.

behind the crossfire created by money, greed and political power wandered the devout Christian Donna Rice had always been.

"When I was younger, in high school and college, I was very committed to my faith," she says. By the time she was graduated from college, Donna began dating non-Christian men, one of whom raped her. "I never said anything about it. It was long before the term 'date rape' was coined. I just starting making bad choices in dating. These subtle left turns drew me away and, eventually, I began living outside of my own priorities and set of values," she says. She remembers the numbness that overcame her the day the national media broke the story on her connection with Hart, but she soon found out it was only the beginning of the frenzy. "I lost my reputation and my career. I felt like my life was out of control," she says. Donna



During her years at USC, she was head cheerleader.



Because of Donna's pioneering role on the issue of Internet pornography, Donna and Enough is Enough are continually sought out by the media, members of congress and the technology community for their expertise on ways of making the Internet safe for children.

Why an issue such as pornography rather than education or AIDS or a host of other worthy causes? "I would not have chosen this for myself. When I said yes to Dee, I did so as an act of obedience to God. No doubt, He's brought me to this place."

Donna also speaks about God's providence, her choices and the resulting consequences believing that perhaps her work with Enough is Enough is His path of restoration. In her crusade to make the Internet safe for children, Donna says she faces a certain amount of cynicism, a "where-do-you-get-off-telling-me" kind of response.

"We try to educate people that this fight is not about restricting adults' access to adult protected speech," she says. "It's about the dangers to children on the Internet created by the exploits of pedophiles and pornographers. It's about using the Internet and having it come into your home to abduct your child. It's about protecting children from accessing materials that are illegal for even their parents to buy from an adult bookstore." Indeed, lists of web sites graphically describe rape, mutilation and torture of women and children as well as bestiality, all free for the taking with a modem-equipped computer.

Cyberporn is the third largest money maker on the Internet, raking in more than a billion dollars in 1997. Smut peddlers aren't the only ones getting rich. The service providers receive a share of the profits as well. "Some people say that giving parents blocking devices will make everything okay, but that's just part of the solution. It won't stop children from going to a friend's house, or the library, or the school even, and gaining access," says Donna.

She went to work for Enough Is Enough in 1994, and within a month she discovered the not-so-secret dark side of the information superhighway. Ironically most people have an aversion to addressing illegal pornography in their communities. Donna found it was not a burning public issue. But as it started drawing more and more media attention, she says, "We were postured at the forefront of an issue there were no experts on."

For those who would debate first amendment rights, Donna points out that certain forms of pornography, such as child pornography, obscenity and adult porn when distributed to children have never been protected by the Constitution. "Because we're talking about protecting children from computer pornography and on-line pedophile activity, people generally don't disagree with our message, they just disagree about the means of accomplishing it," she says.

Enough is Enough sees the solution as a cooperative effort between the high-technology companies to comply with the current law; schools and libraries to put blocking devices in place; law enforcement to aggressively investigate and prosecute pornographers; and the public to become aware of the materials their children are exposed to and to become a part of the solution. "Our message to the public is that there is a way to make the Internet safe without infringing on the first amendment."

In Congress and at the White House, Enough Is Enough has earned wide-spread bipartisan support. Indiana Republican Senator Dan Coats and Nebraska Democratic Senator Jim Exon authored the Communications Decency Act (CDA) which provides penalties on the federal level for disseminating indecency to children via computer. The act, supported by U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno, was signed into law by President Clinton. However, more than 50 organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Democracy and Technol-



The Enough is Enough staff takes a stand in front of the Supreme Court steps. In talking about her work with EIE, Donna says, "The very industries that caused me the most pain — the press and politics — are the platforms God had now given me for His purposes."

Safe Journeys On The Internet

Enough is Enough says there are some ways for parents to safeguard their children against computer porn. Here are a few tips:

- Contact our local legislators and push for support for the current pending legislation to fight the problem of obscenity/child pornography in our state. Attorney General Charles Gondon has made the commitment to fight this type of crime on behalf of our citizens.

- Contact our local libraries and schools and inquire about implementing "blocking technology." Our tax dollars should not be used for our children to have easy access to hard pornography. (Log-on-Data Corp. makes X-Stop which has proven to be nearly 100 percent effective.)

- Keep the computer in a public part of the house, not in a study or bedroom.

- Learn systems well enough to monitor your children.

- Pay close attention to computer files that end in ".GIF" or ".JPG". These are picture files that could contain pornographic material.

- Monitor "chat" or "CB" sessions where people talk anonymously.

- Complain or don't patronize on-line services that offer pornography.

- Use on-line services that offer controls or locks on areas.

- Encourage your child to come to you if he sees nude photos or encounters anyone in a chat room who makes him feel uncomfortable.

- Most importantly, instruct your child NEVER to give out personal information on-line such as names, addresses or phone numbers.


Want to help? Donna says that because of all the media attention her group generates, "People get the impression we're a huge, government funded organization. The truth is, Enough is Enough exists by contributors of everyday people and we very much need more help." Enough is Enough is a nonprofit company staffed by six full-time employees. "We're a grassroots organization addressing a matter of national policy."

If you would like further information on Enough is Enough, or if you want to find out how you can help in the fight to protect our children, write its national headquarters at P.O. Box 888, Fairfax, Virginia 22030-0888, or call 703-278-8343, or toll free at 800-649-8543 or EIE web site at www.enough.org.

ogy, and 57,000 individual litigants are fighting to have the CDA declared unconstitutional.

Because of Donna's pioneering role on the issue of Internet pornography, Donna and Enough is Enough are continually sought out by the media, members of congress and the technology community for their expertise on ways of making the Internet safe for children. To the international press, she is simply Donna Rice Hughes. In all the major network and newspaper interviews she's given, few have brought up her past — few, except those in her home state who seem to identify her more with a 10-year-old tryst, than a lifetime crusade.

But coming home put a few things to rest, too. "This is particularly good for my parents. They were humiliated and embarrassed by what happened, but they were always so proud of me. I see a sense of restoration here locally," Donna says.

For the present she is living one day at a time. After seven years of wondering whether she was going to have any kind of life and how she would make a living, she finally has an answer. "One day my husband and I hope to have children of our own. I've been asked to write books about my journey and about making the Internet safe. But for now, I'm doing what I am supposed to be doing." 

To know pornography exists on the Internet is shocking. To actually read the trash put before any child who stumbles across it is truly revolting. You can easily follow the steps required to reach pornography on the Internet. In some instances, a child can click on picture files and images will appear on the computer screen free of charge. Any computer literate child can view pictures of women having sex with animals — from dogs to horses to snakes. The listings describing videos and images for sale are so gruesome that we were not able to print the titles. The details are appalling — and this disturbing material (including graphic visuals of women being raped and tortured, of mutilation of kids and of bestiality) is quickly available to our children and **should not be**.

Also popular and free are the chat rooms where people can engage in real time conversations. Chat groups have become the playgrounds of the 90s for the pedophile to contact children for illicit sexual encounters. A posted message to alt. sex. pedophilia Usenet news group graphically described a hospital attendant raping terminally ill orphan children. Again, the material was simply too vulgar to print. The kinds of people who search for their victims through conversations with unsuspecting kids playing on the Internet have no limits or restrictions. How horrifying that we as a society have allowed it into the worlds of our children.

If this disturbs you and you want to do something about it, contact Enough is Enough to find out how you can make the Internet safe for South Carolina children.