

Clinton Visit Gets Little Attention From Italian Town, Students Notice  
by Claire Zulkey  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers  
October 11, 1999

FIESOLE, Italy (TMS) -- December 1998: More than 500 people pack Gaston Hall at Georgetown University to hear First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton speak. The few lucky students granted seats are excited. The rest grumble but stand in line for hours to get a glimpse of her. The campus is awash in security and secret service agents as students and faculty are detoured from usual routes. The university is abuzz for hours.

---

October 1999: The First Lady is again near Georgetown's campus. This time not in Washington, D.C. but the tiny town of Fiesole, Italy, just outside Florence. Reaction to Clinton's arrival is a lot less intense.

The First Lady, in Florence this week for a World Bank meeting on business development, on Friday visited the Medici Villa, one house down from Villa Le Balze, the home of Georgetown University's study-abroad program -- and few people seemed to care.

"We were going to head up to the entrance of the Medici Villa to see her come in," said Emily Brunini, a Georgetown junior.

"But we were too lazy to go," added junior Kerri Carpenter.

As Clinton arrived, downtown Fiesole was abuzz ... with rush hour. The town didn't appear to have made any special preparations for her arrival. When asked about Clinton's visit, the owner of a stationery store shrugged his shoulders and said, "I think she's coming today, isn't she?" The concierge at one of the city's largest hotels hadn't even heard Clinton was in town.

Not everyone was as indifferent.

"I'm glad that Mrs. Clinton is here," said Massimiliano Bruno, an employee of a local travel agency. "Because Fiesole is a small town, we usually only get singers and actresses to visit."

Still, it was clear that many in Fiesole couldn't have cared less that America's First Lady was among them.

"For her sake, let's hope that they don't feel that way about her in New York," said Georgetown junior Kristin Stasiowski.

© TMS Campus, 1999