

Mrs. America Highlights Feminist False Racism Accusations Against Schlafly

Alton Hill - The FX/Hulu series *Mrs. America* highlights feminists' effort to shut down Phyllis Schlafly and the Stop ERA movement with false accusations of racism.
By Eagle Forum

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Early episodes introduce an overtly racist fictional character from Louisiana named "Mary Frances," whom Phyllis Schlafly is shown appeasing to keep her coalition together, even though Mary Frances offended the group with her use of offensive slurs.

"There was no 'Mary Frances,' nor anyone like her, and the idea that racism would ever have been tolerated among our organization, by Phyllis or any of our activists is despicable." said Eagle Forum President Eunie Smith, who has been involved with Eagle Forum and its predecessor, Stop ERA, from its inception.

In truth, the Stop ERA efforts in Louisiana were led by well-respected women like Charlotte Felt and Marilyn Thayer. Thayer was inducted in 2000 into the Louisiana Center for Women in Government and Business Hall of Fame at Nicholls State University.

Series producer Davhi Waller claimed that series had to include such representations because Betty Friedan held a press conference and attempted to destroy Phyllis with false accusations of racism. But, the series does not show how definitively these rumors were discredited.

Carol Felsenthal, a staunch liberal and ERA supporter who extensively researched Schlafly and wrote her biography, *Sweetheart of the Silent Majority*, worked in vain to find any evidence that Schlafly was racist. In an admirable example of bias disclosure, Felsenthal admits in the Forward to her book that she desperately tried to find some scandal to tarnish Schlafly's reputation. But that despite her best efforts to find evidence of Schlafly's racism, there was none to be found.

Felsenthal describes investigating a rumor that Schlafly had tried to prevent the integration of her local YWCA when she served as a board member in the 1950s. However, Felsenthal tracked down three of Phyllis' fellow board members, all of whom she described as "ardent workers for ERA," who had to admit that Schlafly "had never shown herself to be a racist; had never tried to block or even stall integration."

Felsenthal described her excitement when Betty Friedan held a press conference accusing Schlafly and Stop ERA of receiving money from The John Birch Society and the Ku Klux Klan: "I had high hopes for Friedan's investigation, but like mine and many others, it fizzled." Felsenthal goes on to note that "as usual," Schlafly got the last word when she responded to accusations, "I hope Ms. Friedan spends her time investigating me. She won't find anything and it might keep her out of other mischief."

When asked about the accusations of racism against her mother, Eagle Forum Chairman Anne Schlafly Cori explained, "For decades, liberals have been using false accusations of racism to shut down debate when they can't win on the facts. This is ironic, because it was the Democrats, not Republicans, that had ties to the Ku Klux Klan and other racist organizations, and my mother was

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always a Republican," she continued. "Not only are false accusations of racism an unjust attack on my mother, they dishonor minorities by trivializing a serious issue."
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"While we are disappointed that Mrs. America continues to mischaracterize Phyllis and the groundbreaking women who led the Stop ERA coalition," Said Eagle Forum President Eunie Smith. "We are thankful that *Mrs. America* is drawing attention to this fascinating chapter in history, and that we now have a chance to tell the truth about Phyllis and the remarkable women she inspired who are leading Eagle Forum today."