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MAD ABOUT YOU
Teresa Heinz weds John
Kerry in '95. Today, she
says she's working for
him "nine days a week."

Will
you take
this
woman
to be
your first

A crowd of 400 was expected, but more than 500 have turned up, and still more are streaming out of the elevators. The top floor of San Francisco's Merchants Exchange Building buzzes with well-dressed professional women standing sardine-tight as they wait for their guest of honor. Kamala Harris, the city's first female district attorney, warms up the audience: "She is a daughter of Mozambique and went to school in South Africa, where she fought to end apartheid. She is now in charge of one of the most significant foundations in the country. She has distinguished herself for her courage and intelligence and is not encumbered by other people's definition of what a woman should say or do."

It's the kind of introduction you'd expect for a woman running for office, but Teresa Heinz isn't running—her husband is. When she strides to the microphone, the wife of presumed Democratic nominee John Kerry is greeted with shouts of "Bring it on!" An admirer thrusts a bouquet of roses into her arms. Heinz doesn't hand the flowers to an aide; she holds them herself because, as usual, she isn't carrying any notes. According to her press secretary, Christine Anderson, "She never, never says the same thing twice." Heinz leans close to the microphone and in a low, lightly accented voice says, "I'm overwhelmed." Then, in almost a whisper, she adds, "I'm a little shy." The room falls silent as she says, "I'm not used to this."

"Get used to it!" shouts a woman from the crowd.

"Get used to it?" Heinz bats back. "I don't mind speaking," she says. "I'm just not used to so much love and affection."

"Get used to that, too!"

While Teresa (pronounced Te-RAY-za) Heinz has been acclimating to the mixture of adulation and exhaustion that make up a presidential campaign, the American public has been getting used to her. She certainly doesn't fit the mold for a would-be first lady. She's the only candidate's wife—past or present—who's freely mentioned her Botox treatments and who has put down her opponents by telling a newspaper, "I don't care. These guys think small." Blunt, sometimes tactless, she has been known to let fly the occasional four-letter word: "I don't give a shit," she told a writer who asked for her response to criticism that arose when she added "Kerry" to her name during the campaign. (More recently, she informed a reporter that, professionally, "my official name is still Teresa Heinz.")

That name rarely appears in print without a number next to it: \$500 million, Heinz's approximate net worth. She is the widow of Senator John Heinz III, Republican from Pennsylvania, who died in a plane crash in 1991 and was an heir to the "57" brands



EN ESPAÑOL

Fluent in five languages, Heinz puts her Spanish to good use talking to Hispanic union members in Los Angeles in March.

ketchup fortune. A woman familiar with the perquisites of wealth ("Everybody has a pre-nup," she told *Elle* last year), she makes absolutely no apologies for them. Her offbeat sense of humor and frankness, combined with her great wealth and foreign background, would seem to make her a major liability to her husband's presidential bid, but, surprisingly, just the opposite may prove true. Her warmth and popular appeal, evident after months of tireless campaigning, have been a welcome antidote to Kerry's deliberate, aloof demeanor on the campaign trail. For Americans who get to meet her in person—in union halls in Iowa, at house parties in Florida, at fire stations in San Francisco—Heinz comes off as much more than the sum of the digits in her bank account. Working her way across the country (dressed in well-tailored pantsuits accessorized with gold bangle bracelets and her trademark bright sweater or shawl), she has managed to bridge the chasm between herself and a large number of voters; they say they find her surprisingly, refreshingly real.

"She's obviously got a more exotic personality than any first lady we've ever had, including Jackie Kennedy," says Kati Marton, author of *Hidden Power: Presidential Marriages That Shaped Our History*. "Each first lady is different, and each one rewrites the rules. The ones that best reflect the times they are living in, and our needs, are the most successful." The question is whether America is ready for a woman who lives so much by her own rules. "The ones that push too far hear from us," says Marton. "There's only a marginal amount of room for change."

Change seems to be part of Teresa Simoes-Ferreira Heinz Kerry's destiny; her story reads like a fairy tale filled with tragic and happy twists. Born in 1938 in the East African country of Mozambique, the daughter of a Portuguese doctor father and a mother whose roots were Italian, French and Swiss, Heinz was exposed to poverty and death, despite her comfortable colonial lifestyle. "I saw some ugly sides of life there," she says, recalling the time

TAMMY KENNEDY, OPPOSITE PAGE; BEVERLY H. HALL

lady?

She's been called outrageous and unconventional. Will Teresa Heinz help John Kerry's presidential race, or hurt? By Clara Bingham



OUT OF AFRICA

As a child in Mozambique, 1940



EARTH DAYS

Left: with her first husband, Republican senator and environmentalist John Heinz, in 1976; above: with a Kerry supporter at a 2004 environmental conference

a distraught mother brought her sickly infant to the Simoes-Ferreira home. "A witch doctor had burned the baby's bottom, trying to send the devil out. The child died in my arms," whispers Heinz, the anguish of the event still fresh decades later.

When it came time for college, in 1959, Heinz chose to study romance languages and literature at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Already, she embodied the contradictions that characterize her today. She was a serious student, a good Catholic girl who attended mass—and a campus beauty who was nominated for "rag queen" (a role similar to homecoming queen). At the same time, she was a rebel with a fierce sense of justice who marched against South Africa's inhumane apartheid system.

After graduation, Heinz attended interpreter school in Geneva, Switzerland (besides English, she's fluent in Portuguese, French, Spanish and Italian), and there, in 1962, she fell in love with a handsome Harvard Business School student named John Heinz, who was working for the summer at a Swiss bank. (Of his family, he told her, "We make soup.") When summer ended, the two vowed to stay in touch. Tragedy darkened her life in Switzerland in 1963, when she learned that her sister Margarida, 19, had died in a car accident in Spain. "That took a piece of her heart away," says a friend. The next year, Teresa came to the U.S. to work as a United Nations interpreter. "Not long after that I had an invitation to the Heinz chapel in Pittsburgh," says her college friend Isa Teeger. "She married Jack Heinz in 1966, and it was a very happy, happy marriage."

By the time the new couple set up house, John Heinz had switched from condiments to politics, first winning a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, and later becoming a senator. During their 25-year marriage, Teresa Heinz raised three sons (now 37, 34 and 31) and led the life of a traditional Congressional wife and mother, volunteering and entertaining. There was at least one shadow across her life—a 1974 communist coup in Mozambique forced her family to flee the country—but mostly those were good years. It was John Heinz, a popular moderate Republican and avid environmentalist, who first introduced his wife to Senator John Kerry, on the steps of the Capitol building on Earth Day in 1990.

In 1991, the Heinzes celebrated their silver anniversary—but shortly thereafter Teresa Heinz's world fell apart. On April 2, while her husband was touring Pennsylvania to meet with voters, his plane collided with a helicopter over an elementary school. Among the seven dead were two children who had been on the playground, and Senator John Heinz.

At age 52, Teresa Heinz suddenly became a widow—and a very wealthy one. She inherited most of her husband's estate, and

along with it the responsibility of heading the \$1 billion Heinz family endowments. Despite urging from the Republican party, she turned down an offer to run for John Heinz's Senate seat so that she could devote time to her family and to her new mission: honoring John Heinz's legacy by using his money to improve the environment and to promote women's and family issues.

Still grieving for Heinz, she traveled to Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to attend a conference on global warming, and there she crossed paths again with John Kerry, who was divorced and the father of two girls, age 14 and 17. Their mutual attraction—based partly on shared interests, partly on sex appeal (Kerry has called her "very earthy, sexy, European")—blossomed into a serious courtship. In the summer of 1995, Heinz and Kerry merged their two families in a small wedding ceremony at her Nantucket house.

Thus began the domestication of John Kerry, a man who had spent years as a peripatetic, eligible bachelor. (He had dated many sought-after women, including TV star Morgan Fairchild.) Heinz gave him, at last, a proper home. "He was separated from his wife when his children were very young," Heinz says. "He missed putting them to bed every night. He was always running back and forth [from Washington] to Boston. He had a lonely life."

Almost a decade into their marriage, the couple remain "mad for each other," says one of Heinz's pals, but friends originally worried she would never get over the death of her first husband. It wasn't until 1997, Heinz says, after her mother died, that she was really able to grieve for that first loss. "When Jack died, I just had to cope. This time, I didn't give a rat's ass about anything. I didn't want to celebrate Christmas, I didn't want to see anybody. But I think [mourning my mother's death] helped me deal with some old pain."

Five years later, Heinz's life took another scary twist. In late 2002, Kerry had a routine medical checkup; looking over his chart afterward, Heinz says she noticed that her husband's PSA workup—a blood test that checks for signs of prostate cancer—showed higher-than-normal readings. After she pestered him to follow up on this clue, Kerry was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent successful surgery in February 2003. Nonetheless, that close call took a toll on both of them. "It was a really hard year," Heinz says, "starting with his operation." What she doesn't mention—but it is implied—is that February 2003 was just the beginning of an ongoing challenge that would force her to face stinging criticism and to understand herself in a new way. "It's a very daunting thing," she says, "running for president."

Daunted or no, at 65, Heinz has thrown herself into her husband's race with vigor: "She's a huge asset," says her press secretary Christine Anderson. The Kerry staff initially discovered Heinz's star

LEFT TO RIGHT: COURTESY OF KERRY CAMPAIGN; AP PHOTO/IC; TAMMY KEENEY



ONE ON ONE In Los Angeles, March 2004, Heinz connects with her audience.



READY FOR HER CLOSE-UP CNN anchor Judy Woodruff moves in for a sound bite during Heinz's campaign trip through California.

power during the winter primaries, when she campaigned in 26 states, packing in four to six events a day in a schedule that was often more punishing than her husband's. After Heinz's first few trips to Iowa, John Norris, the state campaign director, noticed her growing popularity and asked headquarters to send her back as much as possible; she ended up working a total of 36 days there. "Iowans were intrigued by her," says Norris. "They came away respecting her depth of knowledge and passion about key issues like early childhood development, women's health and the environment."

Now that the battle has shifted to the nation at large, the staff dispatches Heinz to as many events as they can—especially ones where she can play up her immigrant roots. (She became a U.S. citizen in 1971.) So, on a sunny Los Angeles afternoon in early March, Heinz finds herself standing beside a mariachi band as she greets a crowd of Hispanic union members in fluent Spanish. After switching to English, she tells a familiar story of exile. Her parents, she says, lost their home when the communists took over her country. "But what they gave me has stayed with me, and I think all of you here know that's what you want to do. You want your children to flourish and become whatever they want to become."

The speech, extemporaneous as usual, meanders a bit, but Heinz has improved on her performances from earlier in the season, when she would talk about everything from voter apathy to the healthful effects of green tea. Afterward, she wades slowly through the throng, lingering to shake hands and chat in Spanish. The crowd responds warmly to her, much as it did during her speech in San Francisco, where she got down on the floor to autograph posters. "I'm good on my knees," she'd joked. "The nuns taught me that."

Heinz's ability to relate to people may be traceable to her own experiences with pain and loss. In person, one on one, she radiates compassion and an empathy that makes you believe that Heinz would listen to your life story for hours on end. And she's ever ready to tell her own tales, of her days in Africa, climbing trees and, in the evening, watching out for the wild animals that would come to drink from the river.

With the campaign staff, Heinz can be both exacting and maternal; she treats their colds with a concoction of hot water, ginger, lemon and honey. She also has a reputation as a health nut ("If she knew I smoked she'd kill me," says one Kerry staffer; with a look of real terror in his eyes) and pesters the team to feed John Kerry more protein and fewer carbohydrates on the road.

It's still something of a surprise, though, that she's embraced her campaign role so unreservedly. Elections are nothing new to her—she helped with both husbands' congressional runs—but they were never her favorite sport. "I (*continued on page 272*)

Campaign 2004: Watch these women!

REPUBLICANS



NICOLLE DEVENISH
When Dick Clarke blasted the

White House's response to pre-9/11 threats, Bush communications chief Devenish, 32, crafted sharply worded rebuttals. She spends "every hour doing 11 tasks at once."



MARY MATALIN
"I parachute in," says Matalin, 50,

describing her unpaid role as adviser to the Bush-Cheney campaign. Her mandates: Raise money, plan strategy and spread the campaign's message.



SHARON CASTILLO
As Hispanic spokesperson for

Bush-Cheney, Castillo, 36, wants to reach all 26 million Latino adults in the U.S. She's a native of Puerto Rico, where, she says, "politics is a national sport."

DEMOCRATS



MARY BETH CAHILL
Credited with rescuing John Kerry's

candidacy, campaign manager Cahill, 50, is mapping battle plans for the next six months. "Decisions are mine," she says, "in concert with John Kerry."



DONNA BRAZILE
Al Gore's ex-campaign manager, 44,

has two new roles this year: CNN pundit and chair of the Democratic National Committee's Voting Rights Institute. "This girlfriend," she says, "is still working hard."



STEPHANIE CUTTER
Kerry's communications director, 35,

is known for swift, pointed e-mail responses to attacks on her boss. "This is the most important election of my lifetime," she says.

—ALICIA BROOKS WALTMAN

told my late husband that if he ran for president it would be over my dead body," she has said. But when Kerry decided that it was his time, she had a change of heart. "I realized I had to overcome my own fears and selfishness," she says. Her fears: the responsibility of taking on the nation's concerns. "If you're identifying with people's problems, the weight of it can be burdensome," she says. Her selfishness: the loss of privacy—and perhaps the philanthropic work she loves. "I couldn't have done it when I was younger," she says, "but I'm wiser, older, more focused now. I told John, I'll help you."

At first, it looked like she might hurt more than help. In the summer of 2002, a *Washington Post* profile of the couple made Heinz look bossy and disrespectful. She was quoted correcting Kerry, joking about his combat nightmares, and forgetting to add "late" to "husband" when she talked about John Heinz. But press secretary Anderson denies that the piece sent the Kerry campaign into damage control mode. "It's ridiculous that people think her staff is trying to muzzle her," Anderson says. "No one can tell her what to do."

Heinz's bold comments this year bear that out. "I just do my own thing," she told *60 Minutes*. "I go out and get everyone into trouble." In remarks printed in the *Los Angeles Times*, she took on Wal-Mart, complaining that "they destroy communities." And in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, she jokingly grumbled about her political handlers. "Go that way. Go this way," she complained. "I'm too old to be bossed around."

Her missteps have been less damaging since the *Washington Post* story, and at this point, Heinz has developed a theory about how the press works, which takes her off the hook, but also holds some truth. "Press coverage reflects the people who write it more than it reflects me," she says. "I have been misquoted, but everything I have actually said is true. I've learned that some people can't handle honesty."

As the public sees more of Heinz, comparisons to recent first ladies will inevitably crop up. Although Heinz, like Hillary Clinton, is a powerful, professional woman, the likeness stops there. Heinz is less ambitious and careerist than Clinton and gets only minimally involved in campaign strategy. Nor is she likely to be publicly involved in policy issues. "I don't see the Kerrys marketing themselves like the Clintons with a two-for-the price of one," says Lewis L.

Gould, University of Texas professor emeritus, who is editing the book series *Modern First Ladies*. He also believes that Heinz is a much less polarizing figure than Hillary Clinton. "By this time in the [1992] election cycle, with Mrs. Clinton, my phone lines were ablaze with calls from the media asking about her." Heinz herself is aware of how Americans regard first ladies who speak out. "Hillary is very smart," she says, "but people didn't want to know what she thought. She wasn't the president." Still Heinz does hope to influence her husband. "Shape policy?" she says. "Well, I think, especially at the dining room table, I'll help to shape policy."

Comparisons to the reserved, always-on-point Laura Bush may seem far-fetched, but there are similarities there too. Friends call Heinz an "old-fashioned girl," one who puts her role as a mother and wife first. Nonetheless, Bush's All-American looks and reserved demeanor stand in stark contrast to Heinz's worldly flair. "Laura Bush and Teresa Heinz are so different," says Barry Burden, associate professor of government at Harvard University, who studies presidential spouses. "It feels like the difference between the blue states and the red states, the coasts and Middle America." But Heinz's foreignness won't necessarily hurt her, says Kati Marton, herself a native of Hungary. "We're living in a country where everyone was foreign at one point."

The biggest problem Heinz faces—her political Achilles' heel—is her money. "The wealth is probably the most difficult thing, because the public likes to perceive a connection with their leaders," says Michele Swers, an assistant professor of American government at Georgetown University. "George W. Bush is incredibly rich, and he went to Yale and Harvard, but he never emphasizes that. You always see him going down to the ranch, all those things that show him to be folksy." Recently, Heinz compared Kerry to a good wine, and the quote ended up posted on the Republican National Committee's Web site. Says Democratic strategist Mandy Grunwald, "That's [the Republicans'] way of saying, 'Hey, our guys drink beer and soda.'"

Accusations that because Heinz is rich, she is therefore elitist, rankle her. There's no disputing that she and Kerry own five houses and that she has a Gulfstream II jet called the Flying Squirrel—but she denies that those trappings put her out of touch with ordinary Americans. "In this country, people look at money differently than

they do everywhere else. Everything here has to have a number. You are so tall, or weigh so much, or have so much money," she says. "If you are raised in Africa, you know that pretension does not fly. My values are not money and I know I can be happy without money."

What she *does* value can be assessed from the millions she gives away each year. "She's very serious about her causes," says Marton. Heinz chairs two endowments, one of which, The Heinz Family Foundation, she started herself with a generous portion of the money left to her. The Heinz Plan to Overcome Prescription Drug Expenses (HOPE) is typical of the projects she champions; its goal is to reduce the price of prescription drugs for seniors by getting drugstores to cut their retail markup. The plan, which has become law in Massachusetts, is being established in seven other states. Heinz's foundations also sponsor an environmental think tank and conferences on women's health, and have given money to Pittsburgh to make its convention center the world's largest "green" building—with reduced energy and water consumption. Heinz plans to continue running the endowments if her husband wins the presidency; Anderson says that Heinz's lawyers will be checking all federal regulations to make sure her potential role as first lady presents no conflict of interest.

Kerry's opponents, however, are already scrutinizing the list of charities Heinz has supported, looking for any that appear to be radically liberal. One attack centered on the Heinz foundation's donations to the Tides Center, an environmental organization that also gives money to fringe antiwar causes; conservatives accused the foundation of "laundering" money to the group. The foundation denies the charge and says the money was earmarked for specific environmental projects in Pennsylvania. These attacks are the first of many skirmishes Heinz will have to negotiate as the election heats up, but she's braced herself. "Every battle you surmount," she says, "you come through more prepared."

In the meantime, Heinz is plowing ahead toward November 2. But what's hardest for her isn't the rigors of campaign living—it's the separation from her husband. "We can hardly even talk," she says. One of Heinz's greatest comforts on the road is the company of a small group of loyal friends—including former *Time* photographer Diana Walker and philanthropist Wren Wirth, wife of the former Colorado Senator Tim Wirth—who call her "T."

They are there to provide comic relief, bags of nuts, bottles of water.

Heinz needed those friends more than ever in early February when the *Drudge Report* claimed that John Kerry had had an affair with an ex-AP writer (most media outlets later discounted the story). Asked about the rumor, Heinz shows a flash of anger. "I know who I am. I know who my husband is. These are desperate people doing this." Remarkably, the woman who has strong opinions about everything else claims that the *Drudge* story didn't even merit discussion with Kerry. "I didn't say anything to him," she says, tossing her head. She narrows her eyes and turns away, clearly not wanting to discuss the subject any further—and then adds, "I can't fight the digital era."

The couple left the mini-scandal well behind them on Super Tuesday, March 2, when Kerry virtually wrapped up the Democratic nomination. That night they leapt into the air, hugging each other and their Brady Bunch brood. "They were like children," says a friend, "so happy together."

The campaign has also brought their whole blended family closer, says Heinz. Her youngest son, Chris, a 31-year-old with John F. Kennedy Jr. good looks, quit his investment banking job to work full time for his stepdad and frequently speaks at college campuses with one or both of Kerry's daughters, Vanessa (a 27-year-old medical student) and Alexandra (a 30-year-old film student). Chris, who is the closest of Heinz's three sons to Kerry, calls his stepfather "JK." "He was obviously very devastated when his father was killed," says Heinz. "And it means a great deal to John that Chris wanted to work on the campaign. It is Chris' greatest gift to him."

Much as the presidential race has dedicated son to stepfather, it seems to have brought Heinz closer to her second husband. The widow who spent the last dozen years running a foundation that keeps alive the memory of the late John Heinz is now working "nine days a week," as she puts it, on behalf of John Kerry. "This campaign has allowed Teresa to focus on her new husband with a new set of goals," says a friend, adding that "something seems to have happened to her on the campaign trail." Heinz, he says, may have at last cast off the lingering grief that has shadowed her for more than a decade. "She seems to have embraced the path that she's on...which might be the final liberation." ©

Clara Bingham's latest book is *Class Action: The Story of Lois Jensen and the Case That Changed Sexual Harassment Law*.