



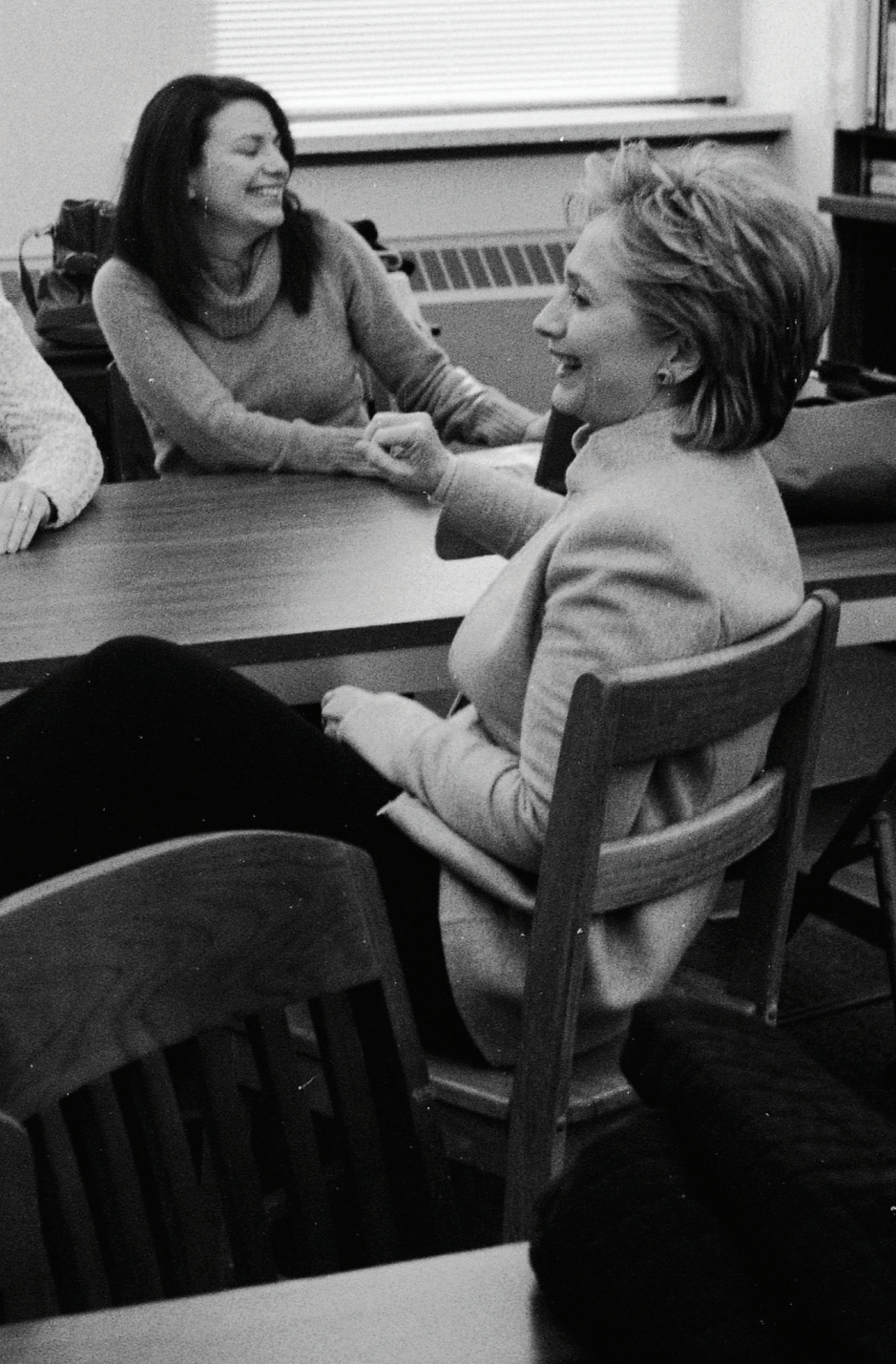
CAMPAIGN Manager

To understand why Brunswick clients seek out Patti Solis Doyle's analysis of next year's US elections—and to get us into the spirit of the campaign season—we asked her to tell us a story from the campaign trail. Her response is a personal account of setback, resilience and redemption. It also offers insight into American electoral politics. A Chicago native and Northwestern graduate, Solis Doyle is a Brunswick Partner and Head of the firm's US Public Affairs offer.

■ WAS HILLARY CLINTON'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN manager in 2008, a job that many people advised me not to take because the first campaign manager often is not the last. But it was an awesome job and an awesome responsibility, and I believed—and still do believe—Hillary Clinton would make an incredible president. I'd first met her in 1992 when I worked on [her husband's] presidential campaign. I thought I had the trust of the candidate, like no other campaign manager before me. I knew the risk, but I was inspired by her and committed to the cause.

She was the front runner for many months until she was not. In the very first caucus of the race, she not only lost, she came in third. That ended two

From the pieces of a career seemingly shattered, **PATTI SOLIS DOYLE** staged a mighty comeback.



husband came into our bedroom one morning and basically said, “Patti, I love you. The kids have to get to school, I have a meeting, and you have to take a shower because you are starting to smell.” That kind of woke me up. So I took a shower, and as I was dropping off my youngest, Joey, I had to take him inside school because we were late, and one of his little friends, Chilamo, came up and said to me, “My mommy says you got quitted.”

That broke the fever for me. I started laughing. Joey, my son, started laughing. “That’s exactly what happened to me,” I said. “I got quitted.” Then the teacher came up and said, “I understand you may have some time on your hands,” and a moment later I was appointed the Parent Volunteer to run the first-grade play. That was the first step for me in coming back to life.

A couple of months passed. Senator Obama clinched the nomination. Meanwhile, I was absorbed in family. One day I received a call from my friend David Axelrod. We’d known each other for 30 years from Chicago politics, and we’d worked together on and off. Now he was the Senior Strategist of the Obama campaign. He said, “We want you to come work for us. We want you to run the VP roll-out. We don’t know yet who the VP is going to be. So it’s going to need to go from zero to 60, and we want you to run it. You’re one of very few people who can take a campaign from zero to 60.”

I said yes, and the rest is history. Looking back, the experience brought home how much family matters, and how much community matters. What also matters is how you’ve conducted yourself over your career. Senator Obama wouldn’t have hired me if I hadn’t acted with integrity as campaign manager to his chief rival, and if I hadn’t behaved with integrity in other campaigns in the preceding years. How you conduct yourself always matters.

By the way, I made a heck of a first-grade theater director. You’ve never seen a better first-grade production of *Somebody Loves You, Mr. Hatch* than what we put on at Sidwell School that spring. ♦

After the Obama/Biden victory in November 2008, Solis Doyle turned down an offer to work in the Obama White House. Determined to spend more time at home with family, she started her own political consultancy before joining Brunswick Group in 2019 as a Partner in Washington, DC and as Head of the firm’s US Public Affairs offer.

things: Her front runnership, and the sense of inevitability around her candidacy. It also made clear that her opponent, Barack Obama, was a very serious candidate. For our campaign, fundraising got harder. Some polls went down.

And amid a growing sense that a change was needed, I was fired. This was front-page news, nonstop broadcast news, around the globe. It was incredibly public, and personally the biggest failure of my life to date. I did what I think anybody in my position would have done. I took to my bed, got under the covers and cried a lot. I watched all the coverage of my firing. I knew intellectually that this was not all my fault. But I took it on full force myself, and I did that for days on end until my

In a 2007 campaign meeting, Presidential Candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, right, sits across from her campaign manager, Patti Solis Doyle, below.



PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, DIANA WALKER/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT, AP PHOTO/CHARLES REX ARBOGAST