At 75, feminist leader Friedan takes on a new battle: Corporate greed and downsizing's impact on families

She's Not Done Yet

By Murray Dubin

McLean, Va.

Carolyn Forche had to talk herself into it and have a friend accompany her. Only then did she walk up to the small, gray-haired woman in black with a brown-patterned velvet jacket.

"You're my heroine," the English professor at George Mason University gestured. I just had to come and meet you.

"The concern of how sex would manifest in the party - novelists, poets, artists of the arts - made little fuss. Neither did the object of Forche's attention. She accepted the adulation with a small smile and quiet, practiced thank you.

"It happens all the time," says Betty Friedan.

The most prominent leader of the women's movement celebrated her 75th birthday in February. Parties in the city. She was parties. Silhouettes from an old friend - Kurt Vonnegut. Made it himself.

Thirty-three years ago, Friedan wrote "The Feminine Mystique." Thirty years ago, she helped start, and was president of, a lobbying group called the National Organization for Women. She also helped begin the National Women's Political Caucus and National Abortion Rights Action League. Three other books and a series of articles bear her name. Taught everywhere, from Temple University to the University of Southern California to Mount Vernon College in Washington. Fellowships, classes and speeches from Beijing to Brazil. Currently guest scholar and seminar leader at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars in Washington.

When she went, the greeting was "Thank you, you changed my life." But this time, no. Nothing. Friedan has her dates straight and hasn't told anyone who she was.

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