

Idaho delegate says candidate succeeded in showing her human side

Joel Mills/Lewiston Tribune

Many political pundits said Hillary Clinton's biggest task with her culminating speech at the Democratic National Convention Thursday was to take the edge off her flinty exterior and show the nation a different side of her personality.

Lewiston City Councilor Jesse Maldonado, who has attended the convention in Philadelphia this week as a Clinton delegate from Idaho, said she succeeded mightily.

"I definitely think that is one of her bigger priorities," Maldonado said. "There are lots of people who don't necessarily like her, and don't believe that she's as human as she could be. But that's her goal, and she's going to continue to move forward with humanizing herself and making people more accepting of her, and hopefully willing to vote for her in November."

He thinks Clinton's image with her detractors has been partially earned by the candidate, but has been pushed forward and magnified by those who have tried to work against her efforts over the years.

"Nobody can argue that she hasn't made mistakes," Maldonado said. "She'll admit that she's made mistakes. She's human, just like anybody else. But I also think there's a perpetuation of some things by her opponents."

Other than "humanizing" herself, Maldonado said Clinton made a compelling argument Thursday for why the American people should support her, as did a string of earlier speakers.

"Independents, generals and other people from the military," he said. "They all made very good points today about why Hillary should be able to earn everybody's votes, and continue to listen to her over the next 100 days until the election. It was very, very exciting to be in the room when a woman accepted the nomination for the presidency."

And that historic fact ranks up with President Barack Obama's nomination in 2008 as the first African-American to lead a major-party ticket for the presidency, he said.

"This one was a little bit more special than others. My mom and my grandma and my sister and my great-grandma are all at home, talking to me, telling me their thoughts," he said. "It's great to be a part of history."

Overall, the week was an "incredible experience" for a 21-year-old getting his start in politics, Maldonado said, and he recommended that anyone with an interest in the subject do their best to attend a convention.

"It's an absolutely amazing time to be surrounded by like-minded folks to put together your vision for the country," he said.

And with that, Maldonado headed off from the Wells Fargo Center to cap the week with a Snoop Dog concert before catching a plane tonight for the long trip home.

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