She went on to say “Meeting **First Lady Michelle Obama, she was beautiful and radiant in her appearance and a role model for women everywhere.**

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

First Lady Michelle Obama came toClevelandon Monday to support her husband President Barack Obama’s campaign efforts. After spending the weekend inChicagowhile the President hosts the NATO Summit, Mrs. Obama visitedClevelandfor a campaign fundraiser.

But during her visit, no cameras or broadcast news reporters were allowed into the fundraiser luncheon. But a press person for the Obama campaign released some statements offered by the first lady during the event. At one point during her speech the first lady referenced the president's recent announcement that he supports same-sex marriage. Mrs. Obama urged donors to tell others that "Our troops no longer have to lie about who they love because Barack

ended Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The policy had banned gays from serving openly in the military.

As volunteers waited for the first lady's arrival, a sound system played "Let's Stay Together," the Al Green classic that President Barack Obama sang during an unexpected, but memorable, performance at a January fund-raiser. The diverse play-list also included alt-rockers Arcade Fire.

The volunteers ranged in age from college-age young adults to senior citizens. Some wore business suits; others were in jeans and shorts.

“You guys are the backbone of this campaign,” Aaron Pickrell, senior adviser to the Obama campaign inOhiosaid before warming up the crowd with chants of “Fired up! Ready to Go!”

It was hugs around the house for a room full of local volunteers who knocked on 8,500 doors inCuyahogaCounty. The first lady entered the room at 12:26, cheered by more than 100 people behind a rope line. “We can't hear you!” a few in the back shouted as Obama offered brief words of thanks. The first lady said “I'll come around because I want to thank every single person.” Mrs. Obama then walked the oval shape room posing for pictures, thanking and hugging mostly everyone in the room.

Mrs. Obama never talked to the reporters, but the joy she brought to the volunteers in the room was enough to last a lifetime. With a fist pump, she left for her private fundraiser lunch with 250 Obama supporters and volunteers.

First lady Michelle Obama began her remarks at 1:20 p.m. in the Terrace Club restaurant at Progressive Field in downtownCleveland.

She thanked the Rev. Ledra Bigelow ofCleveland'sOlivetInstitutionalBaptistChurchfor introducing her and recognized Cuyahoga County Ed FitzGerald and his wife, Shannon, who were in the audience.

“It's so nice to be here,” the first lady said from the Terrace Club, which overlooks the Cleveland Indians baseball diamond. “We just need some hot dogs and a game!” Mrs. Obama spoke for 20 minutes. She focused on initiatives from her husband's first term and repeatedly implored donors to "remind people" about the efforts of her husband.

Speaking inCleveland, she stressed herMidwestup-bringing, blue-collar roots and struck a populist tone. “We're doing this not because we want to win an election -- and we do," the first lady said. "We're doing this because we want out children ... to go to good schools, right?”

She later added, "In America, if you work hard, you can build a decent life for yourself and an even better life for your kids.”

The first lady emphasized the president's support of loans to rescue Chrysler and General Motors, two domestic automakers with significantOhiooperations, saying that "Barack had the back" of the auto industry.

She highlighted her husband's support of the Dream Act. “He believes it is time to stop denying citizenship to responsible people just because” they are the children of illegal immigrants.

“He cannot do this alone,” she said of her husband's re-election bid. “Barack needs your help. Make those phone calls. Have those conversations. Go out there and register those voters. ... This election will be closer than ever – closer than the last one. ... This could all come down to those last thousand people who register to vote.”
She closed with a nod to the high stakes in battlegroundOhio, which awards 18 electoral votes.

The Call & Post had a chance to talk with Rev. Ledra Bigelow Minister of Church Administration for the Olivet Institutional Baptist Church who was thrilled about having the opportunity of introducing Mrs. Obama. “I was given the prestigious honor of introducing the First Lady of the United States of America, Michelle Obama. The selection was made through the 2012 Obama Campaign for Re-election,” said Rev. Bigelow.

She went on to say “M**eeting First Lady Michelle Obama, she was beautiful and radiant in her appearance and a role model for women everywhere. She was very sweet in her approach to everyone, but strong and personable as she communicated with each one of us assembled. She was interesting as well as interested in all our conversations for the length of time we spent with her.”**

“I cannot describe the emotion I felt when I first realized I had been selected to introduce our First Lady, whom I've admired for over these last four years. She is the epitome of dignity, intelligence, sophistication and poise. To have been given this honor of preparing the people in greeting the first African American First Lady was above anything I felt possible in my lifetime. However, it happened and I am so blessed to have had such a wonderful opportunity.”