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The Long Struggle for Representation: Oral Histories of African Americans in Congress

Early Role Models

Roger Addison speaks about the early role models who influenced his life.

Interview recorded May 29, 2019

Role models, you know like in my mind, thinking about it, individuals like to think of role models like Martin Luther King, John Lewis, you know, Ron Dellums—great, great individuals. But in my growing up, my role models were my parents. My role models were—because they were hard-working people. Never a day did I see them, they didn't, my parents didn't act like they were sick. I never seen them, they didn't know—I didn't know that we were struggling because they were hard-working people. Not only my parents, but just people in the neighborhood. You see parents going to work every day. You see single mothers going to work every day taking care of their children. There were individuals in my neighborhood who were home—didn't have fathers. So I was very blessed to have my dad at home with us. But to have women and men who, every day went to work, made sure that there were food on the table, clothes on their children's back. Those are the people that I try to emulate.