

Felda Looper

Campaign to Become First Female Page

Felda Looper reflects on her first meeting with then Majority Whip Carl Albert of Oklahoma.

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Yes, my parents, and my sister, and I came to Washington for the famous—every summer kid has to do this sometime—visit to Washington. And we drove from Heavener, Oklahoma, to Washington. And we were doing all of the tours, the visits, we came into the Capitol. And we went into Mr. Albert's office, who was then the Whip. And we happened to run into him then, and he invited us to go to lunch with him. And during that lunch, he'd asked us what we saw that made an impression upon us. And my impression was that there were only male Pages, and I asked him about this. And he said, "Well, it's just kind of an unspoken rule that we have only boy Pages." And I, at that age, between sixth and seventh grade, said, "Well, that's just not fair." And so he said, "Well, maybe we can do something about that." So when I went back to school in the fall, I wrote letters to Mr. Albert, and wrote letters to Mr. Albert, and wrote letters to Mr. Albert, for many years. And finally, one day, when I was just about to graduate from high school I got a call from Charlie Ward, who was Mr. Albert's administrative assistant, and he asked me how I would feel about being the first woman Page. Well, needless to say, I was finally ecstatic about this, and I said, "Well, I'll have to ask my parents first." And he said, "Well, Mr. Albert's already spoken to your parents, and it's okay with them." So I said, "Absolutely." So that's how it began.