

Cokie Roberts

Congresswoman Lindy Boggs of Louisiana

Personal description of Louisiana Congresswoman Lindy Boggs' transition to the public spotlight after her election to Congress in 1973.

Interview recorded July 11, 2008

Absolutely she did. My sister, who was in politics, said to her, "You know, Mom, the hardest part for you is going to be voting because there's no 'Maybe' button. You're going to have to say, 'Yes' or 'No,' and when you do that, you're going to alienate some people." And Mamma was not used to alienating anybody. And so that did turn out to be the hardest part. Because what her role had been for Daddy had been to make everybody think that he was with them and then to soothe the people after it was clear he wasn't. And so, it became hard for her to be in a more straightforward role.

Also, when she decided to run, or declared or whatever, Mrs. Johnson called her—Lady Bird called her—and said, "Lindy, I think it's a great idea, but how are you going to do it without a wife?" Because they had been so active in their husbands' political lives that the idea of trying to run an office and run a campaign and run your social life without a partner doing that for you just seemed daunting. And it was daunting because she still felt that she needed to do the wifely things—participate with the women and the wives and do the things they were doing.