

## **Liz Abzug**

**Daughter of U.S. Representative Bella Savitzky Abzug of New York**

### **“My Mother Had a Sense of Style”**

Liz Abzug explains the origins of her mother’s personal style.

*Interview recorded November 20, 2018*

She was always sort of a very colorful dresser. She liked dressing in good clothes. Her mother was always buying her and her sister—you know, even though she didn’t have much money, she found a way to get them really nice clothes. And my mother had a sense of style, and how she started wearing the hat is an interesting story, because when she was first practicing law in the ’40s, women at that time, like Eleanor Roosevelt and other prestigious women wore gloves and hats, and—to show that they had some distinguished—you know, that they were distinguished. And my mother went to represent a client and went to a law firm once, to represent this client, and she said, “Hello, I’m Bella Savitzky Abzug from Kramer and so-and-so,” and the receptionist said, “Okay. Sit down there. And wait.” And so then she waited, and waited, and then 20 minutes later, she got back up to the receptionist and said, “Hello, my name—I told you my name is Bella—and I’m here from the law firm of—” and the receptionist said, “We’re waiting for the lawyer.” And my mother said, “But I am the lawyer.” There were so few women lawyers at that time that the receptionist had no idea my mother was a lawyer. So she said, “I am a lawyer, and would you please bring me into the place where I have to meet with the client and the opposing side?” And my mother said that after that, she started to wear hats, because she—first of all, she liked them, they looked good on her, and secondly they showed some distinctive character. But she also said—I used to say to her, it’s what’s under the hat that counts, and she also, also would say, “Well, I kept wearing the hats, but I took off the gloves.”