

The Honorable Shelley Berkley
U.S. Representative of Nevada (1999–2013)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Crazy Time in Life”

Representative Berkley remembers balancing her family life and congressional duties.
Interview recorded July 22, 2019

It was just a crazy time in life for me—all good but very concentrated. I won the election in November of '98, beginning of November. At the end of November, my youngest son was bar mitzvahed, and that was, I mean, we had 300 people at the bar mitzvah. Then in January I was sworn in and with everything that entails, you know, a new office, new staff, new life. And then in March, I got married, and so I had a number of seminal life-changing events all occurring within a six-month period. So it was a very busy time, but I remember Congressman Gephardt having all the freshmen in his office and talking to us about our re-election. And, “Are you raising money, and are you doing this and doing that?” Now, January and February I was getting sworn in. I was preparing for a wedding, and we had 600 people at my wedding, so raising money wasn't the major priority. But when I, you know, when we went around the table, and, you know, one freshman said, “Oh, yes, I've done three fundraisers already,” and this one said that, and this one did that. And then they got to me. I said, “I'm getting married next month. I, you know, I'm not raising any money right now.” Oh, my goodness, they got nervous. But as it turned out, I pivoted right after the wedding, right after the thank-you notes, and started raising money and, and won convincingly the second time.