

The Honorable Beverly Barton Butcher Byron
U.S. Representative of Maryland (1979–1993)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Congresswoman Katharine Byron

Representative Byron shares memories of her mother-in-law, Representative Katharine Byron of Maryland.

Interview recorded June 15, 2016

She did not talk extensively with me on her time in the House because I don't think it ever occurred to her that I might be in the House. She served for, I think, a year and a half. Her husband, who was a Member of the House, died in a tragic aviation accident, with Eddie Rickenbacker going into Mount Story outside of Atlanta on his way to a—no, at that point in time, it was not the Armed Services Committee, it was the Military Affairs Committee. And he was a member of that on his way down to, to I think they were going to Mexico. She did not at all describe her, her—her race she described, which she was a, a widow, with five children. She campaigned. It was back in the days when the smoke-filled backroom would make the decisions on who was going to be the nominee, or who was going to take his place in Congress. She was selected. She campaigned in widow's garb: the black dress, the black veil. A different time, it was 1941. And so, she served for one, one, not quite a full term. But she was told, told by the same people in the backroom with the smoke-filled that there was another candidate that was going to run, and did. And so, she served only one term.