

**The Honorable Eva M. Clayton**  
U.S. Representative of North Carolina (1992–2003)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**“Reality Set In”**

Representative Clayton remembers the relationships that helped her adjust to life in Congress.  
*Interview recorded May 15, 2015*

Well, at first it seemed very welcoming, yes. Oh, boy, we had just arrived, and boy, we were going to take the place over, right? It was very welcoming. Then the reality set in, then you realized we needed to make adjustments and Congress needed to make adjustments. Yes. So after you settle in and the euphoria comes down, and you realize that, not that they were saying step back or go home, but you realize that your euphoria, excitement the first two or three weeks had some limitation as to how far that was going to go. So I think all of us, as we settled down and got on our various committees and realized we were at the end of the line, regardless of what committee, whether you got your committee of choice, you were still at the end of the line, and that, you know there's a pecking—in fact, there's a pecking order how you speak or even not even how you put bills in. I think that we had, you know—what do they call it—regular order, when we understood what regular order meant. You know, it meant that, “Hey, you got your little place, whether you're a woman, or whatever.” So, yeah, I think all of us made adjustments. But the joy of having that number of women coming in together gave us a bonding and a strength that we wouldn't have had if I had come by myself, or, you know, I would have been isolated a little bit. So there was, there were comforts in numbers in that area.