

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Scrutinizing Women Members

Representative Clayton compares the behavior and attire of Congresswomen in 1993 and 1917.
Interview recorded May 15, 2015

I think it had changed, but I do remember an incident where people would make remarks about someone being overly dressed or really too fashionable for the House. But by and large most women kind of dressed similar, you know. And, and, but I think it, I think unfortunately Rankin, she had the distinction and the disadvantage of being the only one, so they had to find, they want to find something, you know. She also had the distinction as a woman of conscience who had the audacity to vote for peace, so they had to find something wrong with her. But I don't think that we, in, you know, at 1993, were that far removed for not being scrutinized for some reason. I don't think the dress was as much the issue, as some would say demeanor, not, you know, not acting with the regular order, not knowing how to conduct yourself, or some would say she's too fashionably dressed for, you know, the floor or something they saw. But most of us dressed very similarly in that era.