

Rochelle Dornatt
Chief of Staff, Representative Sam Farr of California

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Dressing Professionally

Rochelle Dornatt explains the importance of proper office attire for women working on Capitol Hill.
Interview recorded January 18, 2017

I made sure I came dressed every day. And, you know, and it's, and it's hell—you guys wouldn't know—walking marble halls with high heels is a, is a killer, but I had high heels on every day. I had a dress on every day. Not during recess. That was definitely dress-down time, and you could wear, you know, jeans to the office. But, again, it was part of I really felt I needed to be as professional as possible, because I needed to, I needed to sort of emanate that, that professionalism, because I didn't want people to take me for granted, or think I wasn't serious, or that I was just the, I was the secretary. So, so yeah, I, I, I made sure that I always got dressed, and all the other women in the office got dressed as well. And—but I'll tell you, I'll tell you one thing about that is the offices are set to the temperature for the men who are wearing suitcoats, so women are always cold—always. Same thing on the House Floor—you're freezing cold because it's set for guys walking around in wool blazers or something. So you had to be creative about how you, how you dressed during, during session.