

The Honorable Donna F. Edwards
U.S. Representative of Maryland (2008–2017)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Overly Aggressive”

Representative Edwards recalls the ways in which gender and race can have an impact in politics.
Interview recorded June 29, 2018

I remember reading one time in a newspaper that I was overly aggressive. That was the word that was—that was the terminology that was used. That is a very gender-laden description. Because I was passionate about an issue, because I was pushing forward, you know, something that I believed in? I cannot believe that a man would ever be described as overly aggressive. And so yeah, I think that, you know, sometimes the way that gender and race play out, especially now—well, maybe not so on the national level but—is in a much more subtle way. And, you know, but I also think when I ran I was running against somebody that—where everyone thought it was his turn. And I would say if that is true, when will it ever be a woman’s turn because she’s not, you know, she might not ever be at that stage. I was identifying if it’s his turn when it will be my turn? I couldn’t figure out when that would be so I had to take my turn when I thought that I should. But, you know, I would say race and gender played a role in that in a really very subtle way sometimes, and sometimes overly aggressive, not so subtle.