

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

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

**Resistance**

Representative Edwards speaks about the resistance she faced from some House colleagues after she defeated an incumbent.

*Interview recorded June 29, 2018*

I don't feel it was unwelcoming, but I, I think I had the, you know, the sort of double duty of having defeated a longtime colleague and, and so there was some resistance to me because of that. And I would say that that is particularly true within the Congressional Black Caucus, which is a very, you know, sort of closed small caucus of Members and I defeated their guy. And in some ways I think some people never really got over that. And so that was, that was difficult and so I'm not sure that that was about gender, but about the fact that the Congress really is in some ways it's like, it's a very small community and, you know, a very protective community in a way and somebody like me that kind of comes in, you know, and sideswipes the community, it becomes difficult. But people got over that. I remember a really great conversation I had one time with John Dingell who was the Dean of the, of the, of the House. And we were sitting in the Democratic Cloakroom and he said, "Do you, can we talk a little bit?" And so I sat down and I said, "Yes, Mr. Dingell, you know, that would be great." And he said, "No, I'm John." Well, nobody could ever really call him John, but he said that. And then he looked at me and he said, "You know, I've wanted to get to know you because, you know, you beat my friend who was like my son." They served on the Energy and Commerce Committee together. And he said, "But you know what, you're a Member now and I want to count you as a friend." And we were from that day forward.