

The Honorable Elizabeth Furse
U.S. Representative of Oregon (1993–1999)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

A Surprise Victory

Representative Furse recalls her first campaign for Congress.
Interview recorded June 8, 2017

Oregon is a pretty amazing place, you know. It's very conservative and it's very liberal. And here was I, an immigrant with a British accent and nobody questioned that in my race. I mean nobody said, my opposition never said, "Oh, she's not capable of running." And so in '92, we put together a, a team. Congressman AuCoin was very helpful and so was Senator Hatfield, although Senator Hatfield was a Republican, but he still gave me lots of good advice. And so we put together this team and we ran a campaign, and I honestly, truly, never thought I'd get elected. And when the results came in, I, I turned to my husband, and I said, "This can't be. I'm going to have to go to D.C." And we just laughed. He had had a lot of experience, my husband, John Platt in—he had been Senator Hatfield's first intern, so he, he, he thought it was great. So anyway, that was it, I sort of did it off, on, off the cuff because I'd worked with lots of groups, they came forward and worked with me and gave me a lot of support.