

The Honorable Martha Elizabeth Keys
U.S. Representative of Kansas (1975–1979)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Not an Obstacle

Representative Keys shares her observations about the role of gender in her congressional campaigns.
Interview recorded June 14, 2016

Well, I've never considered gender a big obstacle at all. I don't think it was for me. It helped me stand out from these four individuals. I also was a little older, knew a little bit more like life. And, so, I didn't feel it was—hurt me in any way. And in the general election the young Republican I won against—ran against—was the, by far my best opponent. In fact, he was, he was a young state legislator. He'd been judged one of the 50 great legislators of the country and he was very good. He later changed, became a Democrat. But I think his biggest problem that—it was a very clean campaign. We, we appeared together umpteen times on television and stuff. So, it was very open. We appeared together before groups many times and nobody threw negative things at each other. There was none of that. And I think his, one of his problems was that he just hadn't quite had enough of life and of the realities of life to do as well in answering questions.