

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

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

**“Thinking about Running for Congress”**

Representative Keys explains how she made the jump from working on campaigns to running for Congress.

*Interview recorded June 14, 2016*

I happened to have gone out to see Lee and Gary. Gary was, they were, Gary was already campaigning, of course. And I met Pat Schroeder. Pat encouraged me to run. I hadn't really thought about running at all. And I got out there and in the milieu, you know, of meeting and talking, and Pat was encouraging me, "You should be running for that office." I went home and I hadn't been home but a couple of days until I had a call from a local reporter saying, "I hear you're thinking about running for Congress." I just thought right then I either say, "Yeah, I'm thinking about it," and do something about it. Or I say, "No, I have no interest." And I said, "Yeah, I'm giving it some thought." And I immediately talked to political science friends of mine at the university. They did kind of a quick survey. I wasn't interested in running if being a woman—you wouldn't have thought that was a great district for a woman to run in at that time—if that was going to be self-defeating I had no interest in doing that. And they did a quick survey, in as well as could be done. They were well-educated people, used to doing that kind of research. And they said, "No, I don't, I don't think it would be at all." So anyway, I decided to and started working at it.