

Judy Lemons

Chief of Staff, Representative Nancy Pelosi of California

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Interview with Representative Phil Burton

Judy Lemons remembers interviewing with Congressman Phil Burton of California in the early 1970s.

Interview recorded July 19, 2016

And then when I came back, this friend I'd worked with, Pat Krause said, "Hey, Judy, you know, Phil Burton's chair of the Democratic Caucus now and he, he's looking for a leadership post and we're trying to put a small staff together. You're, you're not doing anything right now. Would you be interested?" And I thought, "Well, of course." You know, I was, by that time I was getting serious about looking for a job. So I—she mentioned my name and I went to interview with Phil and he was like supersize. Supersize. You know, just a real powerhouse, intellectual and physical powerhouse. And about six-three or four, 250 pounds, and his staff director was the same. And so, they said, "Well, would you come—walk over to the Rayburn Building and have an interview?" So I, I sat between them and his staff director's here and Phil's here. And I mean, I'm just, you know, enveloped by these two giants. And they start saying, "Well, you know, the job would entail this and the job would entail that and you could do this." Well, the job entailed nothing. It was a basic flunky. That's all the job was going to be.