

Judy Lemons

Chief of Staff, Representative Nancy Pelosi of California

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Marriage and the Mundane”

Judy Lemons reflects on the traditional expectations she felt as a young woman.

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My, my personal expectations and what I thought in the traditional sense was that it would be marriage and the mundane. Not that that's what they—not that that's what marriage is. But that's what I thought. I thought, “Oh, I'll just get married, and I'll drive a station wagon full of kids and go to the bowling alley to watch my husband bowl on Saturday nights.” But that's not who I was. But that's what I thought was the life I probably would have. I wanted to be a teacher. All my life I wanted to be a teacher. So, that was something that I always had as a goal and, and thought would materialize sometime. But I really thought that I would kind of be stuck. That's how I, I viewed it. I didn't view it as the, the world of promise. I viewed it as, you know, traditional. “I'll do what my mother did.” And, but inside I didn't feel that way, so I couldn't adopt that in my spirit. So, then I just kind of struck out. Went on a freighter trip, traveled around Europe, and, and then after my mom died, drove my Volkswagen Bug across country. So, so, I had a streak of part hippie and just being independent and, and wanting to carve out my individual territory in life, I think.