

Muftiah McCartin
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Special Exhibit: Women in Congress

Women on the Rostrum

Muftiah McCartin recalls being allowed on the rostrum for the first time.
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So, when I interviewed for the secretarial position, there was—they had a secretarial position, they had a clerk. And the clerk advised the chair on recognition, and sometimes did some of the little more—wrote scripts and—but mostly kept the clock on—you know, because of debate on the House Floor is tightly controlled. And so, they would advise the chair on time and on recognition. And I had to be out there all the time, and then there were the assistant Parliamentarians and, and the Parliamentarian. So, initially, Bill had said, "Well, you, you can go on the floor. You'll be able to go on the floor and give Dallas some breaks," because Dallas didn't have anybody to give him any breaks, and it was difficult for him. So, I thought that was great. And then kind of a couple of years went by, and I never gave him a break. And didn't quite know why, and, you know, didn't really think to push it. And so, then one day, Bill, Bill brought me into his office and said, "You know, there's women on the rostrum now. So, I, I think, I think it's okay for you to go and, and relieve Dallas." And remember, I mean, Bill is not sexist at all. I mean, he was totally absolutely supportive of, of, of women and their careers and everything. But I think he just was a little uncomfortable in his position, kind of being the first.