The Honorable Kendrick B. Meek  
U.S. Representative of Florida (2003–2011) and Son of Representative Carrie P. Meek of Florida

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Inclusive Philosophy
Representative Meek reveals his mother’s philosophy of treating all people equally and with respect.  
*Interview recorded March 19, 2019*

She told me this when I was in college but also told me when I came to Congress. She said, “If you speak”—I will use the one she gave me in Congress, “If you go out of your way to speak to the Speaker of the House, you go out of your way to speak to the people that clean your office.” And I think about that. Which, interesting because Members of Congress feel that that person that’s cleaning the office can’t do anything for them. But she said, “That person that cleans the office or cleans the bathrooms will probably do more for you than the Speaker would”—and, which is true. She knew all the names of the janitorial staff. She knew the people in the cafeteria. She knew the Capitol Police officers. She knew the people that worked in the garage, in the Rayburn Building, the Cannon Building by name. You know, not, “Hey, he works,” or “She,” she knew them. And she would talk to them, and they would, you know, do things like, you know, “Ms. Meek, you know, the weather’s changing,” or, or this is happening or that’s happening, and that was her friend—that, those were her friends here in this institution. Those that are not on the lens side of the C-SPAN cameras. These were people that worked in this building.