

Muriel Morisey

Senior Legislative Assistant, Representative Shirley Chisholm of New York

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

No Limitations

Muriel Morisey discusses the way women in her family shaped her career aspirations.

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My mother and all of her friends—her, her friendship network was women primarily she had known since college, and they were all professionals—very accomplished women. My father's two sisters were both—I think they were both schoolteachers, but, you know, college educated. And I was acutely aware of this thing called discrimination and segregation and limited opportunities, but I don't remember anyone telling me, "And therefore," you know, "here's a list of things you can't do." I don't think anyone ever even implicitly told me there was something that was out of bounds for me because of being black or female. I mean, it sounds a little crazy to say that, but maybe one of the most important things about the way my own career has developed is that I was—it was always affirmed to me that I would do and achieve what my abilities suggested. And that might include a career in social justice and antidiscrimination work, and working for civil rights, but because that's—those are justice issues, not because my life or options were limited by race or gender.