

The Honorable Sue Myrick
U.S. Representative of North Carolina (1995–2013)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Responsibility of Public Figures

Representative Myrick remembers speaking out about her experience with breast cancer and the effect it had on her female constituents.

Interview recorded March 14, 2016

But cancer is a tough thing for a lot of people, and, and the thing that I found amazing was, after I had it, I learned that there were women that I knew well who had had cancer in the past 20 years, and never said a word about it. They just went through the treatment and everything by themselves. And then there was one woman here in Congress that I was a good friend with—she happened to be a Democrat—and she had breast cancer, and she wouldn't tell anybody. She wanted no one to know. And then there was a second one, later on, that also had breast cancer, and she wouldn't tell anybody until she was done. And then she came back and said, "I had breast cancer." So, everybody has to handle it differently. But I just thought, if I can help other women—and I still, literally, again, today, up until, like, at least a year ago, I was still having women come up to me and say, "You saved my life. I saw you on television. You said, "Go get a mammogram.' And I did, and I had breast cancer." And it's that type of thing that, when you have a position where you're a public figure, you also have a responsibility and to use that, in a way, for good. And so, that was one thing that happened, through the breast cancer that I was able to do.