

The Honorable Mary Rose Oakar
U.S. Representative of Ohio (1977–1993)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Helpful Advice

Representative Oakar recalls advice she received when contemplating a run for Congress.
Interview recorded March 2, 2017

Actually they discouraged, my party discouraged me. It was very interesting. I went to the party chairman and he said, "You know, go see this judge, she's a real trailblazer." She happened to be African American and a Republican. I'm a Democrat. And Judge Capers. "And go see her and she'll give you advice. And you ought to wait a little while, you know." They had their person picked out. And so I went to see Judge Capers. And she said, "What, what did he tell you?" She said, "You go, girl, ignore that man, you know." And she was very encouraging to me. Also the council president, I was a city councilman, George Forbes, gave me advice. And it was, it's an interesting thing, and I don't want it to be misinterpreted. But he said, "If you start going and say, 'I'm the only woman ever elected from my party in Ohio,' and all that stuff, everybody's going to know you're a woman, you know. Do not use that women's thing. You can talk about the issues, but don't, don't promote the fact that you're a woman and these other fellas in the race are all men and so on, and so forth." And, and he helped me as a, the head of the city council to call on me and so forth, because he really wanted me to win. And there were, was another councilperson running. But I thought it was good advice, you know.