

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

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Creative Campaigning**

Representative Oakar describes a unique campaign strategy she used in her first House campaign.  
*Interview recorded March 2, 2017*

I just think, I just think it's easier for guys to go play golf with somebody, you know, go in the backrooms, and, and raise the funds. And I, I don't think women are into making false promises. Not that you do that, because it's perfectly legal to get a contribution. But I don't think that's in our nature as much to, to, to, to raise money for campaigns. I mean they used to force me to sit down and call people, you know, and, when I needed to raise money. But I did not raise a lot of money for my first campaign. But we still won because we had volunteers. And we did something a little bit more unique. One of my friends had one of those old Fords that it was really not a 1932 Ford, but it was one of those sets that they could put together a car. It was red, white, and blue. And so we'd just go. We didn't have money for television. And my, one of my opponents was on every day of the week. Fortunately he didn't wear makeup, a la Richard Nixon, and he didn't look too good in the commercials, even though he wasn't a bad-looking guy. But, so we would go in this Model T Ford all over the district, which was pretty large, and people would come out because they wanted to see the car, and then I'd get to meet them. So, that was sort of a way for me to get to know a lot of the people and get around 12 suburbs and half the city of Cleveland.