

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

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

**Negative Campaigning**

Representative Oakar reflects on the discussions she had with other Representatives about negative campaign tactics used against women Members.

*Interview recorded March 2, 2017*

We met in the women's lounge, which was the former Speaker's Office of John Quincy Adams, right off the Statuary Hall. And, and there were a women's lounge with, with all the amenities. We met I'd say once every couple weeks at least. It was very convenient because you weren't far from the House Floor if there was a vote. And, we would talk about various issues that, that we were concerned about and, and we all would bring up things that were of concern. We all talked also about the way we were perceived. And every single one of them, us, had issues that were not true that we were perceived to be, or in the sense of bad, those who were campaigning in a negative way. For example, Pat Schroeder was neglecting her children. Marilyn Lloyd, she, her husband died in a plane crash, and she succeeded him, and she was called everything. And Barbara Mikulski was something else. And I had something else. I mean we all had things that, that were used negatively when we campaigned. And we didn't see that as much for men. And I remember we would bring this up, some of us, at the Democratic Caucus, and the women, would bring it up—the Republican women—would bring it up at the Republican Caucus so that they would know that that was—in case some, somebody had a female opponent that they wouldn't do that. You know, just talk about the issues that really mean something and not the personal lives, most of which was not true, of, of, the women. So that was one of the things that I thought was very, very interesting, that all of us had, you know, this negative kind of thing that whenever we campaigned. Or we had people targeting us with certain things.