

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

The Women's Suffrage Statue

Representative Oakar recalls the role of the Congresswomen's Caucus in displaying a statue in the Capitol honoring American suffragists.

Interview recorded March 2, 2017

Well, the Architect for the Capitol was from Cleveland, originally. And so he would tell me all these haunts, you know. So I said, "Why don't you take on a tour of, of things?" And so one day, I mean, he took me upstairs. You know how you can walk around the circle of the Capitol? I didn't know you could do that. I'd go up there with him. And he had a map room and he gave me maps of my own neighborhood. And so one day he takes me in this basement, this lower level, that God knows where it was. And I look, and all these dusty monument, you know, figures are in there. And there is this chalky-looking monument devoted to women suffragettes. And, we were always talking at the Women's Caucus a little bit about why aren't there more women in, in Statuary Hall? You know, states can choose the two they want, and usually chose men, which may have been the right people to choose, but nonetheless they weren't. So I told the women about that. And they went downstairs. And we, I think Jim Wright was the Speaker then. He was a very nice man, too. And, anyway so he brought it up and we put it in there. They didn't even vote on it. They just said, "Put it in there."