The Honorable Elizabeth J. Patterson

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Not the First Woman
Representative Patterson reflects on the history of women from South Carolina who served in Congress.  
*Interview recorded April 3, 2017*

Well, there was so much to-do about that I was the first woman. And I always corrected it, and said, “The first woman elected for a full term in her own right.” Then I had to explain it. The reason I always corrected it is, one of those women was still living. And she was a friend. And I wanted people to not forget that we’d had women before. Now, true, one of them didn’t serve but a day, but, you know, they were there. It was, it was sort of interesting. For a while, you know, sort of, people would say something about it, but then now whenever I get introduced someplace, they use it, you know. And people understand what they’re saying. You almost have to stop and say, you know, I always, always add, “And they were elected because their husband died. And, you know, in my case, luckily, my husband didn’t die, so I could serve a full term.” Because that’s the sad, the sad part of that story.