

The Honorable Elizabeth J. Patterson
U.S. Representative of South Carolina (1987–1993)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Things will be Tough Sometimes, and Good Sometimes”

Representative Patterson remembers the helpful advice she received in Congress.

Interview recorded April 3, 2017

It's interesting who helped me—Tony Coelho, you know, because he was then head of the DCCC or whatever. But he, he really helped me with his style and whatever. He would come over and sit by me and say, “Now listen. You do what you think is best for your district. Don't feel like you have to go out on a limb for anybody. Just do what you think is best for your district. And if I can help you in any way, I will.” And he would, he would talk to me very gently. There were, there were others. I guess probably the, the classic one that I still almost sort of tear up when I think about it, is Mo Udall. I had a—many years ago, when he ran for President, I decided I was going to support Mo Udall. So, I had my button, you know, “I'm for Mo” and I wore it in the chamber one day, and showed it to him. And we just sort struck up a friendship and that was when he was so sick. But we, we would visit and talk about the, the days, the old days, or whenever. And he would tell me to hang in here. You know, “Things will be tough sometimes, and good sometimes.” But he was, he was a real inspiration—I guess is the word I'd use—because he really was very sick.