

Deborah D. Pryce
U.S. Representative of Ohio (1993–2009)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Coming of Age

Representative Pryce remembers coming of age during the 1960s and becoming more aware of politics during the Watergate era.

Interview recorded August 9, 2018

I grew up in North East Ohio, which is a very democratic stronghold. My parents were both Republicans, and so we did talk about it a lot. I remember I kind of came of age back in, in the late '60s when there was a lot of campus turmoil. The country seemed like it was being torn apart, not unlike today only for different reasons and different—the war in Vietnam was very, on everyone's mind then. I was at Ohio State University and we had some violence at Kent State and the university, Ohio State University also did but not as extreme. They closed the school and we all had to leave. And so it, it gave me a formulation of what was yet to come. I didn't really admire politicians ever in my life too much and I never thought I would enter politics, but it, it colored my vision of it. And then I spent a summer in Cape Cod and this is kind of a funny story. I worked—I kind of followed a boyfriend up there and my father said, "You can't go unless you get a job." So I got a job the summer of Watergate as a housekeeper at a motel up there. And so I would watch the hearings all day as I was, you know, cleaning rooms and that was very fascinating for me. That was really my first glimpse of Washington at a very troubled time in our country's history. And it didn't give me a real positive look inside of politics. I was kind of turned off by it, but life doesn't always take you the direction you think it will.