

The Honorable Patricia Saiki
U.S. Representative of Hawaii (1987–1991)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Starting Her Political Career

Representative Saiki describes the beginning of her political career in 1968.
Interview recorded September 20, 2018

I was always interested in organizing people so that we would have a say, and if that's what you call politics then that's it. But it was always internal, you know, at my tennis club or my high school class for which I was an officer, that sort of thing. But I assumed leadership positions because I wanted to move our status ahead. But I didn't think of it as a political career until I was faced with having to abide by the rules that were installed on me by an entity over which I had no control. So I felt that the only way to do this is to change the control. And so that's why I ran for the constitutional convention. That same year then, the same bunch of teachers encouraged me to run for the state house of representatives and therein began my political career.