

The Honorable Claudine Schneider
U.S. Representative of Rhode Island (1981–1991)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

"Next Time, Claudine"

Representative Schneider remembers community support after losing her first election to Congress and her motivation to run a second time.

Interview recorded January 20, 2015

But the other thing that was interesting is that after that election night, the next morning I went out, and I did a thank-you tour. So, it was as though I were on automatic-pilot. I went to the same factories I went to at 5:30 in the morning, and then I went to the hospitals to see the doctors and nurses arriving at seven in the morning, and then I went to the bank. And people, of course, first thought I was crazy, saying, "Hey, don't you know the election is over?" And I said, "No, I just wanted to thank you for your support." Well, the next day after that, I happened to spot these bumper stickers that said, "Next time, Claudine." And we had no idea—and to this day we have no idea—who put out the bumper stickers, but it did say, "Next time, Claudine." Which also, then, you know—all-pervasive, and putting an idea in my mind, and I said to my husband, "You know, if we do this again, there's a good chance I'll win." And he said, "You should do it." And I said, "Well, it'll mean a completely different lifestyle for us. Is this something that we want to do?" And he said, "Yes, you should do it." And I thought, "Well, this whole time I've been talking about the change that I would create. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could actually be in a position of power to make a difference and do the things I believe that need to be done?" And so, that was why I ran for the second time.