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

## Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

### Jeannette Rankin's Statue
Representative Schneider shares a memory of unveiling the statue of Jeannette Rankin for the National Statuary Hall Collection.
*Interview recorded January 20, 2015*

So, Jeannette Rankin, the first woman ever elected to Congress, and the only Member of Congress in the history of the United States to vote twice against entering world, world wars, I didn't even know about when I came to Congress. And, as a matter of fact, I didn't know about Jeannette Rankin until I was approached by a Member of the Montana delegation, who said to me, "Claudine, we would like to have you unveil the statue of Jeannette Rankin." So, I quickly said to my staff, "Who's Jeannette Rankin?" And we checked it out, and learned that it was, she was the first woman ever elected. And then I got very uncomfortable because the Montana delegation were Democrats, I was a Republican, not a Montanan. And I went back to the gentleman who had invited me to do this honorable gesture, and I said, you know, "I feel a little uncomfortable. Why are you asking me to do this?" And he said, "Well, we all agreed that you embody some of the characteristics of Jeannette Rankin." Well, I was incredibly honored because when I learned about her, I learned that, you know, she did vote against entering the world wars, and I put myself in her shoes, and I thought, "Well, I probably would have done the same, and, well, yes, I guess I've been pretty, you know, independent in my approach to things." And I think that, you know, having the opportunity to do this with the delegation from Montana, on behalf of a woman, and to have the statue of Jeannette Rankin in Statuary Hall, is a huge honor.