

**The Honorable Patricia Scott Schroeder**  
U.S. Representative of Colorado (1973–1997)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**Role of Gender in the Campaign**

Representative Schroeder describes the way the media, the public, and her new colleagues reacted to her candidacy as a married woman with young children.

*Interview recorded June 3, 2015*

It was very frustrating, when I announced for Congress, the newspaper said, “Denver housewife runs for Congress.” I mean they didn’t even put my name in. And I kept thinking, “Well, yeah, I’m a housewife, but I’m also a Harvard lawyer. I also work at a university. I’m a hiring officer.” So it was really a problem from day one, from that standpoint. Women’s rights were starting to come to the fore. They weren’t quite there but they were beginning, it was all bubbling. And a lot of people were absolutely horrified because I had two children, two little children. And I will never forget when I won. So many people said, “Oh, I don’t know how you’re going to do this.” And I was kind of the same way. “I don’t know how I’m going to do it either but I guess I’ve got to do it, so let’s figure this out.” And I’ll never forget, getting a phone call from Bella Abzug, and I thought, “Oh.” I’d never met her, but I thought, “Oh, finally, somebody who’s going to say, ‘Yes, that’s great.’” And she goes, “I hear you have two kids.” I said, “Yes, I have a two-year-old and a six-year-old.” “I don’t think you can do the job,” she said. “I don’t know how you’re going—” I’m like, “Oh.” So it was, it wasn’t even just being a woman, it was being a young woman, and with little kids, and that really threw people for a loop.