

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Being a Member of Congress with Young Children

Representative Schroeder describes the difficulty of maintaining professionalism while traveling with her young children.

Interview recorded June 3, 2015

Oh, no. I would get on a plane and it was really funny, they would all pretend like they had no idea, I mean we came on with pet rabbits, Franklin Delano Rabbit we had. And we had dogs, we had ponies. And we had, oh, we had everything. And you get on a—we were like a traveling circus. And they'd usually spill at least two Cokes and a glass of milk on me before I got off, it was just, you know, you were always sticky. And Crayolas and, it was just—people just would be horrified, but that's how we were. My, oh—one of my favorite days, you try to look professional, right? Okay, and if you're in your early 30s, it's hard enough as it is anyway, and it's always been hard for me because I'm much too casual. But, we got on with Franklin Delano Rabbit, right? He has to go with us. And they said, "Oh, we've got a problem." We were in the tourist section and there was already an animal back there and they could only have one animal per section. But they said there's nothing up in first class, so we'll put Franklin up under the seat. Okay. So I see this dear little lady up in the first class and she's down there, "Oh, isn't that cute?" And this is back in the days when in first class, they used to roll down the aisle, a little salad bowl, make everybody salad, and bring them the—and I'm just thinking, "No, she really wouldn't, she wouldn't." She gets her salad, she opens the door, and Franklin ran for freedom. The kids are out of their seats screaming, "Franklin!" Running up and down, I mean, you, you can't imagine. And I'm sitting there, smiling. Of course, we're on our way to Denver, everybody's from Denver. "Hello, it's your Congresswoman here." We can do these stories all night long, but you just finally say, "I'm probably never going to look professional." It's just not going to work, not with young children.