

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

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Anita Hill and a Capitol Protest

Representative Schroeder discusses using the media to her advantage during the 1991 controversy involving Anita Hill and the nomination of Clarence Thomas for Supreme Court Justice.

Interview recorded June 3, 2015

So we got really rather riled about that and one morning, we went in and did one-minute speeches. And a wonderful young woman who did my press then, Andrea Camp, I said to her, "What could we do?" And she said, "Go outside, walk over to the Senate this way." We knew they were having their lunch. But she said, "Do it outside so the media sees you, like it's a march. If you do it inside it won't be as—go up the stairs, go in there and knock on the door." So we did. Well, all the Democratic Senators were meeting for lunch, as they do every week. Knocked on the door and to our shock, the Majority Leader answered the door and said, "We don't let strangers in here." And we kind of said, "Strangers? We thought of ourselves as your colleagues, excuse us." And then we kind of said, "See all these people out in the hall behind us, they're press. This is not going to be really pretty. What are you going to do?" So he says, "Come back at a certain time and I will talk to you. Let me find out what's going on." Okay. So, we were trying to be fair and we say, "Okay, we'll come back." So we come back and we sit down and we explain to him what the—he says, "Well, I'll have to tell you. I'm sorry about this, but I finally got them to say that they'll have her come testify. Not the others, but she could come, but that the chairman had promised Senator Danforth that he would make this hearing very fast and quick and get this over." And we're kind of like, "So his promise in the gym, to Senator Danforth, is more important than nominating this Supreme Court Justice?" "Well, you know, your word is your word and the chairman of the committee feels very strongly that, you know that's how it's going to be." So obviously they put her on early in the morning when they know nobody is watching.