

The Honorable Sue W. Kelly
U.S. Representative of New York (1995–2007)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

“Sue Kelly for Congress”

Representative Kelly describes campaigning with her husband.
Interview recorded June 23, 2016

So, we had an old camper. It was a 1983 family RV. So we rigged it with outdoor speakers and I had tapes of John Philip Sousa marches. And we would drive that old camper—we, we slung banners, “Sue Kelly for Congress,” all over it, and we would drive it into a village, and I’d get out, walk and talk and we, because we played music as we drove through the village, people would look up and see my name. We drove all over. We put, we put, we put like over 100,000 miles on that, on that old RV. It served me very well. But, and he was with me, doing things like that. And he helped me raise money, because being a, being a male businessman, he was able to open contacts that I would not have had. That’s one of the things you should actually ask people—women—that you’re interviewing. I have found that, that while a man would write me a—understand that I needed the money to run, and if he could afford it, would write me a decent check, say a check of \$50, a woman would say, “Oh, I get, want to donate to your campaign,” and write a check for \$5 or \$10. Not because they didn’t have money, but because they thought that was a big donation. Women I don’t think are—some of them, anyway—the ones, well, my friends—didn’t seem to understand how essential money is to politics these days. And I don’t know if other women had that problem, but I certainly did.