The Honorable Elizabeth J. Patterson

U.S. Representative of South Carolina (1987–1993)

Oral History Interview
Final Edited Transcript

April 3, 2017

Office of the Historian
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

"So we had a TV spot that started off with everybody in our family—and at that point we had three children—sitting around the breakfast table fully dressed, and I was going around the table pouring orange juice for us. Well, we never were able to do that. You know, carpool's coming, take this, whatever, and grab it, and go get in the car. And then the next scene was me. It was Dwight and me going out the front door, both of us with our briefcases, kissing and going off in different directions. Well, again, we never used our front door. But they did that. Then the next scene, I was in Columbia in the state house, and I was speaking on the senate floor. Then at one point I was at my desk, and several of the senators were leaning over me as we looked at a piece of legislation. It was a very—and sort of dark, communing like we were working hard on something. Then the final shot was, I was back home, sitting on the floor playing Scrabble with my children. And so that commercial supposedly showed that I could be wife, mom, and legislator."

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Abstract

Elizabeth J. Patterson spent much of her childhood and formative years growing up in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol while her father, Olin DeWitt Talmadge Johnston of South Carolina, served in the U.S. Senate from 1945 to 1965. In her interview, Patterson describes Washington, D.C., during the mid-20th century—the legislative side as well as family life. She also discusses the valuable experience of working on her father's congressional campaigns and the lessons she learned which helped further her own political career.

Before coming to Congress, Patterson built an impressive political résumé, serving on the Spartanburg County council and in the South Carolina state senate. In her oral history she compares her local and state service with her time in Congress and reveals how this experience served as preparation for her three terms in the U.S. House. Patterson also explains the role of gender and fundraising in her campaigns. As the first South Carolina woman elected to the House in her own right, Patterson speaks about the history of widows representing her state as well as the obstacles faced by women pursuing a political career. In her interview she also describes her service on the Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committee and Veterans' Affairs Committee, as well as her leadership of the Congressional Textile Caucus.

Biography

PATTERSON, Elizabeth J., (daughter of Olin D. Johnston), a Representative from South Carolina; born Elizabeth Johnston in Columbia, S.C., November 18, 1939; attended public schools in Kensington, Md., and Spartanburg, S.C.; B.A., Columbia College, Columbia, S.C., 1961; graduate study, University of South Carolina, 1961–1962; recruiting officer for the Peace Corps, 1962–1964; recruiting officer for VISTA, 1965–1967; director of a Head Start program, 1967–1968; staff assistant for U.S. Representative James R. Mann, 1969–1970; served on the Spartanburg County council, 1975–1976; South Carolina senate, 1979–1986; elected as a Democrat to the One Hundredth and to the two succeeding Congresses (January 3, 1987–January 3, 1993); unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1992 to the One Hundred Third Congress; is a resident of Spartanburg, S.C.

Read full biography

Editing Practices

In preparing interview transcripts for publication, the editors sought to balance several priorities:

- As a primary rule, the editors aimed for fidelity to the spoken word and the conversational style in accord with generally accepted oral history practices.
- The editors made minor editorial changes to the transcripts in instances where they believed such changes would make interviews more accessible to readers. For instance, excessive false starts and filler words were removed when they did not materially affect the meaning of the ideas expressed by the interviewee.
- In accord with standard oral history practices, interviewees were allowed to review their transcripts, although they were encouraged to avoid making substantial editorial revisions and deletions that would change the conversational style of the transcripts or the ideas expressed therein.
- The editors welcomed additional notes, comments, or written observations that the interviewees wished to insert into the record and noted any substantial changes or redactions to the transcript.
- Copy-editing of the transcripts was based on the standards set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

The first reference to a Member of Congress (House or Senate) is underlined in the oral history transcript. For more information about individuals who served in the House or Senate, please refer to the online *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, http://bioguide.congress.gov and the "People Search" section of the History, Art & Archives website, http://history.house.gov.

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Interviewer Biographies

Matt Wasniewski is the Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives, a position he has held since 2010. He has worked in the House as a historical editor and manager since 2002. Matt served as the editor-in-chief of *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008), and *Hispanic Americans in Congress, 1822–2012* (GPO, 2013). He helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of current and former Members, longtime staff, and support personnel. He earned his Ph.D. in U.S. history from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2004. His prior work experience includes several years as the associate historian and communications director at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, and, in the early 1990s, as the sports editor for a northern Virginia newspaper.

Kathleen Johnson is the Manager of Oral History for the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. She earned a B.A. in history from Columbia University, where she also played basketball for four years, and holds two master's degrees from North Carolina State University in education and public history. In 2004, she helped to create the House's first oral history program, focusing on collecting the institutional memory of Members and staff. She co-authored two books: *Women in Congress: 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006) and *Black Americans in Congress: 1870–2007* (GPO, 2008). Before joining the Office of the Historian, she worked as a high school history teacher and social studies curriculum consultant.

— THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH J. PATTERSON OF SOUTH CAROLINA —
A CENTURY OF WOMEN IN CONGRESS

JOHNSON: My name is Kathleen Johnson. I'm here today with Matt Wasniewski, who's the House Historian. Today's date is April 3rd, 2017. We're in the House Recording Studio in the Rayburn House Office Building. We are with former Representative Liz [Elizabeth J.] Patterson from South Carolina. Thank you so much for coming in today.

WASNIEWSKI: Thank you.

PATTERSON: Thank you. I'm looking forward to it.

JOHNSON: This is for a project that we've been conducting over the last couple years, in honor of the centennial of the election of Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress. We've been interviewing former Members and former staff to talk about their experiences in Congress.

So, to start off with today, when you were young, did you have any female role models?

PATTERSON: Oh, very much so. My mom, of course, was one, because she was always my dad's campaign manager. She made speeches. She went on the road for the [Franklin D.] Roosevelt [presidential] campaign. Traveled all over the place, so she was very much involved. When we got up here, when my dad [Olin DeWitt Talmadge Johnston] was Senator, Margaret Chase Smith was my role model. You know, she was the only woman [in the Senate].[1] She was just such a lady and seemed to be doing a wonderful job for the state of Maine, so she was just a role model for me. And later, when I was elected, I contacted her and told her, even though she was a Republican and I was a Democrat—she was quite a role model for me.

JOHNSON: What were the expectations for you when you were young about what you would be when you grew up?

PATTERSON: There were really no expectations because I was watching what my dad was doing and my mom was doing. We were always together. We went to conventions together, the Democratic Party conventions, postal conventions because my dad was chairman of that committee [Post Office and Civil Service], so there were no really expectations except to care about others. We were very involved in our church, and just to know that we weren't here to just be ourselves, we were here to make a difference to others. So, our family was just very close.

WASNIEWSKI: Did you work on your father's political campaigns?

PATTERSON: I did. The first one I worked on, I was too young to vote—much too young to vote.

WASNIEWSKI: How old would you have been?

PATTERSON: I was in the fifth grade. [James] Strom Thurmond ran against my dad. My dad was serving, and Strom had just returned from a strong presidential campaign. And so that campaign was a fierce one—although my dad came out on top. I would carry signs at his rallies that said, "Vote for my dad." So, those are the first times I really worked for his campaigns.

But later in life, of course, when Fritz [Ernest Frederick] Hollings ran against my dad, and my father won, that was another fierce campaign. And I was just out of college, and I had plenty of free time, so I went to a lot of what we call stump meetings. Those are out of the picture now. But I would go to the stump meetings and hand out things for my dad, wear a hat and a banner and whatever, and ask people to vote for him and hand out things. And I

would put together groups to meet us at those sort of things—young ladies who would hand out things with the banners on. And so I helped in that campaign and then helped in a presidential campaign. When [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy ran [for President in 1960]—involved in that campaign, because I wasn't old enough to vote. I've got a big button at home that says, "If I were 21, I'd vote for him." But, again, I got involved, and we went to that convention.

And then when Lyndon Johnson ran, the South was in hot water at that time. We were facing a lot of issues. But Ladybird came through South Carolina, and I helped organize the "Ladybird Special" and get crowds out for that. So, yes, I've been involved in campaigns for a while. And then, there have been others—races with a good friend who ran for governor and won. People like that. So, just always been involved.

WASNIEWSKI: Were there any lessons in particular that you learned, watching your father campaign?

PATTERSON: I did. My dad never missed speaking to somebody. You know, if there was a crowd, he worked the whole crowd. When we were campaigning on the road and stopping places, we always stopped at the little country store where there were maybe just two people. So he always reached out to everybody, and if he heard somebody was sick, he'd want to go by the hospital and check on them. I remember his campaigning and his style of campaigning, and it was a kind I liked. I don't think it's out there anymore mainly because TV is so prominent.

The last time my dad ran we were concerned because he was not telegenic. He was just an older man—not good looking and dashing like Fritz Hollings was. So we worried about that. Things just have changed in the way you

campaign. The idea now, there's very little one-to-one contact. It's too much television, and too much, now, social media. I didn't have to deal with that. I say deal with it—I didn't have to use it, I guess.

JOHNSON: Did your father's career spark your own interest in a political future?

PATTERSON: Not so much for mine. I didn't think I would . . . I'm of the era that not too many women had been in politics in South Carolina. So, although I thought about marrying somebody, like my dad used to introduce me and say, "One day she's going to be married to the governor of South Carolina." And he'd say that to my sister, too. That probably sparked my interest in being involved in campaigns because I can't think of a year that I sat it out. But I didn't really think about that I could do that until I was married, back in my hometown, and working with a county Democratic Party, getting candidates. And I just said, "If they don't get somebody, I'll run." So it sparked, and it took a while to ignite.

JOHNSON: Did you have any mentors that helped you along the way, as you progressed towards a political career?

PATTERSON: Well, there were a number of people, seldom female, in South Carolina. Former Governor Dick Riley was somebody that I had worked with. He actually worked with my dad when he was young, and so I'd gotten to know him, and I turned to him for a lot of advice. And his style of campaigning, his style of representing the people, meant a lot to me, and I would talk with Dick a good bit about what was going on. So I would say he was a mentor, although male, not female.

Later in life, the females that surfaced then were people like Lindy [Corinne Claiborne] Boggs. I knew her through her husband [Thomas Hale Boggs, Sr.], and my mother and dad knew the Boggs, so I knew her. So when she all

of a sudden was in the House herself, I really thought, "Wow. What a wonderful lady." So, those mentors, I guess, I have had in my early political career.

WASNIEWSKI: In your early career, we read that you briefly served as a staff assistant for a South Carolina Representative?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes, you picked up on that.

WASNIEWSKI: James [Robert] Mann?

PATTERSON: I did. I had helped Jim Mann run his Spartanburg county headquarters. And really got to know him, and like him, and he won. He asked me if I would help in his Spartanburg office, so I did for a short while. Enjoyed what I was doing and whatever, but that was about the time that my family decided that I needed another child, so it was about the time I had to stay home with children. So I just told Jim—but I enjoyed helping him. I did the constituent services, whatever, but I stayed in Spartanburg. I did not come to Washington.

WASNIEWSKI: Just to follow-up on that—you say constituent services. For people who don't know what that is, can you describe that a little bit?

PATTERSON: Oh, yes.

WASNIEWSKI: And then, also, were there any other women in the office? And what was the role of women in the office at that time?

PATTERSON: When I was working for Jim Mann? There were other women. As many secretarial, I guess you'd say, and I can do the—that was before computers—I could do the typewriter. But what I mainly did was if we read in the paper

that someone had died that he knew, I would make certain that we contacted the family.

But what we mostly did were people who are having problems with the red tapes of bureaucracy—veterans who were trying to get in the veterans' hospital or just wanted to talk to the Congressman. But we had a lot of people wanted help to get into nursing homes and get services that they thought they deserved. "I've paid my taxes, and I think I need the . . ." So it was that kind of call.

It's funny, though, some of the calls were things that happened to me just this past week. Calls about, "We're going to Washington—as a family—we're going to Washington. Could you help us? Could you give us some information about how to do this and that?" And, of course, we would send them what I called a packet of information: an envelope full of things. Help them know, and then, when they got to Washington, to be sure to contact Jim Mann's office. And then also, if they wanted to go to the White House, or the FBI, places like that, that we could help make tickets for them, so they wouldn't have to stand in line. So it was that sort of thing.

But most of the things that I call constituent services, people who say, "I have a need. Can you help me?" Now, some of those needs were out of the realm of a member of Congress. Many of them were state or local problems. "The road in my neighborhood," that sort of thing, that really a Congressman can pass the word along but can't get repaired. Those are the sort of things. But you really got to know people because they would come in the office, and you'd get to know them. And many of them were really in need, very much in need.

WASNIEWSKI: Very much a one-on-one experience.

PATTERSON: Very much a one-on-one experience. I still see some people that I helped in Jim Mann's days, and in some form, we helped.

JOHNSON: Before coming to Congress, you served on the Spartanburg county council and also in the South Carolina state senate.

PATTERSON: Right.

JOHNSON: How did these experiences prepare you for your House service?

PATTERSON: Well, I think because I've sort of learned that you have to compromise, you have to work with other Members. County council, we actually had five members (a chairman and four members). And, to get things done—and I was the only woman on the county council, and the first woman—so I had to convince them that I was going to work with them, that I wasn't there to do things that they thought were wrong, or feminist, or whatever. So I learned working on county council that you really had to work together.

But while I was on county council, I also discovered that county governments can't do a whole lot without aid from the state and down the road, even federal government. And we were getting mandates from the state about things we had to do in my county. And I said, "If you're going to mandate things, you've got to give us the money." And that was the point that I said, "I'm going to go to Columbia [South Carolina] to be sure that they don't mandate things that are costly for our county."

I got a lot of flak when I ran for county council. It was sort of interesting, a woman running. And it was countywide, so I had a lot of funny experiences. You know, people talking about a woman running, and "Does she know what she's doing? She should be home with her family," and that sort of thing.

County council definitely helped me learn the way the system worked, as far as compromising. And that happened in the state senate as well because for a while, I was the only woman in the state senate. We had a lieutenant governor who was female, but as a member of the senate, I was the only woman for a while. So I had to again prove to the membership for the state senate that I wasn't so different that they couldn't deal with me. They were sort of fearful of a woman.

JOHNSON: Did you also get some support? You know, on the other side, that people were excited to have a woman that was in that position?

PATTERSON: Oh, very much. Now, most of it came from women. Although, when I ran for county council, the reason I ran is because two men in our county, who I'd worked with through the county party, came up to me at a meeting and said, "If you'll run for county council, I'll give you $100. We'd love to have you on county council." And $100 to them was a lot of money, but it wasn't a whole lot of money for a campaign. So there were men who really supported me.

Then again when I ran for the [South Carolina state] senate it fired up women in our area. They got excited about it. When I was elected, I received a t-shirt that said, "A woman can serve in the house and in the senate." And so they gave me that t-shirt. They made a big to-do about me being in the senate—the women did. And then there were men who did the same thing, who were very gracious.

As it worked out, when I went to the senate, we shared offices—two senators together. And when I was announced that I was coming, the senator that I was going to share an office with said, "Ugh! I'm afraid when she gets here she'll make us paint this office pink!" And we sort of joked about it because

the office was already sort of a pink, and I didn't have anything to do with it. But he ended up being one of my biggest supporters and a good friend. So it was just a matter of —and it's often we're afraid of things we don't know. And once you know things, know people, you can accept them. I think that's a problem we have right now is judging people that we don't know.

And what happened in the state senate, there were like five senators in the South Carolina state senate who had served so long that I had known them since I was a child, and they knew me. We had an incident in the state senate one time that we were voting on a bill, and the guy who'd been there the longest, the senior member, was a little bit miffed with me. And he had sort of crossed hairs with me early on in life at a state convention. I had questioned whether we should have compulsory school attendance. And I was a big fan of, we should have compulsory school attendance, and he didn't . . . One day in the senate, I was trying to get a vote, and he just stood up and said, "Are you that Johnston girl that was against me?" And I said, "Yes, sir, I am." It was sort of interesting how many years, and they still remembered. It was always nice, when you know a few people going into a situation, it helps. In the state senate it helped.

WASNIEWSKI: How big was the state senate at that point?

PATTERSON: Forty-three.

WASNIEWSKI: And what committees did you get on?

PATTERSON: That's another good story. The way you get on a committee is, the first day of session, you choose your committees, and they go around seniority to the lowest Members, and you get to pick what you want. I was not the lowest that year. I was 41st, I think. But I had already said during my campaign, "I'm going to be on the Education Committee because I'm passionate about

early education, and kindergarten, and daycare." I worked with Head Start, so programs like that. And so I talked about education. Then I said, "I've just come off of a committee study with the League of Women Voters on the correctional system in South Carolina, so I'd like to be on the Corrections Committee." Well, we started the rounds of going around and choosing your committee. And when it came to me, I chose Corrections.

You can choose two committees. (You can actually choose three.) But when it came around to me the second time, I chose Education. The senior member that had asked me, was I the Johnston girl, stood up and objected. And so I wasn't going to get it. But then another good friend of mine in the state senate stood up and said, "I'm going to give up my seat on the Education Committee, so Mrs. Patterson can have one." We have something in the state senate called unanimous consent. And the head of the senate stood up and said, "Well, I'm not going to object, but I don't like it." So I got on the Education Committee that way.

And I stayed on the Education Committee. I didn't stay on the Corrections Committee long because I worked my way up into the Judiciary Committee, Medical Affairs, and later Finance. So, in my six years there, I sort of moved in the committees that were more important. They didn't like it. The old party members didn't like it when I got on Judiciary because I'm not a lawyer. And so I had a hard time convincing them that I could serve with them and be a woman on that committee. So it was always interesting. But because of connections in years past, it helped that I knew some of these fellas.

WASNIEWSKI: That's a great story. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Why did you decide to run for Congress?

PATTERSON: Well, first of all, it was an open seat, and open seats make it easier. And it was that same old thing, federal government telling the states and local governments what they've got to do and then not giving us money. So when I saw it was an open seat, and I saw that nobody really was coming forth to run, I said, "You know, I bet I can do this." So I just decided to run. Matter of fact, we were up here at something, I can't remember what, we were in Washington for something, and I decided to run. I went home and announced first to my husband. He says I never tell him things until later. But I decided to run, and as it worked out, I ran without opposition in the Democratic primary—and that helps.

In the Republican primary, there was a fella who was the mayor of the city of Greenville, very popular fella. But he was mayor of the city of Greenville, and in the South, rural politics and city politics divide people. So I sort of looked at it and thought, "Well, maybe this is something I can do."

Of course, we had a tough campaign, but a very successful campaign. That was when my being a woman really came out. We did a poll, first of all, to see if I had a chance. And the poll said that people still remembered my dad. That a certain age remembered my dad and what he did, and that they would support me because of that. So that was good news. Then they said that—and again, it was interesting how it broke down—certain ages didn't think I should go because I should stay home with my family. Older women thought that I should stay home. The younger women were a little bit hesitant for other reasons, that they just weren't sure I knew . . . But the polls also showed that they didn't think I'd be strong on the budget which is a typical thing, women can't balance their budget. So the polls were really interesting, but we played to them.

And I may be telling you too much that you don't want to know, but in that campaign, we had to prove that I could be a woman, a mother, and be a good, tough politician. So we had a TV spot that started off with everybody in our family—and at that point we had three children—sitting around the breakfast table fully dressed, and I was going around the table pouring orange juice for us. Well, we never were able to do that. You know, carpool's coming, take this, whatever, and grab it, and go get in the car. And then the next scene was me. It was Dwight and me going out the front door, both of us with our briefcases, kissing and going off in different directions. Well, again, we never used our front door. But they did that. Then the next scene, I was in Columbia in the state house, and I was speaking on the senate floor. Then at one point I was at my desk, and several of the senators were leaning over me as we looked at a piece of legislation. It was a very—and sort of dark, communing like we were working hard on something. Then the final shot was, I was back home, sitting on the floor playing Scrabble with my children.

And so that commercial supposedly showed that I could be wife, mom, and legislator. And it paid off because my opponent didn't have children at that point. His were grown. So he borrowed some children, and got them to sit around a tree with him, and he read them a story. So it was very obvious that he was trying to get . . . But we did very well in that campaign, and because he was mayor of the city of Greenville, many of his shots, he was very formally dressed. I just was dressing like I normally did, wherever I went out in the county or in the city. And people kept thinking, "He wears tuxedos all the time. I'm not so sure he's one of us." So, I was able to win.

JOHNSON: Sounds like quite the balance that you had to try to fulfill—all of those different roles.

PATTERSON: Oh, it really, really was. Trying to—people still questioned, the family, the family.

JOHNSON: You talked about how you made that decision to run, but did anyone recruit you or kind of push you in that direction?

PATTERSON: Several people talked to me about it, Dick Riley being one. Several people said, "You know, Liz, it's open. Why don't you try for it?" And several people from the Greenville—and Dick Riley's from Greenville—so, several people from the Greenville area felt that I should do it.

I should stop and tell you, when I ran, there had not been a Member of Congress from Spartanburg in 64 years. There had not ever been a woman elected, and there hadn't been a Democrat in eight years. So, in trying to think, I said—in 64 years, there hadn't been anybody from Spartanburg. Eight years, as a Democrat, and never as a female. And I used to tell people, "I can't change where I live, I can't change my party, and I can't change my gender. So, I guess I'll just go with those three strikes against me." {laughter}

WASNIEWSKI: Was there any key turning-point moment in the campaign, where you felt like you'd turned a corner?

PATTERSON: It was really strange. We had several debates. And in one of the debates, I sort of misspoke, I thought, but it really paid off for me. My opponent served in the military but never went overseas. Yet he always gave these impassioned cries about what he would do about war, and how his friends came home so damaged or whatever. And I made the mistake of saying something that ended up sounding like I was questioning his manhood. People just broke up about it. They thought it was . . . Now, some people thought I was out. But at that point, people started saying, "You know, she's pretty tough. She can

respond to the question like that, and put him on the spot." I think that's when, we were amazed at the last poll, and what it showed.

WASNIEWSKI: That's a really interesting dynamic. And, again, you've got to walk that line between being motherly and also being assertive.

PATTERSON: {laughter} Yes.

WASNIEWSKI: So that's tough. {laughter} Can you describe the district a little bit—just the constituents and geography?

PATTERSON: When I ran, it was three counties: Greenville County, Spartanburg County, and Union County. Greenville County has progressed a great deal. Of course it had textile for a number of years, but it also had other industry that's done well. Of course, since I've left, it's even gotten more industry. And Greenville has grown and done very well. Spartanburg was really still just a mill town. And I shouldn't say "just" a mill town, it was a very successful mill town, a nice town, but the county was not as affluent as Greenville by any means. We still had large—our agricultural areas—peach farmers, a lot of peach farmers in the upper part of the county. So it was a little more rural than in Greenville.

Union County was a little county that was sort of left behind. It's very poor. It was all textiles, and when the textiles closed, the little town—and it's still suffering. We're still trying to get people to go there and open up a plant. But the educational level is less there. The African-American population, compared to the white, is stronger. Not that it's the majority, but it's stronger. So it's a county like, when I would go down there to campaign, when I came home I would have homemade pies, homemade bread, all sort of things like that. That was the type people they were. They were just—I kept telling them, they're real people. Real people.

Spartanburg was sort of the midpoint, and then Greenville was different. Union's what helped me win. When we looked at the turnout and the vote and whatever, we realized, I had to get a really strong vote in Union County, which I did. And I got a stronger vote in rural Greenville than they thought I would. So it's there—now, they have changed. The district has changed.

My last campaign, they had taken part of Spartanburg County out of my district. Not a big part, but part of Spartanburg County out of my district, and given me a little part of Laurens County—which was rural, mainly. But, and now it really is changed. Union isn't in that district anymore. So it's changed. But it was sort of a picture of our diversity. I mean, it really was.

Spartanburg at one time was written up in *Time Magazine* as the "international crossroads of the South," because we had so many international businesses that came there, mainly in the '50s, but have stayed—little businesses—but, again, types of textile. Some have stayed, some have not. But, so it was more of we had a lot of internationals.

JOHNSON: Earlier, you talked about the strikes that you had against you when you were campaigning. Did that make it difficult for you to fundraise?

PATTERSON: Not really. We were very fortunate with fundraising. And don't ask me how, okay, although I had a lot of good people supporting me. I do remember, when I came up here to Washington one time for a luncheon, and Ted Kennedy was involved. And when it hit home that I'd had a fundraiser with Ted [Edward Moore] Kennedy, I was doomed for defeat. You know, "that liberal is giving her money." And I think it probably brought a little bit of money in, rather than hurting me. People from Spartanburg were so excited about somebody running that they came forth stronger than I would have

imagined. Because there is money in Spartanburg, but not as much as, say, in Greenville. So it didn't hurt me.

And then, of course, the women's groups, EMILY's List and others, came forward. I mentioned Lindy Boggs earlier. Lindy was supposed to come and do a fundraiser for me, and legislation kept her here [at the Capitol], so we did a video for the fundraiser, and everybody was so excited about Lindy Boggs coming to Greenville to fundraise for me. So we were very successful in the fundraising.

Although I'll have to tell you, right before—and you asked about a turning point—right before the election, maybe a month out, the polls showed that I was close. And, of course, our person doing the media for us, said, "We need to spend a little bit more money. Can you find some more money?" Well, my husband was out of town. He's a lawyer. But he was out of town. And they told me they needed more money. And so I said, "Okay." So I took my daughter—who was about 10, I guess, maybe younger—took her down to the bank with me to get a loan. They were asking me what my assets were, and about our house, and all that sort of thing. And her little eyes got bigger and bigger, and she said, "Are you selling our house? Where will we live?" I tried to explain to her we'd be okay, and luckily we were. We came out on top. We had a debt at the end of the campaign, but not one that was insurmountable—and one that we could pay off very quickly after we were elected.

JOHNSON: How involved was your family in your campaigns?

PATTERSON: Oh, they've always been involved. My husband is very supportive. I thought he would go in politics, but he's the kind that likes to work behind the scenes. So he was very supportive. And my children liked the excitement of

going places and doing things, and to this day probably two of my three will probably do some sort of political action at one point. So they were involved. My oldest son went with me a lot, and then my daughter who was younger went with me some. She's the youngest, so she could slip away from the boys, maybe. But they were involved—same things as I did as a child, handing out things, and asking people to vote for their momma. So they were involved.

WASNIEWSKI: Just to close up on campaigns, you mentioned how diverse the district was, and you ran for three terms, and the very close campaigns, the first two. What's it like to be someone who has to campaign in a swing district?

PATTERSON: It was difficult. Number one, it was difficult because you couldn't really settle into your job here. You had to be constantly aware of what was happening in the district, and, of course, I was hearing from some of them—so many of them about what I'd done wrong, or "You need to be careful about this," or whatever. And, because of the committees I was on, the Banking Committee was under scrutiny a lot.

The third campaign was fairly easy, but it was because of the opponent wasn't strong. But the fourth one was tough, and I just didn't take it as tough. Wish I'd worked a little bit harder.

WASNIEWSKI: You said if it—it kept a lot of your focus down back in the district. Practically, how did that work out in the office? Did you structure your D.C. office a little differently so that you had more staff in the district?

PATTERSON: I had a good bit of staff in my—in the district, to do all those, as we talked about, constituent services. And they did a marvelous job. So much so that I'd run into somebody in the grocery story, and they say, "You helped me get my grandmomma in the nursing home," or "You helped my husband get in the veterans' hospital." And I'd always tell them, "I didn't do it—my staff

did. They were so good." They really were excellent staff. I had one person in Union, three people in Spartanburg, and three people in Greenville. So, they were on—and they were out, doing their constituent services, and meeting people, speaking at groups, and whatever. So a lot was done down there.

But on legislation, I really couldn't dig into things like I wanted. And I had good staff here. I had wonderful, young staff that were good at researching and going to committees and knowing what was going on, so they could brief me. But I really wanted to be more involved myself in some of that. I would miss a meeting because I had to be in another meeting, and you had to be so careful about not having a fundraiser during those days or hours or whatever. So, I just felt like I didn't have enough time. There was too much emphasis on raising money when I was here. I'm not good at it, for one thing.

I have to tell you a little story that happened, that—for true. When I first came up here, they told me I needed to raise money, and I said, "Well, you know, in the South, it's difficult for women to raise money." I said, "We do it for the PTA, we do it for a charity or a church, but it's difficult." And the lady who I was talking to said, "You just need to go home and go out on the street and ask for money." And I said, "You know, in the South, a woman on the street asking for money isn't a very nice person." And that was sort of how—I knew she didn't mean on the street, but that was sort of . . . It was difficult. It was much easier for me to get a surrogate to raise money for me than for me to ask personally—pick up the phone and call somebody and say, "Can you give me $1,000? Or $5,000?" It was hard to get out of your mouth.

WASNIEWSKI: We've heard that from a number of people.

PATTERSON: Oh, I bet you have.

WASNIEWSKI: Yes. Yes.

PATTERSON: It's just, there needs to be some limits. Really does. For my district—the first time I ran—which doesn't sound like a lot now—first time I ran it was $800,000. And the second time it was a little bit more than that. The third time it was less, but, it got higher and higher—and just too costly.

JOHNSON: All the experience that you had campaigning, was that something that you enjoyed?

PATTERSON: I enjoyed it to a point. I really enjoyed going in little stores and going up and down Main Street and doing that sort of thing. Meeting new people, or going to see other people, old people or people I knew before, not necessarily old. So I really enjoyed that facet of campaigning, once you get started. Sometimes, the first time you get out of the car, you're like, "Gee. I'm tired. Wish I could just go home." But once you get started, it's sort of, the adrenaline starts pumping, and you do better. So, once I got started, and, of course, once I was in areas where everybody was supporting me, it was pretty easy.

Right now, the wrangle about town meetings—I had so many town meetings, so many town meetings. I knew, in certain areas, there was going to be some hostility. This is strange, how things change. At that time, the "notch baby" issue with Social Security—you all probably—you remember that?[2] That was a big thing. And so notch babies would turn up at stump meetings wanting to know if I was going to fix it, and I would tell them that I was going to do my best. You know, that I had signed on the bill to try and help. But I knew there was no way to really correct that, but they would turn up, and then a lot of the people dealing with pro-life would come to the meetings, and sort of ask me my stand. And I always sort of threw it back at

them, and said, "Yes, I'm for life. Who isn't pro-life?" But they would hassle me sometimes. So, but the town meetings were a good time for me to meet people, make friendships, and solidify support, which I really enjoyed.

Now, our Congressman doesn't have town meetings. He did do a telephone town meeting just recently, and screened the phone calls and only accepted 12 questions, so, to me that's not a town meeting. That's just not. He offered it to be a phone [meeting]. But things have changed. They're afraid to . . . And I don't know why because in my area, it's a sure Republican district. It's when they realigned it so much, gerrymandered it so much, that it will be a long time before a Democrat's elected, and the only thing that he fears is someone who's a stronger Tea Party [candidate]. So I don't know why they don't go ahead and have town meetings.

JOHNSON: We just had one more question about campaigning before we moved on to your career.

PATTERSON: Okay.

JOHNSON: And you noticed when you came in here the picture of the campaign button that we have that says "Liz Patterson for Congress."

PATTERSON: Yes.

JOHNSON: That's part of the House Collection. We were wondering if you have any sort of story or connection to that particular button—if there's anything that you remember?

PATTERSON: Not the button. We didn't have a whole lot of buttons. Later we had ones that said "Re-elect." The bumper stickers, we had different messages sometimes. But we didn't spend a lot of money on buttons that I recall. You

know, stick-'em buttons, sometimes, at rallies, but I can't remember many buttons. Now, if you asked me about buttons during my dad's campaign, I could tell you about a variety of buttons. But not really, that was the only button I really remember.

JOHNSON: What about generally speaking with campaign materials? How involved were you in making those decisions?

PATTERSON: In the beginning, very involved. I had a friend who . . . At that time, I guess she was doing web management or whatever, and she could go on the computer. When I told her what kind of bumper sticker I wanted, she could go on and draw part of it up and tell me, "How do you like this?" and "Do you think that's strong enough? I think if you did this, your name would be stronger." So, she helped me a lot. And she helped me with the red, white, and blue. I had wanted possibly do to do another color, and they said, "No, you need to stick with red, white, and blue. If you do other colors . . ." We had had campaigns that were successful with other colors, but they told me to stick with that, so we did. So I was involved.

Whenever we did campaign material, I'd try and be involved as much as possible because I knew when people read a brochure and read something, they were then going to ask me about it. And I'd better be prepared to say what it meant. Basically, what we handed out at campaigns were fact sheets, more than anything else. We didn't do a lot of campaign material. Now, my staff might correct you, and tell you that we did. It's been a while, so I can't really remember anything too different. Although at some point we had some that said, "I Love Liz." But we were afraid then that people wouldn't know who Liz was and who—"What's she running for?" so we sort of played that down. But it was because a lot of people just knew me as Liz. It was just sort of an easy way to do it.

WASNIEWSKI: When you first came to the House in 1987, there were a little less than two dozen women. Because there were so few, did you find that women tended to gravitate towards each other and bond?

PATTERSON: Not really. In our freshman class there were four—two Republicans and two Democrats. And during that orientation and whatever, I sort of bonded with the other Democrat. That was Louise [McIntosh] Slaughter because she had such a southern accent because she was originally from Kentucky, and I didn't. People would ask her if she was from South Carolina, and then they'd think that I was from her state, and so we sort of bonded and kidded a lot about that. Pat [Patricia] Saiki was in that class, and Connie [Constance A.] Morella. And I knew them, but we really didn't bond as a class.

Once we were elected and then the women in Congress, there was—and I don't want to put this wrong—no, there wasn't a lot of bonding. The ones who had been here for a while and knew what they were doing and had done a lot seemed to be together. We had to sort of work our way into that group. I don't think I could say I was really close to many Members, women in Congress. Jill [Lynette] Long came along later, and we got to be great friends. And, of course, Lindy Boggs continued to help me and lead me whenever. But I never felt a part of "the women" of Congress. I was there, but I never felt as much a part because there were so many strong women who had already been here, and knew the ropes, and were doing a good job.

I did question something at one of the Women's Caucus meetings, and I was almost verbally attacked by one of the Members because I said what I believed. It was a Member of the Senate. And one who was known for being sort of not hostile, but was sort of outspoken. {laughter} You're going to probably almost guess who it was. We were not—and we really weren't on both sides of something. She just thought that I was—and it dealt with the

breast cancer research and how hospitals would use it. I just told her what we did in my area, and I thought that worked, and she said that wouldn't work. But I just sat there quietly from then on, and I think she probably remembered who I was.

They just, so many of them really—and were much more aggressive. That's something I probably lack, is I'm not aggressive. I'm not going to—I don't want attention. I don't go to the podium to say something all the time. I wait until I have something really on my mind. And that's been true all along—the county council and the state senate, and in Congress. I'm not one to just try to seek publicity. I think the only time I went during special session—not special sessions.

WASNIEWSKI: Special orders?

PATTERSON: Special order, I went. A lot of them use that as messages to get home, televised and otherwise. And I went, one time, and it was just to announce the peaches from South Carolina, and how we had had a good crop, and that I had brought peaches up for every Member of Congress. So, mine was something like that, rather than to argue about some legislation. And I spoke out on how I felt on legislation in several areas, but I just wasn't one trying to get a name in the paper.

WASNIEWSKI: Before we get too far away from the election, I meant to ask, and this is a good point. You were the first woman from South Carolina elected in her own right. There had been four widows who succeeded you, going back to the late 1930s, early '40s. How was that moment for you, when you took the oath office?

PATTERSON: Well, there was so much to-do about that I was the first woman. And I always corrected it, and said, "The first woman elected for a full term in her

own right." Then I had to explain it. The reason I always corrected it is, one of those woman was still living [Elizabeth Hawley Gasque]. And she was a friend. I wanted people to not forget that we'd had women before. Now, true, one of them didn't serve but a day, but they were there. It was sort of interesting. For a while people would say something about it, but then now whenever I get introduced someplace, they use it. People understand what they're saying. You almost have to stop and say, I always, always add, "And they were elected because their husband died. In my case, luckily, my husband didn't die, so I could serve a full term." Because that's the sad part of that story.

WASNIEWSKI: Who was the one who was a friend who was living?

PATTERSON: Last name was—she remarried, so it wasn't the name she had in Congress. Her last name was Gooding. Do you have the names?

WASNIEWSKI: Yes. Elizabeth Gasque, Clara [Gooding] McMillan, Willa [Lybrand] Fulmer, and Corinne [Boyd] Riley.

PATTERSON: Of course, I knew Mrs. McMillan. Her husband was a good friend of my dad's.

WASNIEWSKI: Okay. Did she offer any advice to you?

PATTERSON: No, I just called her. And she was in her 80s, maybe 90s when I called her. I just thought, I'd let her know that I was in the race. But I didn't want them to be forgotten because that was a big day for them.

WASNIEWSKI: Absolutely.

JOHNSON: Did you receive a lot of press coverage, especially locally in South Carolina because of this achievement?

PATTERSON: Of being elected? I got good coverage when I was elected, yes. There was a lot said about it, and the longer I stayed, of course, the more people would mention things. "She's going to be a rising star," and all that sort of thing, so we got good press coverage. Very good.

By the way, when you all were asking me about another woman serving, whenever I would give speeches, I would always tell them the story of Jeannette Rankin how she was elected two times, and how bold she was, and how she voted, and Jeannette Rankin's statue is in Statuary Hall. I would talk about her because I just thought it was interesting. And, of course, she lived in Georgia for part of her life, too. So there's sort of, she was not from Georgia, but she at least had a little bit of southern in her. And I would tell people about how bold she was, and how she got elected that second time, and then defeated again.

WASNIEWSKI: That's an amazing story she has.

PATTERSON: It is.

JOHNSON: How would you describe the atmosphere of the House when you were elected, as far as women were concerned? Was it a welcoming place for you?

PATTERSON: It was. It was welcoming. You know, a lot of people that I sat with and I knew and everything, they never made me feel that as a woman I wasn't welcome. {laughter} I always laughed about Barney Frank because I was on the Housing Committee with him—and Banking, Finance, and Urban Renewal, it was then—but he happened to know a good friend of mine from South Carolina who writes for a political journal up here. And he would always tease me about what that fellow would put in his newsletter about me. Barney was such a tease, and is such a tease, that he always made me feel like, "I'm at home. I'm at home." So there were others like that, that were really

good to me. And a lot of the ones on the Banking Committee were good to me. Doug [Druie Douglas] Barnard [Jr.] was one. That was an interesting committee. There are not many of them still here. Chuck Schumer is.

Then on the Veterans' Committee, that was probably the most warm group of people I served with. Sonny [Gillespie V.] Montgomery, the chairman, was just incredible. And he was doing what he thought we should be doing, with the veterans, and so that group was really warming, more than any.

JOHNSON: We're going to ask you, in a couple minutes, more questions about committee service, but did any of those people that you mentioned or any others serve as a mentor for you when you first came to Congress, or offer you some helpful advice?

PATTERSON: It's interesting who helped me—Tony Coelho—because he was then head of DCCC [Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee] or whatever. But he really helped me with his style. He would come over and sit by me and say, "Now listen. You do what you think is best for your district. Don't feel like you have to go out on a limb for anybody. Just do what you think is best for your district, and if I can help you in any way, I will." And he would talk to me very gently.

There were others. I guess probably the classic one that I still almost sort of tear up when I think about it, is Mo [Morris King] Udall. Many years ago, when he ran for President, I decided I was going to support Mo Udall. So I had my button, "I'm for Mo." I wore it in the [House] Chamber one day and showed it to him. And we just sort struck up a friendship and that was when he was so sick. But we would visit and talk about the days, in the old days, or whenever. And he would tell me to hang in here. "Things will be tough

sometimes and good sometimes." But he was a real inspiration—I guess is the word I'd use—because he really was very sick.

WASNIEWSKI: You mentioned Lindy Boggs, too.

PATTERSON: Yes.

WASNIEWSKI: Do you have any good Lindy Boggs stories? Seems like everyone's got a good Lindy story. {laughter}

PATTERSON: Oh, Lindy is incredible. Of course, like I said, we had known the family. My story about Lindy, though, basically, is before I was in Congress. I worked for the Office of Economic Opportunity under [Sargent] Shriver, and Lindy and Ladybird [Johnson] had come up with the idea of preschool education. And they were having meetings, and this office wanted some representatives. So I got to go over and work with them on the formation of Head Start. And it was just remarkable to me, the two of them, who didn't need to be there, didn't need to be working on issues, were so dedicated to it. And Lindy just impressed me at that point. And we continued to—I just have held her up in high esteem, as I do her daughter, now, Cokie [Roberts].

Then we went to—I'm trying to think why—we went to New Orleans for some sort of congressional meeting. And she invited us to her home, her home on Bourbon Street, and that was incredible. My husband is still talking about that—and how open it was, and how friendly and welcoming, and whatever. So we stayed in touch. But Lindy just always seemed to me . . . she was another one that was quiet. I don't know if I ever saw Lindy go to the podium and get publicity. She was always working very quietly behind the scenes, and I guess that was why I sort of liked her style and sort of followed her. But she was amazing. And I later went to work for Head Start. So, it was sort of interesting to see those two ladies put something together.

JOHNSON: The room that eventually was set aside for Congresswomen was named after Lindy Boggs.

PATTERSON: Yes. Yes, I remember that.

JOHNSON: And that's one question that we've been asking women Members about, is how important was it for you to have that space where it was just reserved for women Members?

PATTERSON: You know, I didn't go in that room very often. We would have a called meeting, and I would go in. And I bet I went in there maybe half a dozen times. So, it's important because it sort of signifies a couple of things. One, that at last, we realized there are women here. There's restrooms for them, there are things for them that weren't here for a number of years—or convenient restrooms. So it's sort of a message that, "Yes, we realize women are here." And then, it's important that women—because there are certain issues that women need to get together and share and talk about—and it is important to have a room like that available.

JOHNSON: Were there any other places that you met, either formally or informally, on the Hill? Or even off the Hill?

PATTERSON: Places that I met?

JOHNSON: Yes, for women Members, especially.

PATTERSON: I don't remember that. Or if they had them, I just don't remember. Probably were. The meeting that I talked about earlier wasn't—there were Members of the Senate and the House meeting, and I'm sure there's a place on the Senate side too. But that day we were meeting on the House side with several Senators.

WASNIEWSKI: Just a few questions about the Women's Caucus, and then maybe take a break because we're almost an hour in. We're just curious to know, did you join the Women's Caucus? And what are your memories of the caucus?

PATTERSON: I joined, but I didn't do a lot with the caucus. Again, it was because I never had time to really get comfortable in my office doing legislation. I would come up, I would fly up Tuesday morning, and as soon as we had our last vote on Thursday, I'd fly home. And I felt compelled to do that in order to get re-elected—I just felt I had to be home. So, with that sort of schedule, when I was here, I very rarely broke away from my normal committees. And of course, Banking, Finance, we were having some pretty heavy meetings at that time about the Savings and Loan [Crisis] and about Glass–Steagall, so we were pretty busy.

And in Veterans' Affairs, Sonny kept us busy, too. I never spent a whole lot of time outside of those committees, and the Committee on Hunger, and my Textile Caucus. You just didn't have time to do it all. I can see where the more senior women in Congress would have time to do it.

I can't remember what the issue was. You all probably remember. That they would ask all the women of Congress to go over and stand on the Senate steps about some issue to sort of protest something. It was right when I had a bunch of constituents in my office. And I said, "I just can't break away from them." And, of course, there's big media coverage. I've forgotten what it was. I said, "I'm just going to meet with my constituents." So, I was one of I guess about five women that didn't go over that day.

In the Women's Caucus, there was division. You can imagine there was some, as there is today—maybe more so today. I don't know if the Women's Caucus meets today, but there's certainly a division in interest and strengths.

JOHNSON: Even though you didn't have the opportunity to be that active, for the reasons you described, how important do you think it was for women to have a caucus?

PATTERSON: Oh, I think it's very important. And I think you have—if the women are going to succeed and get our fair share of representation, you've got to have something like the Women's Caucus. I think things that come out of that is they do come up, and they do encourage other women to run. They talk about what went on in the Women's Caucus—if it's the kind of thing they can talk about—so I think it's important. I think it's always nice to have a group that you can share ideas with.

Now, I'm not sure how open it was as far as everybody sharing their . . . I can't remember who all came to the couple of Women's Caucus meetings I went to. Again, it almost seemed like it was certain Members that didn't like the idea of having a Women's Caucus, or felt like their views were not in keeping with the Women's Caucus. There was always that, "Look who started it," type thing, and do they really have an open door for my ideas? I can't remember a lot of diversity in those caucus meetings I went to, and it was never a very big group. Now, it's probably changed because there's so many more women being elected now.

JOHNSON: There weren't that many women when you were in Congress.

PATTERSON: No. There were only 23 Members of the House.

JOHNSON: Right.

PATTERSON: So, yes, there just weren't many. And you pick and choose 23—and the different beliefs, and stances, issues and whatever—it was a wide, wide range of people.

WASNIEWSKI: The one thing we've heard consistently from everyone we've asked is that it really depended on who the co-chairs were.

PATTERSON: Oh, yes. I'm sure it did. Yes. I should be able to tell you who they were when I was here. I can't, but I would think it definitely would depend on it.

WASNIEWSKI: That relationship. Do you want to take a two-minute break and grab a glass of water?

PATTERSON: If that suits you all, that's fine.

WASNIEWSKI: Sure.

END OF PART ONE ~ BEGINNING OF PART TWO

WASNIEWSKI: So we just wanted to know a little bit about your experience growing up in the Capitol because you've talked about being a Member here and having a very strict Tuesday–Thursday schedule. So you got that end of the spectrum, but talk about life when you were the daughter of a Member, and what it was like living in Washington?

PATTERSON: We actually lived out in Maryland—Montgomery County, Kensington, Maryland. And we did not come in a lot, except on Saturdays when my dad worked, and there I'd come in. So we knew the Capitol, and the garages, and wherever I could do my roller skating. We did occasional things with other Members of Congress. Now, Mom and Dad would do things. But they would have things for children, and I would participate in those. There was some contest one year, and my sister and I sang in it, I can't remember what it was. A disaster, if I sang. We participated in things with other families.

Mother and Daddy were friends with a lot of families. My mom was active in the Senate Red Cross Ladies, so she got to know all those. And so much so that when Lyndon Johnson was elected to the Senate—I have to back up—and they came to Washington, their girls were younger than my sister and me, but just enough that we could share things, and they didn't have bicycles—and so one of them got one of our bicycles. Mrs. Johnson and Momma were good friends. There were several families that we interlaced with, and like I said, I went to school with Nancy Humphrey and her family lived not too far away. So there were families that we got to know because my parents weren't really big social people. But whenever we had the opportunity to come to the Capitol and to be around for something, we were here. Does that answer it?

WASNIEWSKI: Yes. I'm just curious how that kind of bond, getting to know people outside of the chamber, outside of the office, how important that was to the institution itself, and the way it worked?

PATTERSON: It was real important to me because I was a little girl, really, when I was doing that skating. So I got to know the policemen, I got to know people who worked here on Saturdays, and got to know a lot of Capitol Hill. Now, Rayburn [House Office Building] wasn't built when my dad was in Senate, but I would get lost sometimes, and not sure where they were coming out, and people would help me. I'm still not sure I'm answering your question, though.

WASNIEWSKI: Your personal experiences are—that's exactly what we want. But I'm also thinking, kind of, how important those personal interactions were, off the Hill to the way business was done here on the Hill. Was it a different place because of that?

PATTERSON: I think it was. I think there was—friendships off the Hill played into a lot of successes. There was a group of Senators who were good friends of my dad that we did things with, and my family traveled with. And there were people who were not like my father. Senator—I always have to hesitate—Senator [Robert Samuel] Kerr—from Oklahoma was not like my dad, but they were big buddies. Daddy didn't play poker, but Daddy was always there when they were playing poker. Daddy didn't drink, but he and Rob Kerr were good friends.

Then the Senators from Mississippi, of course, were friends of my dad. And a Senator from Louisiana that was a very good friend, Allen [Joseph] Ellender, he and his wife were good friends of my parents, and they traveled together. So, there were friendships that were important, especially to my mom. When Daddy was down here working all the time, it was important for her to get to know some of those folks a little bit better, more intimately.

WASNIEWSKI: Absolutely. Okay.

JOHNSON: And then when you came back to Congress, and you were elected, in the late 1980s, how had the institution changed from when you were younger, and you were having all these experiences?

PATTERSON: You know, it might have just been my feeling, but it just seemed like it was so much bigger, in many ways—more staff. I don't remember how many people my Daddy had in his office—although he had extra staff because of his chairmanship—but it just seemed like all of a sudden everything had grown, gotten bigger.

And then, of course, the incoming of computers, and all of that, and that technology that started to come in, so it was different. It looked like it was much bigger. And I guess because I knew some of the people, and I knew my

way—I really didn't know my way around on the House side. Daddy was in the Russell [Senate Office] Building, and I knew my way around the Russell Building, and how to get to the Capitol. But I don't think I ever even came to the House side when my dad was in the Senate. Not that there was any downplaying.

But I knew who the Congressmen from South Carolina were, and where they were over here, but I don't remember really visiting any of them. Now, one of the Congressmen from South Carolina was a very, very good friend of my dad's. And so we saw them often—my mom and dad. But it just seemed like a bigger place—a busier place, I guess. Although my father, if he were living, would probably tell you that it was just as busy.

You know, it's just different. When you have to do everything paperless, electronically, and everything, it seems to me as though that takes away some of the . . . this sounds crazy. I think you can slow down better if you don't have to do all that, and you have to really . . . my husband argues that—he doesn't practice law anymore because you can't pick up a book and read it and study it. You have to go to the computer. And I think it's the same thing up here. You go to the computer and read the bill, but that's not quite the same as holding it in your hand and looking. I know you can mark on the computer, but really study it and make a study of it, take it home, and not use your computer. So, there's differences there, I think. Which I guess people would say is good. They can move legislation through quicker. But it just seems like they don't move it any quicker. {laughter}

WASNIEWSKI: And talk a little bit about your committee service. So, you came into the House, and you were assigned Veterans' Affairs and the Banking, what was then Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs. And we're curious to know, are

there any stories about how you got on these committees? And were they your first choice?

PATTERSON: Veterans' Affairs was, because I talked during the campaign a lot, that I . . . And when it came down to the second, there were several committees I probably would have liked to have been on. But I had to stop and think, "How would people at home feel about me being on those?" Some that were too hot-button or whatever. But the Banking Committee, the reason I ended up going on it is, someone said, "You know, it also does housing." And I was interested then in several issues dealing with housing. I felt more comfortable about going on that. Banker friends at home wanted me to go on the, wanted to have representation on that committee. And so that's why I ended up . . .

Veterans at that time, one in nine people in my district was a veteran and so I felt like I was representing them. And I won't tell you, the Banking Committee, I had a lot to learn. Because I'd never been involved in banking, finance, and so it was a lot to learn, and it probably wasn't as easy for me as I would have liked. But it was an interesting group, and interesting issues.

JOHNSON: When you first joined in 1987, you were one of three Democratic women, when we were looking at the committee rosters. Was the reception that you received good, as one of the few women? And did you feel like the women on the committee had to work a little bit harder to be taken seriously?

PATTERSON: Probably on the Banking Committee, yes, a woman had to be a little more informed and aggressive. I remember, especially on the Republican side, there were two that were very, very knowledgeable, and very involved. I'm trying to think who was on Banking with me. I guess it was Marcy [Marcia Carolyn] Kaptur, but I can't remember.

JOHNSON: Mary Rose Oakar.

PATTERSON: Mary Rose Oakar. Right. And she was going through some problems at that time, so I didn't really get to know her. We spoke, and we visited, but didn't really get to know her on that committee. So I really got more support from men on that committee that I got to know and that I had confidence in. That's probably how I got to know what the issues were and felt comfortable, more comfortable, about being on the Finance—Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs. {laughter} I can't get used to the new name.

WASNIEWSKI: Who were the men who you interacted with?

PATTERSON: Well, I think I mentioned earlier, Doug Barnard from Georgia.

WASNIEWSKI: Okay.

PATTERSON: I really had a great deal of confidence in Doug. And, again, strangely enough, Barney Frank. I sat next to Joe [Joseph Patrick] Kennedy [II], and so we would exchange information or whatever from time to time. But Joe wasn't as serious about that committee as a lot of people were. He was just there. But, so he didn't share a lot of issues. I'm trying to think who else was on that committee, on that top row. Of course, Chuck [Charles Ellis] Schumer was on that committee. That was also the committee that had problems with the chairman, from time to time. Although [Henry B.] González and I were friends, the other one prior to that I wasn't as, Freddy—

WASNIEWSKI: [Fernand Joseph] St. Germain.

PATTERSON: Yes. So it was interesting, the folks that . . . How that committee went through several changes, and problem areas as they were dealing with tough issues. I won't tell you, I shake my head every time I think about some of the things we voted on, and I wish I'd been more knowledgeable, and I wish I'd been more outspoken. Because I wish more people on the savings and loan

issue—I wish more of them had gone to jail. And I don't know, I never did understand why all that that went on and the laws that were broken, the people that were hurt, why they didn't go to jail. And that was something for me. Then now, with the situation in the banking world, I wonder, did we really do the right thing, in bringing down the wall? Glass–Steagall. So it was a real learning, for me, and I probably needed to be more knowledgeable on that committee.

Now, the Veterans' Committee was a delight. The main staff member on the Veterans' Committee had been under [William Jennings] Bryan Dorn—Mack Fleming was from South Carolina, and he was a friend of mine. I knew him well. He helped me on that committee, as did Sonny [Montgomery]. They helped me introduce a little—they said, "Don't you want to have a bill on your record?" They helped me introduce a little piece of legislation that actually passed. Nothing big and significant, you all probably might have—I don't know if you all even picked up on it. Nurses had been very supportive for me in all my campaigns and so had the Veterans' Administration. So, the guy who headed up the veterans' hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, had come to me and said, "You know, I'm losing a lot of my nurses, and good people, because of childcare." And so we put together a—Mr. Fleming and I put together—a bill that said, "Where space was available in the veterans' facility, that there should be a daycare for the employees, and it should be cost-effective." I don't know if any of them did it or not, but it was put in the veterans' appropriation bill. You do things like that, and you feel like you've done so much, and you wonder about all legislation how much of it is really carried out and gone through everything.

JOHNSON: We had read on the Veteran's Committee during your second term that you were the only woman serving on the committee. {laughter}

PATTERSON: I was.

JOHNSON: What was that like? And, again, did you feel like you had to work a little bit harder?

PATTERSON: No, not really, I'm sitting here thinking, "Oh, was I? I'd forgotten that." So, no, there was no real problem. The Veterans' Committee had so many really—I shouldn't say good people, but warm people, especially on the Democratic side, that I knew. Jim [James Prather] Jontz, who'd been elected the same time I was. And, of course, Joe Kennedy was on there with me too, so we were following each other around. So the members on the Democratic side of that committee, we were all pretty friendly to one another and helpful to one another. I really enjoyed being on Veterans' Affairs.

Now, some of the things we discussed were interesting, but I did wonder, "Why are we sitting here having hearings on this?" Like, we had a hearing on tombstones at veterans' hospitals where they had graveyards. Should the tombstones be up or should they be down? Up, they said, people who are in the hospital dying probably don't want to see the tombstones because that signifies death. But if they put them down flat, then maintaining the yard around them is difficult. So, we got into discussions like that, and then what size coffin, and what kind it could be, and we had different people come in and demonstrate the different kinds of coffins.

I think probably the best thing we did from the Veterans' Committee, and it went on to others for approval, was when we changed the name of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Sonny Montgomery especially thought, "It's not a soldier. It's the tomb of more than one soldier and one area of the military." So he encouraged that that be changed. And he didn't really like the Tomb of

the Unknowns, but he said that was better than . . . Isn't that what they call it now, the Tomb of the Unknowns?

But, it was interesting to see the issues we took up on the Veterans' Committee that were so important to veterans. Of course, we heard from all the veterans' organizations about their concerns, and I do think they have sort of been forgotten in recent years. I think about all the veterans' hospitals, and what's going on, and management because the ones I dealt with were wonderful, especially the one in Asheville.

JOHNSON: That issue that you spoke about with the daycare center that certainly would help a lot of women veterans. Did you feel, because you were the only woman on the committee, or did women come to you, trying to get you to help them with certain areas to represent them?

PATTERSON: I didn't really ever have that. And what was funny about that little bill, I don't think anybody ever thought about it as being just for females because we did say, "any employee of a veterans' hospital." So if there were people working—a father. That he would have the opportunity to use the daycare. So we tried to tone it so it wasn't . . . because when I was in the state senate, I got so teased about bills that I introduced. "Ha, ha, ha, look, that's some feminine bill. That's, whatever." Nobody paid that much attention to it. It just sounded like a good idea to everybody, and the nurses liked it. So there wasn't too much talked about in a feminist move. And nobody came to me and said, "Will you help me get a bill passed in my committee?" So, no.

WASNIEWSKI: A bit earlier, you mentioned the Congressional Textile Caucus. And we read that you had chaired that. I'm just wondering what your memories of the caucus were, and what that job of chairing the caucus was like for you?

PATTERSON: The caucus didn't meet really often. We met occasionally. And it was bipartisan, and we had some good leadership in that. What we did do more than anything is give support to that industry that we were still concerned, and we were still looking at ways that we could help them. NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], for instance—I left before the final vote for NAFTA. But they were very concerned about that. And by the way, I was chairman of the committee for maybe six months. I was elected and then I was defeated. At that point, the Textile Caucus had gone down so far that there were, when we'd have a meeting, there might have been maybe 12 people there, not a lot of people. Because people had sort of decided, we need to look other directions as far as textiles. That's interesting because textiles now are coming back in my area. Cotton has become the king down there again.

It was a good group to be with. I went with members of the Textile Caucus to Taiwan, mainly to see how they were doing in their textile mills. Our host was not really anxious for us to see the mills. They showed us a yacht manufacturing company. They showed us fishing industry. They showed us everything you could imagine, and I kept saying, "I'd really like to see one of your textile mills." And so, about the day we were getting ready to leave, they let us go in the textile mill, and we learned quite a great deal.

They had housing for them, and they would bicycle in from their little town on Monday, and stay there until they'd bicycle back to their little town home. They were women, and if they got pregnant, they got sent home. I could see why it was cheap labor. It just broke my heart that it was cheap labor, and that's what we were competing with.

But at the same time, when we were there, I realized, my state didn't have a trade center. Many states did have it. I thought, "You know, if you want to

promote your textiles, why don't we have a trade center here to promote them?" And they said, "Well, they're planning on doing it." It was a big building, and there were lots of states and other organizations represented. I kept saying, "I need to go home and tell our governor or whoever to do that, because we have to have a presence." But that was an interesting eye opener about textiles in Taiwan. They weren't going to show us those mills. They really weren't.

JOHNSON: We read that you also chaired the Conservative Democratic Forum's task force on budget reform. Can you describe what this task force was all about?

PATTERSON: Well, the Conservative Democratic Forum met every Wednesday after the prayer breakfast. And we just usually found a little alcove to sit down and talk about the issue that was pending, and where we as conservatives should vote to go, or how we should conquer that particular vote. Then they put me on that committee because I had made some suggestions on how I thought we could deal with the budget and balance. And there were some extremes and things that I knew wouldn't get passed.

We met several times, trying to figure out a way to—and there were some strong people in that caucus. Of course, Charlie [Charles Walter] Stenholm headed it up, but David [Keith] McCurdy . . . There were just several who were really strong about, "We've got to do something about the budget. We can't keep talking about it, we can't keep taxing and spending and being picked on." And of course, being all Democrats, we all had our eyes on looking better to the community about where Democrats stood on issues. We would come up with suggestions on the budget, and try to say whether we should support them and go for it. It wasn't a lot of action, just a lot of mainly a lot of talk and sharing because it's tough to deal with that budget. We tried.

WASNIEWSKI: You served when the Democrats were in the majority. You had two Democratic Speakers, [James Claude] Wright [Jr.] and [Thomas Stephen] Foley. We're just wondering if you have any memories of those two gentlemen, and if you can compare or contrast their leadership styles as Speakers?

PATTERSON: Well, let me start with Jim Wright. He was serving when I was elected. Each new Member had the opportunity—a Democrat, or I guess maybe both—had the opportunity to meet with him. And when I went to meet with him in his Capitol Hill office, he asked me how things were going, and we chatted and talked about things. I said, "Well, I just have one complaint." He said, "What's that?" I said, "You know, all through orientation, and even now, you all don't seem to realize that there are women here." And he said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well, every place I go, it's 'Fellas, let's get ready and do this.' 'Fellas, let's get ready and do this.'" And I said, "It just seems to me, you could have said something, 'colleagues,' or something besides 'fellas.'" He had a smile on his face. He got up, and he went and rolled over this big dictionary—which I now have the one that was my dad's like it. I think they gave them to every Member of Congress—and he rolled it over, and he showed me the definition of "fellow." Of course, it's not male—"fellowship." So he says, "So we really weren't talking you all down. We were including you. In this fellowship, we're all together." I had to sort of smile and say, "Well, that's not quite how I take it, but thank you." {laughter}

But he was good, easy to talk to. Gave me all the time I wanted. I thought he was a good leader, doing a good job. I'm sorry he got caught up in that book deal of his because I really think that he had good leadership talents, and strong. I think he had good people underneath him, too, that were doing a

good job of keeping votes tallied and doing things like that. I was really sorry when he was defeated just because I'd settled in with him—really had.

Now, Tom Foley, who doesn't like Tom Foley? He's what I used to call at home, people, "teddy bears." And, of course, I didn't serve under Tip [Thomas Philip] O'Neill [Jr.], but sort of the style I think of Tip. But Tom, I don't think he really enjoyed being Speaker. But I think he did a good job because he was quiet and so good. I never saw evidence of him really pushing a lot of things on Members. I saw him being very genteel and whatever, and again, was sorry when he was defeated—just a fine gent.

But, he got caught up in the same thing I did, basically. And that's gerrymandering, and not paying enough attention to your election. I know that it was difficult for him, and he wasn't going home often. I just felt for him because I thought he was in good leadership and was doing a good job. But the wave has started coming in, of conservatism. There might have been other Members of the Congress that might tell you that he was a very strong leader. I just saw him as being a very good leader, not demanding. Now, Jim Wright, I think would be demanding, right—almost hostile, if you didn't agree with him. I never had the opportunity to cross him. {laughter}

JOHNSON: Earlier we had asked you about what it was like to be the first woman elected in your own right from South Carolina. And a follow-up question to that we had, because you were the first, but you're also the only, still: Why do you think there have been so few women elected in South Carolina?

PATTERSON: It's so funny—and we've had a governor, we've had a lieutenant governor, we have a state superintendent of education—so we have women being elected. But when you get down to a congressional district, I don't know why. We've had women running, but they just don't seem to make it. And I'm not sure,

myself. Although I used to say, "Women didn't run because of the money." You know, the idea that they have to raise that money. Women are just not comfortable raising money for themselves.

And then they always use the excuses. I've tried to get women to run, and it's, "When my children get older." I keep saying, "No, you don't have to wait until your children get older. You can include them." But they use that, and then sometimes they say, "I'm not smart enough. I can't do that." And I say, "Look at Liz. I'm not by any means a scholar. You can do it." So I'm just trying to convince women. I have convinced several women to run, but they haven't had a chance. But it's strange that we haven't had a Republican woman because most of the districts are Republican. The only one that's not is Jim [James Enos] Clyburn, and, of course, he's not—I hope he doesn't retire any time soon. It's a shame—if they'll run for governor, why not Congress?

WASNIEWSKI: Looking back on your congressional career, were there any instances that stand out in your mind where women worked together across the aisle on a particular bill or issue?

PATTERSON: Again, I can't really remember working across the aisle with a woman on the other side, no. I just think that you hear this said so much. "You've got to be here a long time to get a lot done." In my six years I was still struggling to get elected at home. So I didn't have the time to really do the legislation, and doing the friendship of people across the aisle. I'm trying to think who across the aisle I served with, or even sat with or visited with—can't think who that might have been. I'm trying to think of the different women.

WASNIEWSKI: Some of the women, Connie Morella, would have been one.

PATTERSON: Now, Connie. Connie and I did do some things together. I should apologize there, yes. Her office was sort of diagonal across from mine. But she was in the same situation as I was, but sort of reverse. She was having to campaign viciously because her district was—she was in a Democratic district. I was in a Republican [district], and we both were more concerned, having to be re-elected. But Connie was really a hard worker and was doing a lot for her area. I'm trying to think of some of the things that I worked with, whether somebody on the other side of the aisle helped me. There were a couple of things that I did while I was here that I always tell people I'm proud of.

WASNIEWSKI: Marge [Margaret Scafati] Roukema?

PATTERSON: Yes, she was on House Banking and Urban Affairs. Marge was on that.

JOHNSON: Nancy [Lee] Johnson?

PATTERSON: Yes, I remember Nancy, but we didn't really do anything together.

WASNIEWSKI: Okay.

JOHNSON: That's fine.

PATTERSON: I'm trying to think. Marge was on the Banking Committee. There was another woman on the Banking Committee with me, I think.

WASNIEWSKI: Patricia Saiki.

PATTERSON: Oh, Pat. We were elected at the same time. And we visited and talked because of that, but didn't get to know her as well. She was very quiet spoken. I guess the two of us together were both so quiet that we didn't have a chance {laughter} to get to know one another. And you all have to remember, it's been 20-something years since I was here.

WASNIEWSKI: Oh, absolutely.

PATTERSON: So for me to remember all of these, it's . . . {laughter}

WASNIEWSKI: No, no. No, you're doing great.

JOHNSON: We're impressed with what you remembered so far. In passing, you mentioned a town hall where the issue of pro-choice and pro-life had come up. How important was that issue to your congressional career?

PATTERSON: Well, although I'm not positive now because there's so much [that] has happened in my district, I would say early on, that if I had been pro-life, I probably could have been elected longer because even some Republicans would have voted for me then. But it was important, but not—until the Tea Party group came in, and that was after me. That did not defeat me. They strongly did—I say they didn't, I'll take that back. When I was defeated, a group put out flyers—and I've heard various numbers, 15,000, I've heard 50,000—flyers that they put on church windows, giving my voting record. And, of course, it was primarily, I kill babies, and that was what it was. Then they did some radio spots that Monday. So a lot of people believe that's what defeated me, was that last push by the pro-life people. It probably was. Because I lost a good many votes in Union County, and that's just such a quiet little town and a county that always supported me.

So it was important in that last campaign, very much. Why, I still have some of those flyers, I still have a copy of the radio program that they said, which, of course, was not correct. You know, just how they can take a piece of a bill and say what you've done—how bad it was. But it was something you could not correct.

After the campaign, I went around to several of the churches and told them I was sorry they put that information out, and I tried to straighten them out on it, but they were pro-life, and didn't like anything that I had to say. I'd always point out to them, "I have an adopted child. You think I don't believe in life?" It's crazy. It was a big issue.

WASNIEWSKI: In 1991 there were a group of women from the House who marched over to the Senate Democratic Caucus.

PATTERSON: That's the one I didn't do.

WASNIEWSKI: And urged that Anita Hill be allowed to testify in the Clarence Thomas hearings for Supreme Court. Even though you didn't participate, what are your memories about that?

PATTERSON: That whole thing was so ugly. You see, and about that time, Clarence Thomas' wife was lobbying us for something. She was the Department of Labor and she was in our office all the time. It was difficult to know what was going on that such vicious—on both sides—how viral it was. So it was not a good time. Now, I got mailings and calls about it. And I would say, probably three quarters of the people said, "Don't put Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court." But then I got calls that said, "Listen to Anita Hill. These things happen. Don't you care about women being abused?" So it was an interesting situation. But I did not go over to any of the hearings, and I did not go over that day. That was the day that I had constituents in my office and I know that's sort of a puny excuse. I could have said, "I've got to go with my Members over there." But there were a number of women that did not. But the strong leadership did. I remember that.

WASNIEWSKI: How did that contribute to the atmosphere in 1992, that election? How did that—did it have any effect on the way you ran your campaign?

PATTERSON: The Anita Hill?

WASNIEWSKI: Just the issue of women's rights.

PATTERSON: The women's rights organization in South Carolina is just now really getting to be strong. We really, aside from a couple of groups, it really wasn't organized, it really wasn't outspoken. Groups like the League of Women Voters, which I was a member, would release a press statement or maybe have a hearing or a press conference. But I don't remember that even being mentioned in '92. Now, it might have been.

It has taken the women of South Carolina a while, and they're still struggling, as I am with them, to have our voices heard. A number came up to the Women's March on Washington [in 2017]. A number of them are now organizing that have never organized before, so, it's just taken a while. I never really had a group of women endorse me, aside from nurses. I never had women just have a press conference and say they're going to support me—and women leaders. Like, when I ran for lieutenant governor, I never had anybody statewide come forward and put together a women's group in support. I had women supporting me, but never organized, even if people knew of my stand about women's issues.

JOHNSON: Several of the people that we've interviewed, and definitely for staff as well, an issue that has come up is balancing a very demanding career with raising a family and having children that were young enough that they were still with you while you're in Congress. Can you talk a little bit about that experience for you?

PATTERSON: Well, I was lucky. My children were a little bit older. I was always amazed at women, who had babies while they were in Congress. I just didn't see how they did it, or had little children while they were in Congress. Our children

were 16, 13, and 11. I was lucky that mine were older, so it was easy to find somebody to care for them, and get them to school and get them home from school. So it wasn't too difficult. And because I had involved them in my campaigns and in what we were doing, the kids really worked out well.

Now, I brought them up here for the swearing in, brought them up here several other times on special trips—took them on several trips. The Arts Caucus went to New York for four days to see plays and hear musicians, and whenever I took my children, and they really remember that. We went to Philadelphia for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the [Constitution]. And my children went. We went on tours out to Gettysburg. My son, my middle child, never meets a stranger. So he got to know so many of the girls and boys of—sisters—I'll say daughters and sons of the Members of Congress then that he really sort of still wonders where some of them are. And my daughter found a little girl that she really liked, and my son found a little girl that he liked. Senator [Clarence William (Bill)] Nelson from Florida, he had two of the cutest kids. And Jack [Bascom] Brooks had some children that related to my children, but I guess the closest one was a good friend from Atlanta—John [R.] Lewis. John Lewis had a son that was the same age as my son, and the two of them did lots of things together. Olin would ask about him. Every time I'd see Congressman Lewis, he would ask, "Where is he now?" And they've never gotten together, but my son would have liked to link up—my son has learning disabilities, and he was going to school in Vermont at that time. And he was flying back and forth a lot, and sometimes he would have the opportunity to be here.

And that's how like he told me today, "Don't worry about me, Mom! I know where everything is. I'll take everybody." And he literally does. He's been up in the [Capitol] Dome, which I've never been. He got somebody to take him

up there. And the best story is, he got to be friends with one of the doormen, named Nathaniel. One night Olin said, "Momma, Nathaniel wants me to go to dinner with him. Is that okay?" And I said, "Sure." Didn't ask Nathaniel's name. I just knew Nathaniel. He came home about 9:30, and I said, "Olin, where have you all been?" He said, "We went to the homeless shelter. We went and bought a whole bunch of chicken, and we went to the homeless shelter. That was really neat."

And so it was funny, the things Olin learned, and my children learned, while they were here with me. So they enjoyed it, and they got to meet a lot of people. My oldest, my son, really still talks about who he met and who he knew, and he and Barney Frank—are friends. Barney comes to South Carolina several times a year for different activities, and Pat's always there leading them around, so there's a friendship there which would not have developed if I hadn't been in Congress.

WASNIEWSKI: Because there were so few women who were in Congress when you were serving—less than two dozen—did you feel that you represented more than just your constituents in your district? That you were a representative for women nationwide?

PATTERSON: Oh, very much so, I think. And I think if you'd asked that question of most of the women, they would say that you just . . . It's the same thing I used to say when I was in county council or state senate. You don't just represent your district. You represent the state, you represent what's going on in your area. So, no, I would definitely say that, no, I didn't think I was just here representing women—just representing everybody in my district. And certain issues, of course, that were special to women I would be more in the forefront. Every vote I took, I had to think about everybody in my district.

JOHNSON: Do you want to go to retrospective?

WASNIEWSKI: Sure. We just have a few wrap-up questions.

JOHNSON: Yes. We're almost done, thank you. There are now 109 women in Congress.

PATTERSON: Right.

JOHNSON: Eighty-eight in the House and 21 in the Senate. How many do you think there will be 50 years from now, when it's the 150th anniversary of Jeannette Rankin's election to Congress?

PATTERSON: It would be so nice if the House and the Senate represented the overall population of our country. And I think at this point, we actually have women on 50-something, maybe plus . . . But I also think, when you consider that, you have to think about other minorities—making the body more diverse not just male-female, but nationality, ethnicity. I would hope that more women would be in Congress.

But it's so strange. Maine can have two women, California can have two women in the Senate, and it's just those pockets that seem to be able to do that. I'm not sure how long it'll be for South Carolina to have a Senator, although I would expect that in the very near future our former governor will come home and run for the Senate. But there's just no women on the forefront. But I would hope, in the 250th anniversary or whenever, that we would see a wonderful picture of Congress as it relates to our country. It's hard to do, so you got 50 percent, but half of them are from—two of them are from the same state, so it's not like you're really spreading it out. So that's—how do you do that?

WASNIEWSKI: What advice would you offer to a young woman who was thinking of running for political office, or for the House?

PATTERSON: Well, I would encourage them. But I would sit down and talk to them and ask them, "Why? Why are you thinking about it? What difference would you like to make? Where are your interests? What have you been doing up to this point?" I spent a lot of time last fall talking to a young man who ran for Congress in our district, and trying to tell him what the ups and downs were, and trying to tell him, "You've got to be prepared for defeat." And, of course, he wasn't going to be defeated. But he was. Encourage them that if you don't try—don't be hesitant about running. If you really want to run, do a little quick poll. If it's for Congress, have somebody do a little quick poll. And see about your name recognition.

It's funny. I always have believed you get into Congress by sort of working your way up and getting to know people. That doesn't always ring true in South Carolina. The person who defeated me had just never been involved in politics. So it just doesn't ring true always. But I try to encourage them to be involved in something, whether it's civic organizations, to show that you care about the community. You've got to have something on your résumé. You can't just come up and say, "I want to run." But I would encourage women. And if I thought they were a good candidate, I would help them. Make suggestions about staff and raising money and that sort of thing.

JOHNSON: Do you think that your service in the House, at the federal level, and also what you did at the local and state level, may have inspired any women to run for office or will inspire women in the future to run?

PATTERSON: Well, I've had people come talk to me about running, and I've had women who have said, "I decided to run because of you." So yes, I think it helps. I

think it would help more if I'd stayed in a little bit longer {laughter} or been elected to a—like when I ran for lieutenant governor, if I'd served on the state level.

I think my visibility's almost faded. Even my hometown, up at the clubs I'm in, many of them don't remember that I was in Congress. Time slips away. {laughter} And it has been a while. So, but I would hope that I've inspired some. I don't think I've inspired my daughter. She loves politics, but school board's probably her first thing. She's not really into the partisan politics as much as I'd like for her to be.

WASNIEWSKI: Looking back on your House career was there anything unexpected, or that surprised you, about your time in the House?

PATTERSON: I guess if I really had to say something that was unexpected and surprising it was the waste of time. I know everybody had something to say. But it seemed to me so often, in hearings or committee meetings, some people had to speak and had to speak a long time—and not to say a great deal. So I just felt like we wasted a lot of time with people, again, having to do that to get the word back home that they spoke out against this or that. So, it just seemed like there was a good bit of time wasted on unnecessary talk. Whoever was doing it would tell me that it wasn't unnecessary.

But I just remember Sonny Montgomery didn't let people ramble on. He really kept people—that military in him kept us right in line. The Banking Committee was a little looser. We had several on there who had to say something. I never felt like I—so often in the Banking Committee, I thought, "What did we do today?" That sort of thing, that we really didn't do as much as I would like. When you don't have a great deal of time, as I didn't have, I didn't like time being wasted. I wanted to use all . . . and I

know what it takes to get legislation passed. I've heard those tales about sausage and legislation. But, just too much talk, sometimes. And, in some bodies, that's the way to stop it. I know the filibuster. But when you're really trying to get legislation passed, enough is enough.

JOHNSON: I just had one final question. Given your political career in South Carolina, and this could include the local and state level as well as your House career, what do you think your lasting legacy will be?

PATTERSON: I saw that on the list, and I asked my husband. I said, "What is going to be my lasting legacy? They always talk about—I guess my children?" I guess that I did break part of a glass ceiling. I did break some rules that were out there that I was able to . . . So I'm hoping people remember that. I hope, when people remember that I didn't leave a millionaire. I didn't leave disgruntled. I'm still very involved, very active in politics. So, I want people to realize that's the way it should be. You should be involved at all times, whether you're in office or not. That maybe answers your question.

JOHNSON: Definitely.

WASNIEWSKI: Thank you so much for bearing with us, and answering all the questions, and we haven't kept you too much beyond 12:00.

JOHNSON: Yes.

PATTERSON: Thank you. No, that's fine. That's fine.

JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

WASNIEWSKI: Yes.

PATTERSON: Thank you all. I know you probably have long days and a lot of questions.

JOHNSON: No, this is the fun part of our day. {laughter}

WASNIEWSKI: Yes, this is great.

PATTERSON: Oh, okay.

WASNIEWSKI: Thank you.

JOHNSON: Definitely.

PATTERSON: Well, I'm glad. I'm glad to know.

NOTES

[1] Margaret Chase Smith of Maine served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1939 to 1949 and in the U.S. Senate from 1949 to 1973. Smith was the only woman in the Senate for much of her career, including the 81st and 82nd Congresses (1949–1953), the 84th and 85th Congresses (1955–1959), and the 90th and 91st Congresses (1967–1971).
[2] Term applied to Americans born between 1917 and 1921, who due to an error in a formula used to calculate cost of living adjustments, received lower Social Security payments than retirees preceding them.