

Cokie Roberts

Life As a Child of a Member of Congress

Detailed account of the close connection between family life and politics for the Boggs family.

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My life as a child of a Member of Congress was wonderful. It was totally interesting and a lot of fun. And my father ran for Congress when he was 26 years old; and my mother was pregnant with my brother, Tommy; my sister, Barbara, was a baby; and she [my mother] was 24. So they pretty much understood that their family life and their political life were one and that there was no separating them. And if they did, either the family wouldn't be involved in anything and never see him, or the political life would suffer, so we pretty much did everything. We went on campaign trips, we made speeches, we went, you know, to the blessing of the fleet, you know, or the opening of the headquarters. We certainly went out on Election Day and went to all the polling places and we handed out literature and we put up signs, and we tore down other people's signs. {laughter} I mean it was very, very much an active involvement.

And when we were here, in Washington, we spent a great deal of time in the Capitol building, and we went to debates, and we knew all of the key players. They were regular people at our dinner tables. And our parents did not have the children go away when the grown-ups came. In retrospect, I've sometimes wondered, "What did those people think to have all these children around all the time?" But we were around, and it was great for us.