

**The Honorable Elizabeth Holtzman**  
U.S. Representative of New York (1973–1981)

**Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress**

**“I Really Felt As Though I Were in Quicksand”**

Representative Holtzman remembers feeling overwhelmed by the extent of the Watergate scandal.  
*Interview recorded March 10, 2016*

At some point in this process, I really felt as though I were in quicksand, that even though I disagreed strongly with Richard Nixon’s policies, it was just overwhelming to know all of the details of his misconduct. And it wasn’t just the break-in, and it wasn’t just the subordination of perjury, and it wasn’t just getting the CIA to stop an FBI investigation, and it wasn’t just the enemies list, and it wasn’t just the wiretapping, and it wasn’t just the illegal bombing of Cambodia, and it wasn’t just the secret bombing of Cambodia. You couldn’t come up with a list that was big enough. It was just more, and more, and more, and you just felt as though you were sinking and there was no bottom. No end of the misconduct; no end to the violation of the law; no end to the criminality; no end to the conspiracy; no end to the conniving; no end to how they were just trying to put their own political and personal survival over the good of the country. It was, so I—that’s the feeling I had, was just overwhelming. I never expected to see that. It was very sobering. Nobody took any pleasure, not—I know the Republicans didn’t, but nobody that I know. No Democrat on the committee took any pleasure from seeing what we had to see, and dealing with what we had to deal with. And having to vote for the impeachment of Richard Nixon was one of the most sobering, somber things I ever had to do in my life. I did not want to have to do it. I would have wished a thousand times that he hadn’t acted in the way he had so that I would not have to sit in judgment on him.