

Gwendolyn Mink

Daughter of the Honorable Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

Coming to Washington D.C.

Gwendolyn Mink recalls her family's transition to living in Washington D.C. after her mother was elected to Congress.

Interview recorded March 14, 2016

Initially, we, we settled in Arlington, Virginia, still, still a place of racial segregation, and in some corners, white supremacy. So, that was kind of a difficult place to be. We only stayed there for six months. It was also a moment before the Supreme Court had decided *Loving v. Virginia*, and the Virginia law banned all interracial marriages. And so, I don't, I don't really know, and I never asked—I should have asked—I don't know how that affected how my, my parents felt as a couple going around, but I certainly experienced, you know, the whispers and so forth in school, and among parents, and so forth, for being the progeny of an interracial couple. And you know, especially nasty kids would throw around, like, "Are you illegitimate then," and that kind of thing since theoretically my parents' marriage was not valid in the state in which we at that moment resided. So, we fled to Maryland, and that was a better kind of situation. I, you know, in seventh and eighth grade—or eighth and ninth grade—which was the only two years we spent in Maryland, I didn't spend that much time in my mother's office during the school year, except on certain kinds of particularly exciting votes, or contested votes. Sometimes I would drive in with my father from Silver Spring, where I was in middle school. But by 10th grade, we moved back into the city, and were only three minutes from the Rayburn Building where my mother's office was at, at that point. So, I came up all the time, and after school, and on weekends, and so forth, and really sort of soaked in the experiences of anti-war legislative activity, and civil rights activity, and, eventually, the burgeoning attempt to promote equality for women through legislation, kind of activity.