

The Honorable Susan Molinari
U.S. Representative of New York (1990–1997)

Special Exhibit: A Century of Women in Congress

"A Long Line of Politicians"

Representative Molinari remembers growing up in a political family.
Interview recorded January 8, 2016

I come from a long line of politicians. My grandfather was in the New York state assembly, my father was in the New York state assembly, then a Member of Congress, then borough president. I'm an only child and very close to both my parents, and we would, you know, have Sunday breakfast, and we would have elections for who was going to be the president of the day. And so you would say, "Well, if I'm elected president, you know, I will take us all to the zoo." And whatever you promised you got to fulfill, and so you really learned a lot about, you know, making deals so that you could get that extra vote. We would have elected officials come to our house all the time, so it was an area in which I felt very comfortable. My dad didn't run for office until I was in high school, but there was always that constant discussion of politics. He was always involved in campaigns. And then when my dad did run for politics, I, you know, continued to follow and nip at his heels, and just found the debates, the protests, so much of campaigning—you know, my friends and I would go door to door with him and, you know, stick letters from him into doors. So, it just sort of became a natural—although never at the time, going back to the question of, "Were there female role models?" would I have thought that I would run for office. I just really enjoyed being a part of the world.