



24 Years of House Work . . . and the Place Is Still a Mess

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From the fight for enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill hearings, Pat Schroeder was a progressive, frank, and sometimes devastatingly witty Congressional representative. Her book is a lively and well-paced account of many of the important events in the latter part of the twentieth century.

She entered the House in 1972 from a moderate-to-liberal Denver district, and won increasing majorities until she retired, undefeated, in 1996. She served for all these years on the Armed Services (renamed National Security) Committee and for seventeen years on the Judiciary Committee. Her husband, James, forgave Pat her abysmal cooking and strongly supported her political career, which included a brief run for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1988.

Schroeder was one of the founders of the Congressional Women's Caucus and became a fervent and effective advocate for issues affecting women and children, such as the Violence Against Women Act, the Child Abuse Accountability Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and many more.

Her quick wit served her well, and made her famous for two sallies: Frustrated by Ronald Reagan's popularity despite many mistakes, she called him "the Teflon president. Nothing he does sticks to him." And after Newt Gingrich had publicly complained about having had to exit Air Force One via the rear door, she waved a fake Academy Award at him in the House, nominating Newt for the best performance by a child actor that year.

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