

The 'Different' Member

Washington

When Liz Holtzman strides down avenue J in the heart of Brooklyn, meeting her constituents, old men keel. Roughly translating from the Yiddish, this means they stand back a few paces and sweetly stare at her, smiling as if a favorite granddaughter were running for president.

But Jack Bertam, owner of Miller's Finest Meats, is not so reserved. "Liz!" belted Bertam, when he discovered the youngest woman ever elected to Congress campaigning outside his store for reelection last month. "You remember me? Of course you remember me."

Whether she really did was not so important. He quickly introduced her to all the boys in his butcher shop, made her pose for a picture with him and one of his best steaks, and posed with her again on the sidewalk outside, shouting "She's the greatest! She's the greatest!"

"Of course she's different," noted one woman supporter. "She's a honey." Murmured another: "Charming."

A lot of people on Capitol Hill would question whether Liz Holtzman is "a honey." But no one would challenge the assertion that she is indeed different from most members of Congress.

Take Emanuel Celler, for example, who represented Holtzman's congressional district from 1923 until two

years ago, when Holtzman upset the old chairman of the House Judiciary Committee (and prominent foe of the Equal Rights Amendment) in the Democratic primary.

Celler had a lot of friends in Washington, but he seldom campaigned and didn't even maintain an office in his district. Holtzman, who is called "shy" by her friends and "the ice princess" by others, nevertheless was elected almost solely on the basis of street campaigning. Her district office is open seven days a week, and she is often there at least one day out of the seven.

There are other reasons why the people of Flatbush are pleased with their congresswoman. "You were fantastic on the TV program," one voter tells Holtzman. Chimes in a very old woman: "We saw you on TV, and the way you let them have it was very good."

They refer, of course, to the televised House Judiciary Committee show, the summer impeachment season's big hit, which was revived in October to study the pardon of Richard Nixon. Holtzman played opposite President Ford in one of the revival's leading roles, asking him tougher questions than any of the other committee members.

Something rather extraordinary always was expected from Congresswoman Holtzman whose father, Sidney, a Russian immigrant, is a successful trial lawyer; whose



ELIZABETH HOLTZMAN
Youngest elected

mother, Filia, also a Russian immigrant, is head of the Hunter College Russian department; and whose twin brother, Robert, is a resident neurosurgeon at New York's Columbia-Presbyterian Neurological Institute.

But though her achievements were no surprise, her birth — 30 minutes later than her brother's Aug. 11, 1941 — was "the best surprise of my life," says her father.

"Mt. Everest was not high enough for them," continues Sidney Holtzman of his children's education.

Everything about the Holtzman home on "Doctors' Row" in Brooklyn's Ditmas Park neighborhood, is impeccably well kept. A bust of Moses greets visitors

who come to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Holtzman about their daughter, the lawmaker.

She was "indubitably at the top of her class," purrs Sid Holtzman in his silky lawyer's voice, with which he says he "makes love" to juries.

Liz Holtzman graduated magna cum laude from Radcliffe in 1962, with a major in American history and literature. Because "the application was easy to fill out," she says, she applied and was quickly accepted as one of 21 women in a class of 539 at Harvard Law School.

Neither she nor her father credit him with influencing her career choice. But, like him, she became a litigating lawyer following her graduation from Harvard in 1965.

She achieved national fame in 1973 by suing to end the bombing of Cambodia. Her suit was initially successful but was later stymied by the Supreme Court.

She does all this by overcoming what almost all of her friends agree is a basic shyness.

"She always respected her privacy a great deal," says her brother, who confesses to having teased her about this and who is generally considered the more outgoing of the twins.

But when she does talk, she talks so precisely and with such a straightforward tone that it's difficult to doubt her. "I don't ever remember her telling a lie," testifies her brother.

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