A painting of a long, winding staircase leading up a hill to the White House under a hazy, orange sky. The White House is visible at the top of the hill, with an American flag flying from a tall pole. The sky is a mix of orange and pink, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is one of aspiration and challenge.

Before ascending to the White House, a presidential contender must clear countless hurdles on the campaign trail, ranging from name recognition and financing to battling with the press and public opinion polls. The candidate, however, isn't the only one who must endure a long series of grueling challenges. Voters, too, must sift through the many issues of a presidential campaign before rendering their decision. But that, of course, is what a democratic society is all about.



# The Politics of a PRESIDENTIAL RACE

*Illustrations by Neil Brennan*





By Richard Benedetto

FIERY RHETORIC  
IS FASHIONABLE,  
BUT THERE IS  
MORE TO A  
CANDIDATE'S MESSAGE  
THAN SOUND BITES

# The Language of POLITICS

**B**ack in January 1993 at a Republican National Committee meeting in St. Louis, outgoing GOP Chairman Rich Bond, in his swan-song speech, called for the removal of the tough anti-abortion plank from the party's platform. When Bond finished talking, reporters scrambled back to the press room to file their stories. As they arrived, a network television producer was barking into the phone back to his desk in Washington. "Get me the biggest anti-abortion bomb thrower you can find!" the producer shouted.

The producer, of course, was cobbling together the story that would air that evening on his network's newscast and he wanted to make sure a view contrary to Bond's was expressed. However, he didn't just want any response, he wanted a hot one to add drama and color to the "sound bite." That meant going to someone who not only is opposed to abortion, but also takes an extreme position, and who would denounce the Bond proposal in straight-for-the-jugular terms.

All in all, great theater. But what does it do to move the abortion issue forward toward greater public understanding or possible solution? Not much.

The highly emotional issue of abortion is one that easily lends itself to hot rhetoric. But scenes like this one are repeated almost daily in newsrooms across the



country on political issues ranging from topics as bland as budgets to those as contentious as smoking. Editors and reporters are increasingly enamored with the hot, hotter, and hottest language in politics to punch up their stories and give them zing.

They proceed from the growing belief that they are competing for viewers, listeners, and readers against a panoply of entertainment options. Therefore, they think they have to make their news reports as entertaining as possible to keep people interested. Thus, as James Fallows notes in *Breaking the News*, a new book that outlines why the public has grown distrustful of the news media: "Issues that affect the collective interests of Americans—crime, health care, education, economic growth—are presented mainly as arenas in which politicians can fight."



So reporters, like fight promoters putting together a boxing card, seek out politicians, special interest spokespersons, and expert analysts whom they know will give them what is known in the business as “the killer quote”—some clever phrase that denounces the other side’s position in true “gotcha” fashion.

And if at first reporters don’t get what they want, they’ll frame their questions in such a way as to elicit passionate responses, often by revealing what the other side said when asked the same set of questions. Then, they’ve got what has come to pass as a news story: a conflict with two opposing sides shouting at each other. Little attention is given to the substance of the arguments behind the issues, and even less to the notion that these conflicts can and must be resolved, usually through compromise.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communications at the University of Pennsylvania and a noted scholar on political discourse, says the media are contributing heavily to giving the public a distorted picture of what’s really going on in the political world today.

“Most political discourse is not attack. Most political discourse is advocacy,” she says. “But you read the press and you think most political discourse is attack. Not only by focusing on attack do reporters fail to let us know what the substance was, but they give people the sense that politics is more negative than it is.”

The net result of this seemingly endless stream of adversarial cacophony blared out by the media, as a February 1993 editorial in *The New Yorker* magazine pointed out, is akin to the “earsplitting screech” you get at a heavy-metal rock concert when the speakers get too close to the microphone pickups on the guitars. And its devastating effect, the editorial continues, “deafens performers and audience alike.”

Little wonder then that so many Americans seem to be so turned off by the political process, distrustful of politicians and the media, and increasingly pessimistic about the possibility that serious public problems can ever be solved through rational and thoughtful government action. Much of what the daily news media are dishing out in the way of political discourse—and that includes not only the traditional outlets, but also talk radio, public affairs TV shows like CNN’s *Crossfire*, and late-night-TV comics with their snide jokes about public figures—is indeed a lot of noise with little solid information.

Jack Fuller, president and publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* and a Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial writer, argues in his recent book, *News Values*, that people seek knowledge so they can gain control over their intellectual and emotional environment. But, he adds, given the complexity of today’s issues and the media’s tendency to treat them in a simplistic, adversarial way, a frustrated public tends to think the worst of everyone, including the journalists themselves.

“Complexity invites cynicism, and cynicism eventually leads people to tune out,” Fuller writes. Worse yet, he continues, people conclude the world is beyond anyone’s control and careening toward a tragic end.

Consequently, with a presidential campaign in full swing, it’s little wonder that many citizens say they’re not paying much attention. A common remark heard among potential voters these days is that it makes little difference who wins because neither side seems to be addressing the things that matter most to real people with real problems.

The fact of the matter is, while the candidates are seriously addressing issues and talking substance as they hopscotch around the country in search of votes, the media continue to play up the negative aspects of the campaign—the attack ads and nasty remarks

hurled at opponents. Sit in a crowd of reporters on the campaign trail and watch their boredom as a candidate drones on about foreign policy or supply-side economics. But watch the pencils and pads spring into action as soon as a criticism of the other side is uttered. Now they’ve got a story.

*Washington Post* media critic Howard Kurtz noted in a June article that Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole was making a lot of speeches but getting little news coverage because his talks were largely on issues of which the press had long since grown tired.

A study by the nonpartisan Center for Media and Public Affairs underwritten by the Markle Foundation

looked at how the three major TV networks covered the first two months of the 1996 presidential primaries. Its findings shot down several myths being disseminated by the media.

Myth 1: This year’s campaign is focused on personalities and lacking in discussion of issues.

The Markle study examined 28 candidate speeches, 59 paid ads, and 315 election stories broadcast on the ABC, NBC, and CBS evening news and found the candidates more substantive than the TV reports. Nearly half of all statements in speeches and ads (49 percent) concerned policy issues. Only one in six

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statements on TV (16 percent) were focused on issues.

Myth 2: This year's campaign being waged by the candidates is the nastiest, meanest, most negative ever.

According to the study's director, Robert Lichter, "The real negative campaign is being waged by the media." He reports that in nearly two of three TV evaluations of all candidates (63 percent), the results were negative. In addition, 98 percent of all sources quoted agreed that the campaign's tone was too negative, and 96 percent criticized the candidates' paid ads.

"But statements in the candidates' paid ads and speeches were mostly positive in tone by a three-to-one margin overall," Lichter says.

Jamieson says that when the media play up and reward the negative, they only encourage more of it. She notes that during the 1994 health care reform debate, those who wanted to air positive advocacy ads found they couldn't get any press attention.

"But when they put up small amounts of negative advertising they immediately got the reward of positive news play," she says. "And so the press created the cycle. Once the press had elicited the negative advertising, the press then began running stories saying negative advertising dominates. So the press created a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Adding to the cacophony—and demeaning the candidates in the process—is the continuous stream of mean, nasty, and tasteless political jokes dished out nightly on TV by the likes of Jay Leno, David Letterman, and their imitators.

Jokes like this one by Leno: "President Clinton is pretty kinky. The other night he blindfolded Hillary, then he tied her up, then he went out with another woman."

Or this one by Letterman: "While Bob Dole was in town he went to his favorite theme restaurant, the Hardened Artery Cafe."

There is a tendency to dismiss such jokes as harmless fun. But these comics reach millions of people daily, especially young peo-

ple, and their influence on political thinking is potentially great. True, there is no empirical evidence to suggest a direct causal relationship between the blizzard of cheap-shot political jokes and rampant public cynicism about government, politics, and politicians. But one has to feel in the gut the cumulative effects are corrosive.

Unfortunately, the only exposure many young people get to politics may be the satire they get on MTV, Comedy Central's *Politically Incorrect*, NBC's *Saturday Night Live*, and the late-night TV comics. That says two worrisome things:

Many young people are so turned off by or uninterested in politics that they shun traditional venues of political news.

The view of the system they are getting is highly distorted.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that the three networks broadcast 2,427 stories about the election on their evening news shows. It also found that in tandem with that, Letterman, Leno, and Arsenio Hall told 1,984 jokes about the various candidates. Judging from the pace being set by the comics in 1996, the jokes may end up outweighing the news stories.

Politicians and their strategists, along with spokespersons for a broad array of interest groups seeking publicity for their cause, are not dummies. They've surveyed the media landscape and they have come to know what sells. So they are only too willing to oblige with nasty words.

They know the hotter the rhetoric, the greater its chances of making the papers or getting on radio and TV. So rather than make cogent arguments for their position or cause, they stay up nights thinking up "killer quotes" that will capture media attention, trash their opponents, and offer the public cheap thrills.

Fallows notes that the practice has become especially prevalent in Congress, where the decline in power of party leaders has converted the membership "into an assemblage of free agents competing for the same scarce commodity: airtime on the network newscasts, the talks shows, or at least C-SPAN."

As issues arise, those seeking publicity fax their punched-up opinions to newsrooms in hopes of being included in the story. National newspapers and TV networks receive hundreds daily. Consider some

examples of recent mis-  
sives faxed en masse to  
major media outlets. While  
they may be cute and  
clever, they shed little light  
on the problem they pre-  
tend to address. These two  
came from the Republican

hierarchy on the touchy  
issue of welfare reform:

"College students get  
expelled for less egregious

plagiarism than Bill Clinton's shameless pilfering of Republican welfare reform ideas," says GOP National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour.

"Bill Clinton pretends to run the ball, but he fumbles when it's time for real change," says Michigan Gov. John Engler, chairman of the Republican Governors Association.

And clearly, a speech by Vice President Al Gore, sent in advance to the media so they would have time to peruse it, was composed of a string of "killer quotes"

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pers and TV networks  
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attacking Dole's support of the tobacco industry.

The Gore text included this line: "They seem to believe that the way to turn their tattered campaign into a Cinderella story is to engage in the politics of Pinocchio: forget about the truth, tell a bunch of lies, and let someone else pull the strings."

And this one: "Kick the habit, Senator Dole. It's not worth stinking up your reputation with the smoky stench of special-interest politics and the dangerous din of dishonesty."

Neither went unnoticed by the Associated Press. The AP story distributed to news media nationwide featured this lead: "In an unusually harsh attack on President Clinton's campaign rival, Vice President Gore accused Bob Dole of engaging in the 'dangerous din of dishonesty' and the 'politics of Pinocchio.'"

The alliteration is reminiscent of former Vice President Spiro Agnew. Remember his "nattering nabobs of negativism?"

One career public official troubled by the corrosive word game politicians and the media play with major issues is Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, who received master's and doctoral degrees from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.

While a student at Syracuse, Shalala says that she "fell in love with American politics, public service, and being in the political arena." But having been in that arena now for more than 25 years—and having competed in a losing struggle to reform the nation's health care system—she says she has had to develop a suit of steel armor and rhetorical weapons with a sharper edge to compete and survive.

She notes that she has been "yelled at" by the best of them, including New York Senator and SU alumnus Alfonse D'Amato.

"In today's political arena," Shalala says, "everybody has become a combatant. And there's so much noise out there that you have to raise your voice if you want to get through."

Shalala notes sadly that political discourse has become less thoughtful and less informational, even when those speaking are highly knowledgeable in the subject area they are discussing. She says those competing in today's chaotic environment know that unless they deliver their message in a "clever way" that captures media attention, they might as well have not spoken at all.

"I've seen reporters walk out of congressional hearings that have featured a lot of thoughtful discussion



on very important topics saying, 'No news here,' and report nothing on it," she laments.

Another negative side effect of all this, Shalala says, is that those taking the most extreme positions—right and left—get most of the publicity, even though the vast majority of the general public is somewhere in the middle. And it's that somewhere-in-the-middle point of view that is the essence of compromise.

Shalala adds, however, that the public is not blameless in all this. Given its short attention span, she says, and its penchant for getting the news in more palatable sound bites, the media are only too willing to play to the lowest common denominator.

Finally, Shalala concludes, the emptiness and nastiness of the din not only turns the public off to the political process, it also discourages many good people

from entering public service.

"It's got to get better," she says, "or we're going to have trouble attracting our best and brightest people to American politics."

And that's not to mention what it's doing to the fabric of our democratic political system.

Richard Harwood, a *Washington Post* media columnist, puts a fine point on it: "Until we learn to use a language that is accessible and meaningful to the apathetic public out there, neither the press nor our political system will be cured of its problems."

*Richard Benedetto '65, G'71 is national political correspondent for USA Today.*



By Jay Cox

PRESIDENTIAL

CONTENDERS

MUST MATCH

IMAGE AND ISSUES

TO CATCH THE

ELECTORATE'S ATTENTION

Lasting

# IMPRESSIONS

**Y**ou are a responsible citizen of the Republic, a proud participant in the pursuit of life, liberty, happiness, and—since this is a presidential election year—picking a fellow American to guide the country into the 21st century through the potholes and precipices, twists and turns, and other taxing encounters along the way. To accomplish this task you must sift and sort through the deluge of information and images that accompany presidential politicking. It is no easy chore. At times you are a political junkie, sopping up the campaign offerings like an all-absorbing sponge. Other times, you sidestep the red-white-and-blue rhetoric as if it were a pit bull barreling down the sidewalk toward you.

Before strolling into the voting booth, you wonder how you will choose a candidate: gut-wrenching instinct, a simple sentiment, perhaps even a complex philosophical evaluation that drains your brain's Decision '96 Department. Regardless, between you and that click of the lever stands a multimillion-dollar presidential sweepstakes machine overtly obsessed with influencing your selection. In fact, according to the Center for Responsive Politics in Washington, D.C., the two major parties will spend an estimated \$663 million this election year. Quite a price tag for your one little vote.

To truly indulge in this colossal quadrennial event, you must succumb to the overwhelming allure of a cot-



tage industry inhabited by a coterie of politicians, pundits, spin doctors, advisors, aides, analysts, and assorted other characters who pump the candidate of choice and puncture opponents under the constant surveillance of the mass media. The experience can be uplifting and inspiring one moment, vicious and troubling the next. And out of it all will emerge America's president, arguably the premier player on today's rough-and-tumble world stage.

"The presidency is where most people look for leadership in both domestic and international affairs, and you must not only project the image, but have the ability to lead," says Federal Trade Commissioner Christine Varney G'82, who has worked on several presidential



campaigns and served as counsel for the '92 Clinton-Gore campaign. "The image is only a reflection of the reality."

## Finding the Ideal Candidate

Politics, you are told, is situational; an ideal candidate must mesh with the times. Like many Americans you recognize the ever-visible big-party candidates, President Bill Clinton and retired Senator Bob Dole, because they appear on TV—a lot. But there are independent and third-party candidates, too: the returning Ross Perot, a Libertarian, Ralph Nader, even a representative of the People's Revolutionary Party. Actually, you could write yourself in on the ballot. Bad idea, you decide, so you turn to the experts for advice on the qualities of an ideal presidential candidate.

This is what they suggest: honesty, integrity, sincerity, truthfulness, credibility; electability; a proven record of public service; a sense of humor; a well-suited temperament; a dogged campaigner and articulate visionary who can inspire enthusiasm; an upfront person with steadfast ideals who understands the populace and cares for its needs; and, of course, a consummate leader who comes through when the chips have been spilled all over the floor.

"There's no such animal as an ideal presidential candidate. Today, candidates are so sanitized," says Palmer Pilcher '49, G'56, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Arkansas. "Perhaps there are no ideal candidates because America has lost its idealism. We have become, and to a great deal correctly, highly cynical about our candidates."

While some folks might dispute that view, you understand the cynicism that rumbles through the electorate. The political season perpetuates shenanigans, both alleged and accurate. There is, however, no question that potential applicants must endure a dizzying amount of exposure that scrutinizes virtually every aspect of their public and private lives. "We turned all of our politics, especially presidential politics, into personal politics. And that's a great mistake," says political scientist Robert D. McClure, associate dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. "By personalizing all these politics we do a disservice to democracy, to ourselves, and to the candidates for president."

## Out of the Past

Was presidential politics always such a public evisceration of the personal domain? "Democracy is about conflict. I don't know of a way to conduct democracy nicely," McClure says. "What's at issue here in American politics today is we don't agree."

And we never have. Back in the early days of presidential politics, candidates were considered shameless if they campaigned and promoted themselves. Instead, the chore was left to the parties, political bosses, and

operatives. The candidates, meanwhile, stayed home in their rockers on the front porch and whittled, or something like that, to preserve their presidential appearance. "Instead of having the person do it, we had the institution do it," McClure says. "It left the president distanced from the inevitable conflict and nastiness of democratic politics."

Eventually, promoting the popular image of candidates evolved from pamphlets and biographies to buttons, slogans, songs, and signs. "Tippecanoe and Tyler too"—the catch phrase of William Henry Harrison's 1840 presidential campaign—was accompanied by the gimmick of hard cider and log cabins, even though he'd never lived in a log cabin. While stumping on the campaign trail hadn't caught on yet, Harrison was apparently ready to elaborate to the electorate because, following his election, he braved a cold, dreadful drizzle and gave the longest inaugural address in history. Unfortunately, he caught cold during the speech and died in office of pneumonia a month later.

By the late 1800s, candidates were more than willing to espouse their ideas from the podium. Consider, for instance, the vigor of Teddy Roosevelt. Running on the Bull Moose ticket in 1912, Roosevelt apologized to a crowd of supporters for cutting short a nearly hour-long speech because he'd been shot and had a bullet in his chest.

## Omnipresent Electioneering

Today, real-life encounters with Oval Office seekers are rare, although there's no shortage of "virtual" encounters thanks to the Internet, talk radio, TV talk shows, MTV, the nightly news, and the newsstand; not to mention car bumpers, the U.S. Postal Service, and placards in the neighbor's yard.

In fact, there may be few places you can escape them. But amid this barrage of messages, you must be aware of the tactics of the modern-day elec-

tioning machine, a highly sophisticated, frenetically paced beast capable of launching political warfare at the punch of a fax machine's send button. "Getting your message out is so important nowadays—your rapid response team disputes what your opponent's going to say before he even says it," says Tom Mezzio '92, executive assistant to the general chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

An incident unfolds and—voilà—here come the charges and counter charges, the rumor mongering

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and message maligning, the spitting, smearing, and egregious attacks designed to promote or plunder a candidate. "It's a hell of a beating we give our presidential candidates," Pilcher says.

The trick to surviving the individual assaults is not taking the prying and punches personally, campaigners say. Still, the presidential aspirant must have feelings; and besides, uncorking a little emotion these days is acceptable. "People like sincerity and sincerity is conveyed through genuine emotion," says Matt Frank, a Syracuse University doctoral candidate in psychology and presidential politics aficionado. "They want reassurance that the person is real."

As part of that reality, the candidate must remain resilient and ring the right message in the ears of a majority of voters. "As a candidate, you must stay on message because you can't afford to get distracted," says NASDAQ media relations manager Michael W. Robinson '85, a member of the Bush administration who was part of the '92 Bush-Quayle campaign. "It's hard enough as a candidate to get your message across clearly through the media filter. It's even harder when you don't have a single message because there's so much background noise and competition for the attention of the voters. You must be clear and concise about what you stand for."

## Mixing Image and Issues

This insight causes further contemplation on how to size up a candidate of choice. You don't want to bank on divine inspiration, so you settle on looking, listening, and asking your own questions. Is the candidate connected to the real world or unplugged? An egomaniacal zany zealot? Thoughtful compromiser? Tried-and-true leader? Past images pop up: Hey, Mr. Dukakis, take off that helmet and get out of that tank. Failed strategies fuel your thoughts: Mr. Mondale, do you really think it's a good idea to tell everyone you're going to raise taxes right off the bat? Broken promises appear: Mr. Bush, are you sure you want us to read your lips?

You realize you can create your own issues, as trivial or important as you want: a 12-cent gas-tax slash; homegrown terrorism; table manners in the company of foreign dignitaries.

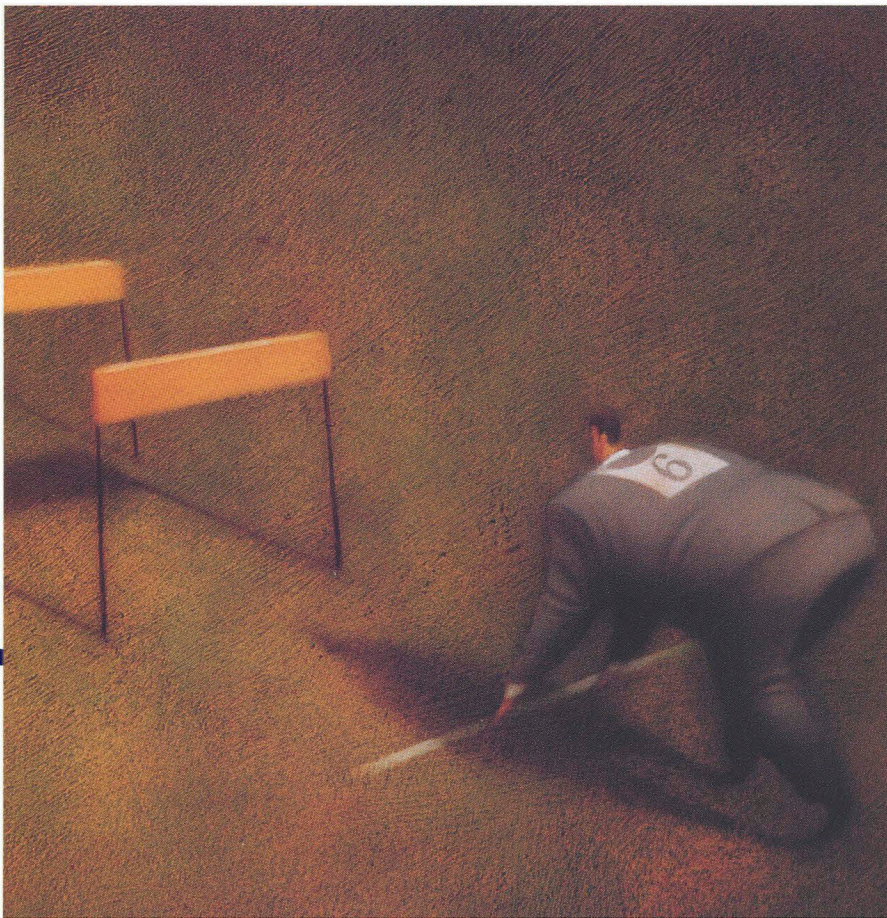
True, your particular agenda might not be among the top priorities of the people, but issues can vanish in a blink or loiter through an entire campaign. This is where issues and images intermingle. If the candidate's a dud, delivering drivel on a dead issue, the exit sign lights up early. So it's imperative that the candidate comb through the clatter, assemble a believable emotion-evoking itinerary loaded with hot-but-

ton issues, and get to work at inspiring and amassing support. "How the candidate approaches things depends on the prevailing political climate at the time," says Gale Horton Gay '78, president of Horton Lind Communications and Public Relations in Atlanta. "The candidate has to key into those issues that mean the most to people in the country during that particular time."

The presidential hopeful must also be committed to his own image and ideals. Robinson, for instance, offers the case of former President Ronald Reagan. You might not have agreed with him, Robinson says, but when you woke up in the morning you knew where Reagan stood. "Trying to change the image of a well-known person who has a clearly established political presence could be a real kiss of death," Horton Gay says. "People would pick up on it right away and they'd say, 'What's this all about?'"

## Marketing the Message

You don't want to be hoodwinked, so you begin monitoring whether the marketing campaign matches the candidate's character and record. Jeffrey Kanter '77, campaign coordinator for Libertarian candidate Irwin Schiff, emphasizes the impor-





tance of properly promoting the message, otherwise the words will go unheard. The Libertarian Party, he says, is gaining popularity, and marketing the mission certainly contributes to the improved recognition. "The promoters of the world have become more involved with our party and they have said, 'Look, the philosophy's great, but it's packaged so poorly. You have to sell the sizzle, then they'll taste the meat. You're so busy shoving the meat on everybody and they don't have the time. It's too time consuming.' So we've become a lot slicker in our ability to communicate."

Astute verbal communication must also be accompanied by a visual appeal. "Persuasion hinges a lot on attractiveness, similarity," Frank says. "People tend to be persuaded by people they like or who they think are like them."

A candidate's body language, style of dress, and even height can figure into the public persuasion formula. Such physical cues may be inconsequential to the message, Frank says, "but they're key to how people perceive you."

## Instilling Reasonable Doubt

By assessing campaign strategy, you soon understand that simply promoting a presidential candidate's attributes isn't enough—fingers must also be pointed at the opponent, usually whenever possible. "People will distort your past to suit their own interest and then you're in a position of defending yourself; it's impossible to prove a negative," Robinson says. "But if you're telling the truth and it's documented, I think that's absolutely fair game because it happened. Why shouldn't the voters know about that?"

Blair Johnson, professor of social psychology at SU, points out that negative information tends to carry more weight psychologically, too. "Positive events, psychologically, are going to be kind of status quo; you don't have to make any adjustments," he says. "Negative information almost implies that you have to do something to get away from it. You have to respond. So, typically, negative information tends to be a lot more salient with people."

Example: the 1964 TV commercial that nuked Barry Goldwater. The ad, run by Lyndon Johnson's campaign, featured a little girl picking flower petals. Next thing you know, there's a massive atomic mushroom cloud—and no more little girl. Goldwater's name wasn't even mentioned, but the commercial certainly annoyed Goldwater and enraged viewers, according to one account. Regardless, though, the ad accomplished its mission—feeding fear to the electorate about Goldwater's pro-nuclear stance.

To avoid sloshing about in the mud-slinging mayhem, the candidate must attempt to appear presidential, above the fray. "You try to put your best foot forward; you try to present yourself as best you can with what you are and have been," McClure says, "so that

the public today is more inclined to listen to you and support you."

## A Personal Presidential Consultant

Listen you do, but maintaining a round-the-clock vigil of presidential politicking is basically impossible. The garden needs weeding, the credit-card bills are due, and the refrigerator looks

famished. "To heck with all this petty squabbling among the candidates and media," you cynically say to yourself. "Who cares?"

But wait:

You might never have looked at it like this before; you could have

your very own

personal presidential consultant. "Word

of mouth is certainly

influential," says former political consultant Dennis F. Kinsey, now professor in the Public Relations Department of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. "We rely on our friends and relatives and others who we may know are more in tune with politics."

Kinsey supports this with evidence from a study he conducted during the 1992 California GOP primary. The study examined the relative influence of mass media versus interpersonal communication. Looking at a drop in then President George Bush's job rating, he says the strongest correlation to the decline was interpersonal communication, basically people talking among themselves about the election. "The fact that interpersonal communication seemed to be the most powerful communication behavior was a little surprising," he says.

As an undecided voter, you're not surprised to be the target of all this hoopla—part of the swing vote, the so-called "soft middle" that the political types clamor to control. "There are very sophisticated models based on a precinct-by-precinct breakdown across the country of where your most-likely voters are," Varney says. "You have to turn out your base, and then you have to identify what we call persuadables. And you have to attempt to get the persuadables."

Election Day nears as images and issues abound in your head. You ponder this complicated process and what the future will hold for the next president.

"The president's job is to make everybody happy," the DNC's Mezzio says. "And that's impossible."

"Positive events, psychologically, are going to be kind of status quo; you don't have to make any adjustments. Negative information almost implies that you have to do something to get away from it. You have to respond. So, typically, negative information tends to be a lot more salient with people."



By Peter Brown

ARE THE  
MEDIA MEETING  
THEIR OBLIGATION  
TO PROVIDE  
THE PUBLIC WITH  
FAIR COVERAGE?

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# P R E S S

**H**ad a Martian come to Earth immediately following February's New Hampshire primary, he likely would have reported back that the next president of the United States might well be Pat Buchanan. That's the message the news media were sending out in the days after Buchanan upset Bob Dole in the first major Republican contest of 1996. Buchanan, who had never been elected dogcatcher and is unlikely ever to be, was pictured on the cover of the news magazines and was the subject of TV stories from dusk to dawn. Journalists dissected his background and views on everything from illegal aliens (the earthbound, not ET types) to abortion. Implicit in the coverage was the message that Buchanan was someone who had a serious chance of occupying the Oval Office.

"Flushed with excitement, the wise guys (in the press) convinced themselves they had a Big Story. The plot line went like this: By finishing second in New Hampshire to Patrick J. Buchanan, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole had been dealt a mortal blow, not only to his front-runner status, but to his very chances of winning the presidency," wrote *Baltimore Sun* White House correspondent Carl M. Cannon, one of the nation's most perceptive critics of his own business.

The reality, of course, was that Buchanan's chances of winning the GOP nomination were slim. All jour-



nalists had to do was use common sense. Buchanan had a very deep but relatively narrow group of supporters. In a field of eight candidates (like New Hampshire) he might get 27 percent of the vote and win. But in a field of two or three survivors, as would be the case in succeeding primaries, he also would get only 27 percent of the vote and lose. That was because even among self-identified Republicans, more told pollsters they viewed him unfavorably than favorably.

Those journalists who took the time to catch their breath and consult with those with some perspective



about the race were quickly told the notion of a Buchanan nomination was not possible. As Lydia Saad, the managing editor of the Gallup Poll, put it at the time, "There is no precedent in the last half-century (since polling began) for someone with Buchanan's unfavorables going on to win the nomination." But instead the news media added one (that Buchanan had won New Hampshire, albeit by 2,000 votes or 1 percent) and one (that the nominee is almost always the New Hampshire winner) and got three (that Buchanan was a strong candidate for the nomination).

The next few weeks, of course, showed how faulty that logic was as Dole wrapped up the nomination faster than any candidate in a contested field in modern political history. "If bookies and stockbrokers were as wrong as often as political analysts and com-

mentators have been lately, they would go broke," suggested NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw as Dole was claiming the nomination.

Brokaw knew of what he spoke. The night of the New Hampshire primary he had told his audience that Buchanan's victory made him "the man to beat in the GOP field."

Was anyone harmed?

Perhaps the American people.

An axiom of presidential politics is that the press can only focus on two candidates at one time. All the others get short shrift.

In 1996, the odd-man out was New Hampshire and Iowa caucuses third-place finisher Lamar Alexander, who was lost in the media feeding frenzy about Buchanan's strength and Dole's weakness.

Actually, it was former Tennessee Gov. Alexander, finishing just 7,000 votes behind Dole in New Hampshire, who the Dole campaign—and the Democrats—feared the most.

The Dole high command had known losing in New Hampshire was a possibility, so they focused on making sure their man finished ahead of Alexander. In the final weekend before the New Hampshire voting, the Dole TV ad campaign concentrated on describing Alexander's shortcomings to New Hampshire voters.

The Dole camp—and virtually every neutral party official from New York to California—believed Alexander's non-Washington background and moderate politics could make him a much more serious long-term threat to Dole or Clinton than Buchanan.

"I never for a minute thought Pat Buchanan would be their nominee," said Democratic National Chairman Don Fowler. "But Lamar could have been. I always thought he could have been the most dangerous candidate for President Clinton to face."

Many fewer Americans may have known Alexander than Buchanan, but that made Alexander much more marketable because he hadn't already alienated large chunks of the electorate. But we'll never know, because the media feeding frenzy about Dole's alleged weakness and Buchanan's alleged strength obliterated any chance for millions of Americans to learn enough about Alexander to take him seriously.

Despite this flaw in the 1996 media coverage of the presidential primaries, the impact of the press on this election so far has been far more benign than in the two previous contests. Remember, it was the press in 1988, not the voters, who began winnowing the candidates when its reports about the personal backgrounds of Senators Gary Hart of Colorado and Joe Biden of Delaware forced the two men from the race.

In 1992, the news media broke even more ground on the issue of investigating the private lives of politicians: Bill Clinton's sexual behavior and draft history were plumbed in great detail. "Dozens of well-paid pundits literally used the word 'dead' to describe Mr.

Clinton," noted the Sun's Cannon. Of course, they were just as inaccurate then as they were about Buchanan this year.

So far this year, coverage of the candidates' personal foibles has not been as focused as four years ago. But the legacy of those campaigns has left its mark on the way journalists have done their job in 1996. The negativity of news reporting during the 1996 Republican primaries reached an all-time high.

Despite the widespread belief that the candidates' negative tactics lowered the level of the discussion, the evidence during the 1996 GOP primaries was that the press was more to blame.

The Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA), a Washington, D.C.-based nonpartisan group that monitors press coverage, found TV news reports to be more negative than the candidates' campaign commercials.

For instance, while CMPA found 44 percent of the TV ads placed by the GOP candidates during the primaries were negative ones about their opponents, its analysis showed that fully 74 percent of the stories on the CBS, NBC, and ABC evening news shows were negative about one candidate or another.

Ken Walsh, who has covered politics and the White House for *U.S. News & World Report* for most of two decades, says the negativity of journalists toward politicians gets in the way of the public's finding out what it needs to know to make an informed choice.

"Too often, coverage of presidential campaigns does

"The traditional relationship between the news media and candidates has deteriorated into a mutual cynicism that interferes with the ability and willingness of both sides to educate the country."



not reveal the unvarnished truth—or anything close to it,” says Walsh in his new book *Feeding the Beast: The White House Versus The Press*. Walsh says that what is new these days is “the traditional relationship” between the news media and candidates “has deteriorated into a mutual cynicism that interferes with the ability and willingness of both sides to educate the country.”

The negativity of the network news coverage is not, as some journalists would argue, a product of reporters just transmitting the candidates’ words. It is a product of the journalists’ words.

We know this because increasingly the dominant voices in television news stories about political campaigns are not those of the candidates but of the journalists themselves. In 1992, the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that reporters’ comments took up 72 percent of all election news air time on the evening news shows. This year, CMPA found that an amazing 85 percent of the time taken up by network news stories about the Republican primary campaign from January 1 through March 5 featured journalists talking.

“The single biggest political variable in the last year has been the way the public became concerned that the Republican Congress was attempting to go too far—and virtually every fact upon which they base that is not true.”

A study by Syracuse University professors Catherine Steele and Kevin Barnhurst of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications further confirmed this with an examination of sound bites on evening news broadcasts in September and October during election years between 1968 and 1988. Their analysis, published in *Critical Studies in Mass Communications*, showed that the length of sound

bites decreased and candidates’ comments shrank more than the journalists’. Reporters’ comments, meanwhile, increased. The study also indicated a major trend toward journalists providing more opinion and less information. By 1988, in fact, anchors turned more to asking their correspondents for opinions than to the candidates.

A comparative figure is not available for presidential elections from a generation before, but there is little doubt the difference would be mammoth. In those days, journalists let the politicians talk.

A slightly different measure makes that same point. In the 1968 election, the average sound bite—the amount of uninterrupted speech—for a presidential candidate on a network evening news show was 43 seconds. In other words, a candidate was given the oppor-

tunity to make a coherent statement that involved more than just a few words so that voters could intelligently evaluate what he had to say.

By 1992, the typical network campaign sound bite was eight seconds, meaning candidates were limited to only a few words. Those words were generally picked by the journalists to illustrate a point that the reporter was trying to make with his or her story. During the Republican primaries in 1996, that figure shrank even more, to seven seconds.

Traditionally, journalists have functioned as interme-

diaries between the candidates and voters, deciding what the public was told about the candidate and his positions. Given the tone and content of such coverage, the public is increasingly dissatisfied with the judgments made by the news media in that role. That’s why record numbers of Americans watched the presidential debates in 1992. They tell pollsters they want to decide for themselves what is important from the candidates, but they have relied on the news media to tell them. That is changing. Look for viewership of the presidential debates this fall to have even larger audiences.

The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, a leading journalistic think tank, did a study of Americans’ attitudes toward press coverage of the ’96 campaign this March. It found that 83 percent of Americans believe “media coverage leads candidates to perform for cameras rather than focus on issues”; 77 percent agree the “media have too much control in defining issues in the campaign”; and 67 percent believe “media coverage discourages good people from running.”

And once again, as virtually every study done on the subject in the last 20 years has found, the public believes press coverage is biased in favor of Democrats/liberals. Of the more than 2,000 adults surveyed for the Freedom Forum study, 29 percent said they saw the coverage as “biased toward the liberal point of view,” compared with 13 percent who said it was “biased toward the conservative point of view.”

Republicans/conservatives for years have argued this bias hurts their candidates. But in 1996 they argue that while the news coverage has hurt Dole, it is not because of unfair scrutiny. They complain that the media have unduly helped President Clinton by irresponsibly adopting his nomenclature.

Remember, a year ago Clinton was in the public’s doghouse and the Republican Congress was the supposed wave of the future. But in the year since, Dole’s ratings tumbled and Clinton’s rose, in part because the president and Democrats convinced many Americans that the GOP Congress wanted to gut traditional government protections for the elderly and needy.

Republican National Chairman Haley Barbour argues that the press’ adoption of Clinton’s description of GOP budget proposals as cuts in federal spending bears a heavy responsibility for this turnaround. He argues that has especially been the case with Medicare,



the federal health program for the elderly.

The truth, all sides agree, is that the GOP plan would limit the rate of increase in Medicare spending over the next seven years to about 7 percent annually, slightly less than the rate of increase proposed by Clinton and the Democrats.

Barbour argues that, for the most part, by repeating Clinton's charge that the GOP wants to cut Medicare rather than limit its growth, the news media let the president mislead the American people while practicing sloppy journalism.

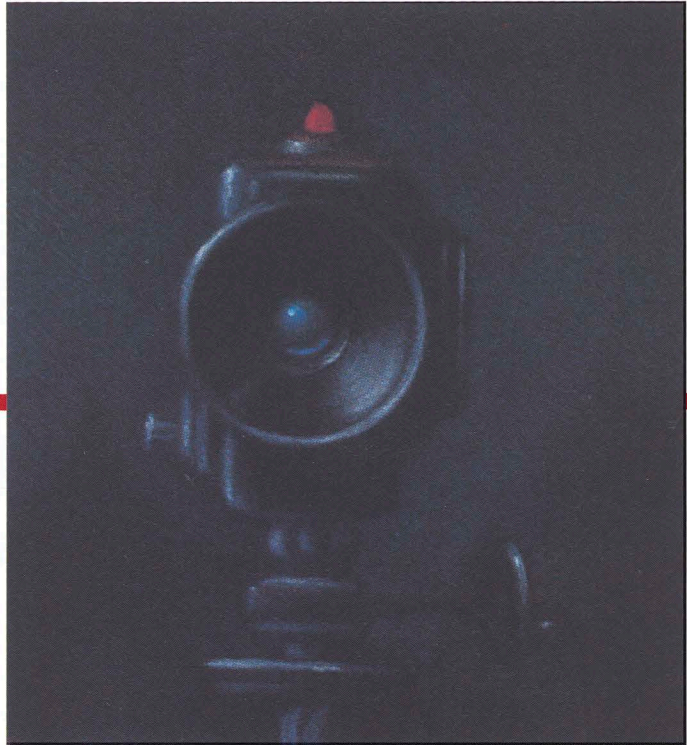
"The press has allowed him to get away saying with a straight face that the Republicans want to cut Medicare," Barbour says. "The reporters and editors all knew that wasn't true and knew Clinton knew it wasn't true. The single biggest political variable in the last year has been the way the public became concerned that the Republican Congress was attempting to go too far—and virtually every fact upon which they base that is not true. There have been a couple of issues that have been proxies for 'going too far.' Medicare, far and away, has been the biggest one. Clinton over and over again told people something different from the truth. Reporters chose to let him get away with it, and that has had a big impact on the election."

Barbour gets support in his assertion from Tom Patterson, a former SU professor of political science. Patterson says the media have failed to fulfill their responsibility in this case by not using the more accurate, although clumsier, phrase "reduction in the rate of growth" to describe the GOP plans.

"It is clumsy but more accurate and should have been used," says Patterson. "The other ('cut') is not accurate. I think the press has tended to take an issue like this and portray it more starkly than is in fact the case. Language matters. The way in which we frame issues has a very substantial impact on the way people perceive political choices. If you frame an issue as cutting rather than reducing the rate of growth in the cost of Medicare, you will get a different public response. To the degree one of them dominates the public sense of what is really going on, you will have major consequences. Clearly, it has worked to the advantage of Clinton and the Democrats. I don't think journalists are trying to help Bill Clinton, but in their effort to dramatize the story it has had that effect."

This lack of precision, perceived bias, and unwillingness to have the news media as its intermediary may be a reason why public patronage of the press has been in sharp decline over the past generation.

In the last 25 years, newspaper circulation in America has been flat while the population has grown 25 percent and hundreds of papers have gone out of business. But the widespread belief that newspapers are suffering at the hands of TV news is wrong. TV news programs, especially the once-proud network news shows, are losing viewers at an alarming rate.



A study done this May by the Pew Research Center, an independent pro-press group, found that only 42 percent of the public now says they watch one of the three network nightly news shows regularly. The problem for ABC, NBC, and CBS is not competition from CNN, which has relatively low ratings except during breaking news stories. The problem is the network news shows themselves. The Pew Research Center study found that "opinion of the network news has eroded" and that believability of the major networks was down.

In 1970, Nielsen ratings found that almost four in five television sets turned on during the network evening news shows were tuned to one of them, compared with little more than one in two today.

The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) does annual surveys of public attitudes on a host of public institutions, including the news media. NORC's data show that since 1973, the share of the population saying it had "hardly any" confidence in the press has almost tripled, from 15 to more than 40 percent, a rating only slightly better than Congress—perhaps the ultimate insult.

The news media may not have taken candidates out of the race in 1996 as they did in 1988, but unless they clean up their act they will continue to destroy their own prospects.

*The author, a 1972 graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, has covered every presidential campaign since 1980. Until this June, he was chief political writer for Scripps Howard News Service; currently he is editor of the Insight Section of the Orlando (Florida) Sentinel and a member of that newspaper's editorial board.*



By Jeff Stonecash

IF USED

RESPONSIBLY, OPINION

POLLS CAN BE

A VALUABLE TOOL

FOR AMERICAN

POLICYMAKERS

# The Politics of

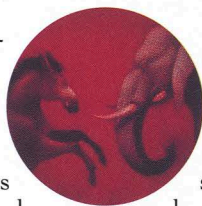
# POLLING

The public is often skeptical of pollsters and polls. Pollsters are often seen as the hired guns of modern campaigns. Pay them enough and they will give you what you want. Questions can be twisted to make certain responses more likely or aimed only at those with opinions favorable to a group or position. There are also charges that politicians follow the polls rather than lead. Democracy by Gallup.

While there are always reasons for concern—skepticism is healthy in the democratic process—polls play a valuable role in the democratic process and are here to stay. Democracy presumes people should have a say in the policies that affect them. Politicians want to know how they are doing. Polls are only one means by which feedback occurs. Without this feedback, politicians would struggle mightily to know what the public thinks.

## Avoiding Bias

But can we trust polls? For polls to be legitimate, they must be done right. And pollsters know their credibility and business will plummet if they fudge the numbers. The first question to ask about any poll is how it was done. If a poll is executed improperly, bias creeps in and the results are not representative of the public. Questions must be written without biasing language. Organizations that want certain answers often don't do this. If an anti-abortion group wishes to



demonstrate support for its position, it may be tempted to ask: "Do you oppose abortion, or do you favor killing babies?" Those who favor the right to abortion may ask: "Do you think male-dominated state legislatures should control abortions, or should women have the right to choose?" Each question is likely to get the desired response. A pollster who really wants to know about public opinion might ask: "On the issue of abortion, do you regard yourself as pro-life (opposed to abortion) or pro-choice (supporting the right to choose to have an abortion)?" This question may be followed by probes about the willingness to accept conditions under which choice might be allowed.

It is also essential to include all the relevant alternatives. If someone wants to know how a state might deal with a budget deficit, the alternatives of "cut spending" or "raise taxes" may be acceptable, but the response of most people will probably be some combination of the two. Presenting only the first two alterna-



tives will provide interesting information about stark contrasts, but politicians are aware there is a middle ground and will want information on all alternatives. As a consumer of polls, always seek to find the actual questions asked.

The next requirement is to follow a process in which all relevant groups are contacted so no viewpoint is excluded, either on purpose or by accident. If exclusion occurs, the results are biased: they represent some views, but not others. Acquiring an unbiased list of people to contact is not easy. If the poll requires a public response, a voter registration list might be used, but lower-income individuals register less often than others, so a voter list will underrepresent lower-income groups. The telephone book might be employed, but many people do not have publicly listed numbers, so they will be missed, and their characteristics unknown. Many political pollsters use a list of randomly generated telephone numbers that provides access to unpublished numbers. This list can be problematic because people may say they are registered to vote or likely to vote, but they may lie. Avoiding bias is not easy.

Assuming an unbiased list is obtained, getting the responses of a representative, unbiased set of people can still be challenging. Young people and shift workers are less likely to be home in the evenings. Older people are less likely to participate. At every step, some unintended exclusion of a group can creep in, and the results may not represent some people.

Considerable concern also surfaces with sample size—how many people are actually contacted. As the number of people contacted increases, the fewer the worries about the results being a product of some odd random sample, which can happen. For local polls, a sample of 300 is normal, while for national polls, around 1,000 is normal.

While the number of people contacted is always important, the crucial matter is whether the questions are unbiased and legitimately present issues with real and relevant choices, and whether the process of developing a list and contacting respondents is done in a way to avoid bias. This is the technical, unseen, decidedly un-

exciting side of polling, but it is the crucial part that gives it credibility.

## Democracy and Polls

Suppose the information is gathered correctly. Is the result really valuable in the democratic process?

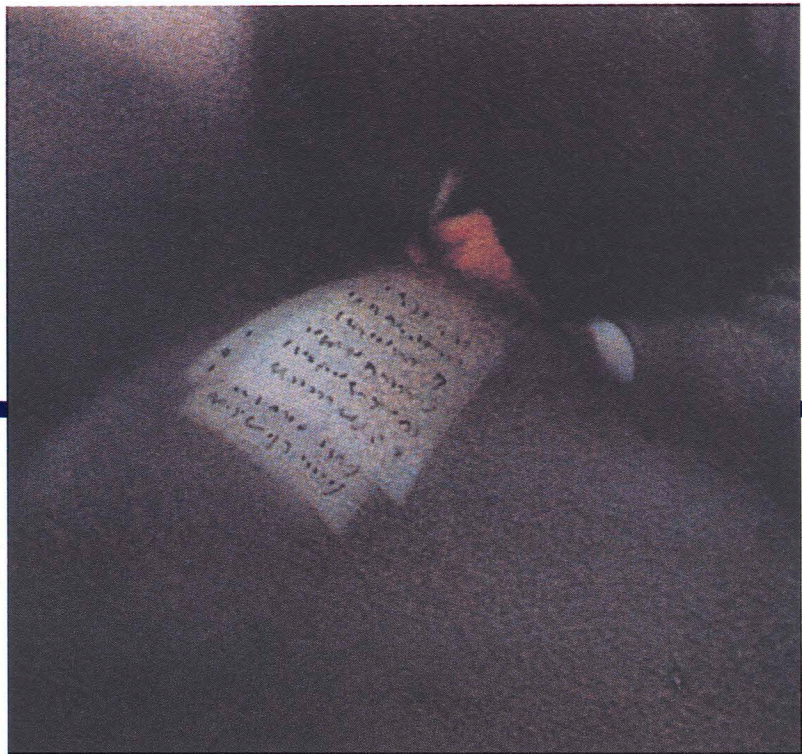
Any information collected is a snapshot. It tells us about people's reactions at a particular time. It does not tell us how opinions will change if new events occur. In political races the results can change con-

siderably as a consequence of television ads with new information, scandals, changes in the economy, announcements of candidate policy positions, or as the undecided make up their minds. We have to be careful about assuming polls can predict the future.

But polls are still invaluable for politicians. When politicians take office, their essential problem is knowing what their election meant. In 1994 Republicans took control of the House of Representatives for the first time in decades. The issue for Republicans was whether their election was a mandate to reform government in general and Congress in particular. Did it indicate support for the "Contract with America?" Did it reflect conservative opposition to welfare, regulation, taxes, and big government? Did it suggest support for reducing the deficit? Party members argued about all this and concluded that it meant a little of all of these. They then set out to implement that agenda.

The polls became crucial as a means for the public to provide feedback on political policy. Polls will not tell politicians if they are doing the "right thing" for the long run. That is a subjective judgment and best left for policy gurus. Today, polls are valuable to assess how these policies are viewed in a democracy with pending elections.

An example of an important feedback question is shown in Graph A. A standard question is whether people intend to vote for a Democrat or Republican in the congressional elections. The crucial matter for politicians is whether the polls indicate a trend away





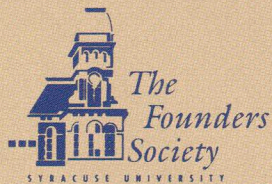
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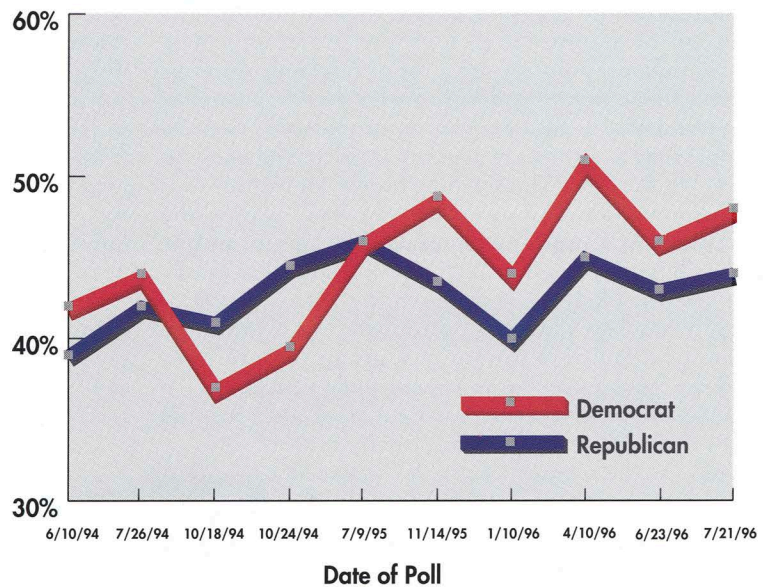
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from or toward a party. While some random fluctuation in the numbers exists, polls clearly indicate a decline in support for Republicans since early 1995. Since mid-1995 Democrats have had a consistent advantage compared to Republicans. This is feedback that politicians struggled to obtain in prior decades.

While these general trends are important, the crucial matter for politicians and analysts is how specific groups react. Is a party alienating some and winning others?

**A**

### THE GENERIC BALLOT QUESTION Democrat and Republican Vote Choices—1994-1996



Question: "In the congressional elections this fall, do you intend to vote for the Republicans or Democrats?"

Graph B presents approval ratings for the policies of Republican congressional leaders by income level. The results are fundamental in indicating how the political dynamic is playing out. Republicans initially dominated the agenda in Washington, and President Clinton struggled with a response. He then began to focus on the argument that the budget changes were unfair to lower-income groups and those less well off. As he stressed that theme, support among lower-income groups for Republicans began to decline. As Clinton kept up the attacks, support eventually declined among all groups, but the greatest drops were among lower-income groups. The debate between the parties eventually split the electorate.

The meaning of this information is up to the politicians, and it is here where the debate about who is leading whom emerges. Moderates within the Republican

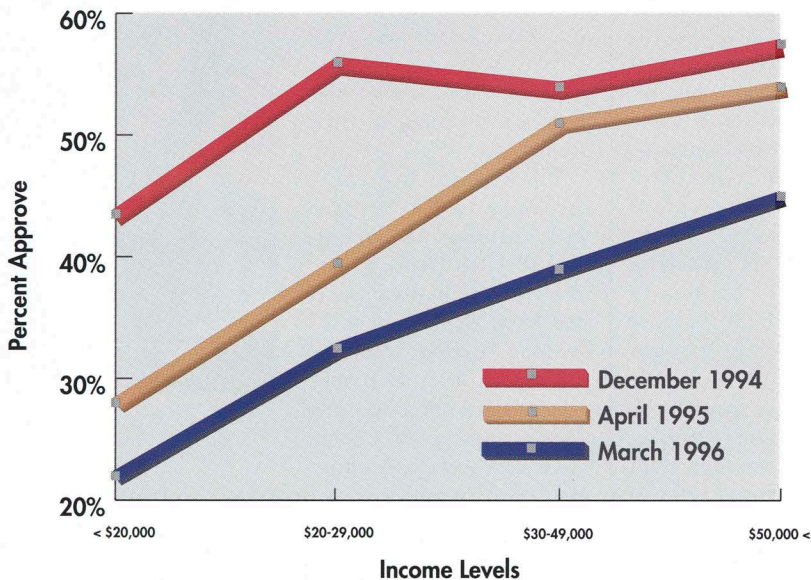


Party argue the GOP has gone too far too fast. Others argue they have done the right thing, but they have done a terrible job of communicating their ideas. Still others argue the problem is that they have not delivered on enough specific policies and the way to reduce skepticism is to plunge ahead and deliver more. Polling is valuable, but it cannot tell politicians how future dynamics will evolve. They still have to decide what they will do with the information, and whether they will lead or follow. That, naturally, produces a healthy political debate.

If citizen views are to matter in a debate of such fundamental importance as altering the federal budget, polls have become the means of providing important feedback. The politicians in Washington in 1995 did not set out to change policies just because of polls. The Republican congressional delegation clearly believed it was doing the right thing. Politicians come to office with convictions, despite popular images that they lack them. But polls play a valuable role in letting politicians know what people think of their proposals. For good or bad, the feedback process is much more immediate now, and that is unlikely to change.

*The author is a professor of political science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs.*

**B**  
**PUBLIC SUPPORT**  
**for Congressional Republican Policies by Income Levels—**  
**1994-1996**



**Question: "Do you approve or disapprove of the policies of the Republican congressional leaders?"**

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*By U.S. Senator  
Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
(D-Del.) G'68*

*By U.S. Senator  
Alfonse M. D'Amato  
(R-N.Y.) '59, G'61*

# Working Together

# Dole Best

## to Meet Our Nation's Challenges

## Represents What America Stands For

**T**he 1996 election will be a defining election—about our families, our values, and our future as a nation. It is about whether our nation will continue on a path that gives all Americans the opportunity to make the most of their lives.

We must continue our policies of fiscal responsibility and wise investment. The Clinton administration has cut the deficit in half and our growing economy has responded by creating more than 8.5 million new jobs. We have the lowest combined rate of inflation, unemployment, and mortgage rates in 27 years and a record number of new businesses.

We have increased exports by 31 percent, creating high-wage jobs that help parents provide for their families. We must also continue the gains we have made to fight crime and make our communities safer. The crime law I wrote, which President Clinton signed in September 1994, is putting 100,000 new community cops on the beat, helping to reduce crime nationwide. The crime law includes the landmark Violence Against Women Act, which provides shel-

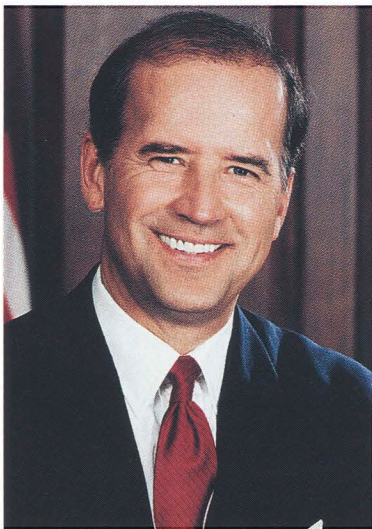
ter spaces for an additional 900,000 battered women and their children, increases courts' ability to protect women who are being stalked, and creates a national family violence hotline to immediately help women being abused. The assault weapons ban and Brady bill's waiting period to purchase a gun, which are also

**B**ob Dole, the Republican nominee for president, represents the best of what America stands for: character, courage, and leadership. Dole is a patriot and a fighter who nobly served his country. He fought and was critically wounded during World War II and spent 36 months in the hospital rebuilding his broken body with unceasing determination.

Dole also represents the best of what today's Republican Party stands for: less government spending, less taxes on working middle-class Americans, and giving hope and opportunity to all Americans. Dole led the Republican effort to pass a balanced budget amendment, and as president will work with Republicans in Congress to see to it that taxpayers keep more of their money.

The Dole tax plan accomplishes this. His plan will cut personal income taxes by 15 percent and lower the capital gains tax rate from 28 percent to 14 percent, leaving American workers with more money that can be reinvested into the economy to create more jobs and opportunity.

He calls for a \$500 tax credit to low- and middle-income families for every child they have who is age 18 or younger. The Dole plan also calls for a repeal of President Clinton's 1993 tax on Social Security benefits and the expansion of Individual Retirement Accounts. The plan will balance the budget by the year 2002.



Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr.



Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato



## Biden

part of the crime law, are working to stop the proliferation of guns on our streets and in criminals' hands.

President Clinton's record demonstrates we must ensure that all Americans have an opportunity for a brighter future. We must build upon our economic progress by balancing the budget in seven years without abandoning our fundamental values. President Clinton's balanced budget plan will not be compromised by cuts in Medicaid, Medicare, or our invest-

ment in education and the environment. The president and a bipartisan group of moderates in the U.S. Senate will succeed with welfare reform that moves people to work and encourages self-sufficiency.

President Clinton will continue to work with Congress to give parents the tools they need to protect their children. We have expanded the earned income tax credit, which provides tax relief for 40 million Americans; enacted the Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows working Americans time off after a child's birth or to care for a sick family member; and passed the new telecommunications law that includes the so-called "V" chip, which will allow parents to monitor their children's TV viewing. Under the Clinton administration, child support collection is also at a record high.

All children must have access to quality education. Over the past four years, we have expanded Head Start for thousands of children. We also are working with states, schools, and businesses to link every classroom in America to the information superhighway by the year 2000. We have increased access to college for millions more young people by reforming the student loan system and by expanding Pell Grant scholarships and work-study. President Clinton's national service initiative, AmeriCorps, has helped 45,000 young people serve their communities while earning money for college.

To fight illegal drugs, the crime law triples penalties for criminals who use kids to sell drugs, toughens penalties for selling drugs near playgrounds and

## D'Amato

The Republican Party doesn't just speak out about welfare reform and bringing about workfare not welfare, we do it. Under Dole's leadership, the Senate overwhelmingly passed the Welfare Reform bill, 87-12, changing welfare into workfare. Again in July, the Republican Party passed a welfare reform package that encourages able-bodied recipients to work and builds a system that creates hope and opportunity. As president, Dole will ensure the implementation of this

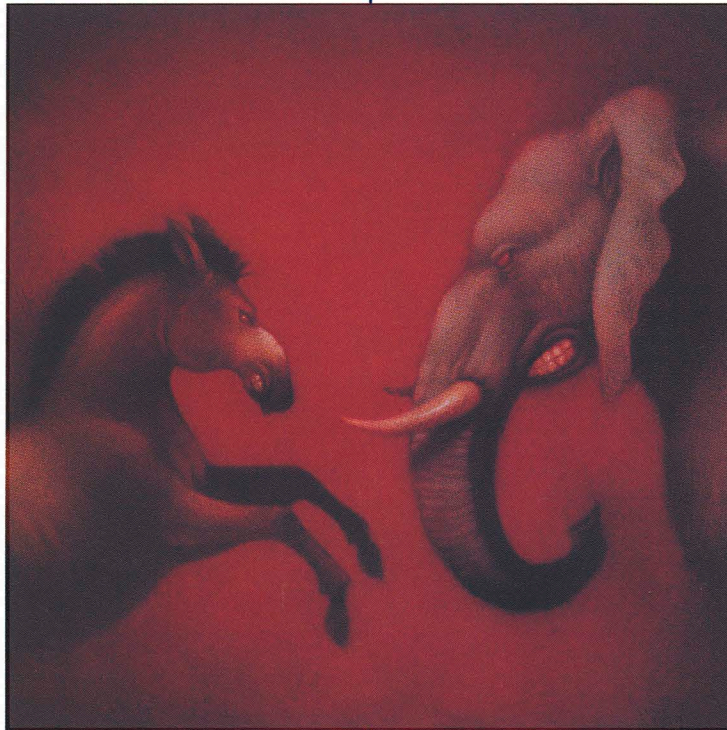
legislation, which replaces welfare with workfare.

Dole is an American whose roots are deep in the belief that every citizen of the United States should have the right to live free from the fear of crime. Whether in their own home or workplace, running errands, or attending evening church services, he believes that each and every American must feel safe.

As president, Dole will see to it that judges appointed to the federal bench will administer just rulings and not release criminals early onto the streets. He recognizes the need for a strong criminal justice system. That means judges unlike Clinton-appointed Harold Baer, the New York federal judge whose ruling threw out key evidence against alleged drug couriers. Seventy percent of the crime committed in this country is drug-related. Judge Baer ruled that 75 pounds of cocaine and 4.5 pounds of heroin

could not be admitted as evidence because the police did not have a reason to stop the suspect's car. As president, Dole will appoint judges who are tough on crime.

Dole will also lead a real war on drugs. There is no disputing the rise in illicit drug use by adolescents. Studies have shown that 2.9 million teenagers used marijuana in 1994, an increase of 1.3 million from just 1992. This alarming trend shows that one in three high school seniors smokes marijuana. Since 1992 drug use by 10th graders has risen nearly two-thirds. Drug use by eighth graders has nearly doubled since 1991. Of a class of 30 students in a New York City





## Biden

schools, and increases penalties for drug use and drug trafficking in prisons. We also have instituted the National Gang Tracing Network to crack down against gangs and youth violence.

During the last four years, democracy has been restored in Haiti, and we have stood up for those who take risks for peace in Bosnia, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland. The anti-terrorism bill, which I co-wrote with Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and the president signed into law last April, will strengthen our ability to combat foreign and domestic terrorism.

As a direct result of the White House's reinventing government efforts we have cut the federal workforce by more than 200,000 positions and eliminated 284 federal advisory committees. Through these and other efforts, we have saved American taxpayers \$58 billion.

We are creating a smaller, more efficient government that is on the side of working families. Let's continue with the progress we have made to give Americans a government that works for them.

*The author is a 1968 graduate of Syracuse University's College of Law.*

## D'Amato

high school or junior high, approximately five use marijuana or other illicit drugs heavily.

With drug use on the rise with teenagers, the White House administration has to start allocating adequate resources in order to reduce the presence of narcotics in the United States. But instead, when President Clinton took office, he cut the Office of National Drug Policy from 147 to 25, an indication of the president's priorities. When faced with criticism of a failed drug strategy, President Clinton has found the need to restaff the drug czar's office.

As president, Dole will work with the Congress to develop a comprehensive drug strategy, such as was recommended earlier this year by the Congressional Task Force on National Drug Policy.

The Republican Party is working to reform the welfare system, combat crime, and balance the budget to ensure a sound economy for our children and grandchildren. As president, Dole will lead us in these efforts. I am proud to support Bob Dole. He will make a great president.

*The author is a 1959 graduate of the School of Management and a 1961 graduate of the College of Law.*

## AN SU ALUM PURSUES THE PRESIDENCY

As a third-party write-in candidate for the presidency, Earnest Lee Easton may lack funding and name recognition, but that hasn't stopped him from pursuing his agenda of keeping the American Dream alive and correcting society's ills.

Easton, an independent scholar from South Bend, Indiana, is well-schooled in government, holding a Ph.D. and two master's degrees, including a master of public administration that he received from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in 1971. "I think that all those in America who have to give up something every day and who work hard should not be told that they're in a country where they can't expect what was expected before," says Easton, who declared his candidacy in April 1995. "I think we still have an American Dream."

Easton's varied background and interests meld academics, the arts, and athletics. Aside from teaching and consulting, he sings, composes music, writes songs and movies, and is a lifelong competitive athlete, most recently a race walker. As a presidential hopeful, he bills himself as "sophisticated, refined, and fearless." Fearless, perhaps, is an understatement: In 1994, moments after witnessing a fatal shooting

in a South Bend fast-food restaurant, Easton wrestled the armed murderer to the ground. In December 1995, while riding a bus in Mishawaka, Indiana, he stopped a beating and prevented two gangs from mixing it up. Both acts earned him commendations of bravery and heroism from local communities.

The Army veteran is also founder of the Veteran's Industrial Political Party, recognizing what he sees as the intertwined relationship between the strength and contributions of the American veteran and the country's industrial power. "They both stand for the United States and for strength worldwide," he says. "The American veteran is one of the greatest freedom-fighting groups ever. Without the veteran, we might not have the form of democracy that we have."

Along with supporting veterans' issues, Easton is a constitutionalist who preaches what he calls "Free Enterprise Democracy." Private initiative and superior management training must be fostered in the business world, he says, while the government must have programs to help those in need, too. Easton also supports creating scholarships for all qualified students and wants jobs available for all university graduates. Among other key issues, he advocates the United States collecting the debts it's owed by foreign countries and would work to eradicate drug use, functional illiteracy, and diseases.

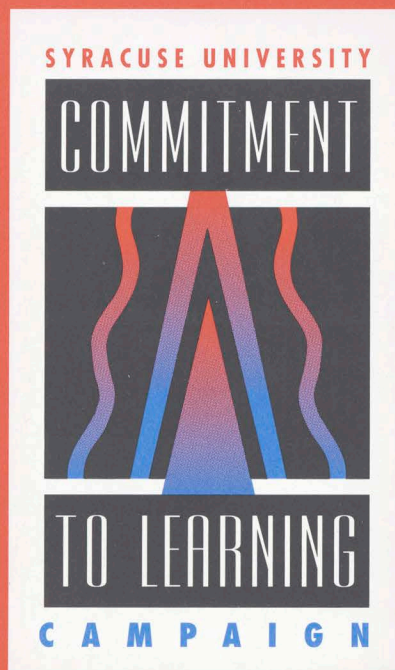
"We have a lot to do in our country," he says. "And I'm the person who, without doubt, will get it done."

—Jay Cox



Presidential candidate Earnest Lee Easton





AN OVERVIEW



# The Vision

## COMMITMENT TO LEARNING IS:

- a campaign that supports SU's vision to be the nation's leading student-centered research university;
- a commitment by the University to provide the highest quality environment for learning to take place; and
- an appeal to those who can provide the resources to make the vision and commitment possible.

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

Dear Alumni and Friends,

On campus, this is a quiet, peaceful season. As I write this, it's late summer, and the Quad is bright with sunlight—and seems pretty empty when compared with the bustle of the academic year.

But Syracuse University is not resting. Last year, we formally announced the start of the Commitment to Learning campaign, a plan to raise \$300 million to take Syracuse into the 21st century. So you can understand why we're busier than ever.

We're busy transforming Syracuse into *the nation's leading student-centered research university*. This vision takes our historic strengths—undergraduate education and an emphasis on research—and melds them to our competitive advantage. Syracuse University will be the place where undergraduates participate in research and where cutting-edge developments enrich classroom instruction.

Through this campaign, set to conclude in June of the year 2000, we're building the strongest student body ever through merit-based scholarships and attractive, innovative programs of study. We're reinforcing our strong faculty with new professorial chairs. We're establishing programs and centers of inquiry that will meet the changing needs of our students and the evolving research needs of faculty.

This campaign is also about building bridges to you, our alumni and friends. We can only succeed by expanding our connections to the people who care about Syracuse, its future, and its students. For our part, then, we're eager to explain to you our plans for Syracuse, the vital activity hidden under the summer silence. That's why we've prepared this document.

We hope what you learn will bring you closer to Syracuse and its community of students and faculty. And we hope you'll join us in our commitment to learning.



Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw



Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw



# The Vision

Only a few years after the close of the Campaign for Syracuse (1985-91), Syracuse University underwent what some might call a paradigm shift. While the campaign under Chancellor Melvin A. Eggers had enhanced both the physical plant and program excellence, Chancellor Kenneth A. Shaw's mission was to build on that campaign's momentum to position SU for success in the 21st century.

The next step was visionary. The Chancellor and his advisors looked at SU's history, its strengths and traditions, its consistent values, and its competitors in the world of higher education, and they decided Syracuse would redefine itself. Syracuse University would become *the nation's leading student-centered research university*, fulfilling its mission of undergraduate education and high-quality research in an environment that stimulates student/faculty collaboration.

The fuel for greater change at SU is a four-pronged fund-raising initiative that will prepare Syracuse students for productive and exciting lives and stand the University in good stead for decades to come.

## MEETING STUDENT NEEDS: \$120 MILLION

Given the competition for the best students, Syracuse needs to both attract and retain the finest young minds. We're achieving that through merit- and need-based scholarships (the single largest campaign priority), undergraduate advisory programs, career counseling centers, and centers of learning that emphasize current research and innovative learning practices.

## INVESTING IN NEW EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES: \$40 MILLION

Throughout the University, our schools and colleges need the latest research tools and technology to build state-of-the-art classrooms and labs. And for all our students, the University Library must upgrade records and access.

## EXCELLING IN A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT: \$120 MILLION

We will strengthen the programs and faculty in our schools and colleges through endowed professorships, new academic programs and research centers, an enriched academic environment with more lecture series and student-faculty collaborations, and new spaces across campus where students can congregate or study.

## PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: \$20 MILLION

No one can predict the future; we can only prepare by acquiring the resources necessary to respond to changing conditions. This will be accomplished through unrestricted gifts, general scholarship support, and annual operating support for all our schools and colleges.



MARK TURNER

Terri Grey A&S '96 (left), a Dean's Scholar, assists in a classroom at the Maxwell School-affiliated High School for Leadership and Public Service in lower Manhattan.



# Scholarships

*I wouldn't have been able to come to Syracuse without a Chancellor's Scholarship. It was a deciding factor in my choosing to come here.*

—KATHLEEN SWALD A&S '98

Financial aid in the 1990s is undergoing new pressures. Colleges and universities can't meet every student's financial need the way they once did. And with a sharp decline in the number of college-age students, competition for the best students has led institutions to offer awards to students with the greatest promise.

At Syracuse, we've launched a responsive scholarship program that attracts the finest students and supports those with need. The result is an enormous financial commitment that requires assistance from our alumni and friends. Through the Commitment to Learning campaign, we're seeking funds to endow scholarships. Those funds will help ensure the future of the following initiatives:

## **CHANCELLOR'S AND DEAN'S SCHOLARSHIPS: \$40 MILLION**

Aimed at attracting the best and brightest students, these new merit-based awards (for 1996: \$6,000 for Chancellor's, \$4,000 for Dean's) are the core of our scholarship fund-raising drive.

## **GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS: \$20 MILLION**

Support for these awards will help our graduate programs attract the finest students, researchers, and postdoctoral fellows, strengthening the work done in the lab, the field, and the classroom.

## **THE UNDERGRADUATE OPPORTUNITY FUND: \$25 MILLION**

Monies from this fund will assist students who need additional support because their financial situations have changed.

## **THE STUDENT ATHLETE FUND: \$10 MILLION**

This fund will not only ensure scholarships for student athletes, but also strengthen academic support services for athletes.

## **REMEMBRANCE SCHOLARSHIPS: \$3 MILLION**

A tribute to the 35 Syracuse students who lost their lives in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, these scholarships recognize seniors of extraordinary merit.

## **OUR TIME HAS COME: \$2 MILLION**

Established in 1987, scholarships from this collection of funds support African American and Latino students who have financial need and demonstrate academic excellence.



Investing in our future: Robert H. McCaffrey Jr. MAN '49, donor to two endowed scholarships and an honorary trustee of the University, with Kimberly Schuster NUR '97, a recipient of the Dorothy and Robert McCaffrey Scholarship.



# Scholarships

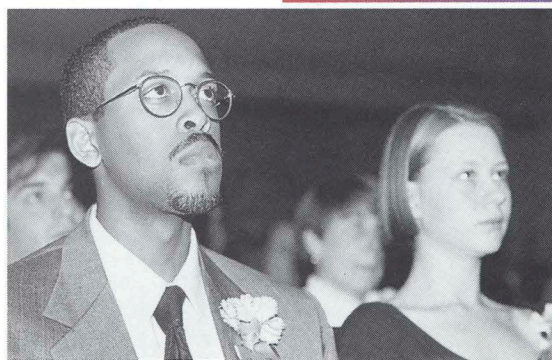
## GIVING TO SCHOLARSHIPS

Programs of study change, the fortunes of athletic teams rise and fall, buildings are erected, refurbished, or torn down—but an intelligent, vibrant student body is a constant at Syracuse. So too is students' need for financial support.

Much of our emphasis in the Commitment to Learning campaign is on scholarships because we want to ensure that—just as your generation of students walked this campus and helped shape the University—future generations of students will enliven Syracuse with their ideas and dreams.

We're encouraging endowed gifts for scholarships. The interest from such gifts will support our scholarship initiatives while the principal grows in perpetuity. People who establish named endowed funds can become acquainted with the recipients of their gifts—individuals, with their own unique goals, who are living out the Syracuse tradition.

A gift to scholarships is unlike any other gift. It's a recognition of your past, a connection to the present, and an investment in the future.



Two of the 35  
1996 Remembrance  
Scholars: Adolphus Belk Jr.  
A&S '96 and Catherine  
Blair-Dixon A&S '96.  
Below: At center, donors  
Maxine Davison MAN '33  
and her husband, Bernard  
Singer MAN '27, with recip-  
ients of the Donald F. and  
Maxine B. Davison  
Scholarship (from left):  
Theodore Richane A&S '98,  
Cynthia Maynard VPA '97,  
Ryan O'Grady ECS '97,  
Megan Kaiser A&S '97, and  
Jeffrey Souva MAN '97.

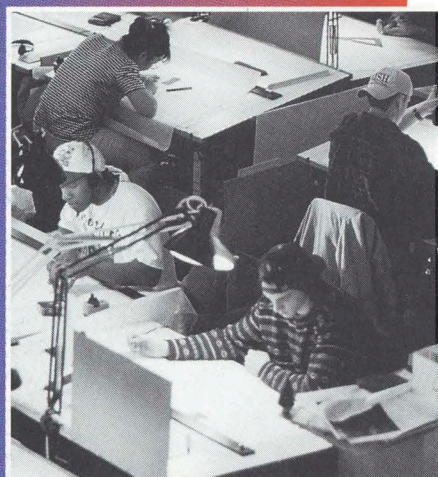




# School and College Priorities

Each school and college in the Syracuse University community is promoting its own set of priorities under the campaign banner. Taken as a whole, these priorities seek support for existing strengths, immediate needs, and forward-looking initiatives.

In addition to the partial listing of priorities here, *all schools and colleges are seeking funds for endowed scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students, support for faculty chairs and professorships, and unrestricted gifts.* Also, contributions may be used *both* to support school-based priorities and to name rooms, areas, programs, buildings, and the schools and colleges themselves.



The undergraduate studio at the School of Architecture. Below: In the Maxwell School's Global Collaboratory, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich leads a discussion with students at SU and—via satellite—the University of Texas.

## SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

- *The Center for Architectural Research*, where Central New York is viewed as an architectural laboratory
- *Lecture series* in Syracuse and New York City
- *The Fund for Special Projects in Technology*, supporting distance education and the acquisition of the latest equipment

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

- *The Freshman Lecture*, bringing prominent speakers to campus
- *The Center for Career Exploration*, supporting several initiatives aimed at connecting school and career
- *The Center for Innovative Learning and Problem Solving* to link several innovative learning programs
- Creation of the *Writing Center* by expanding the offerings of our nationally recognized Writing Program
- *The Jewish Studies Endowment* to expand the Jewish Studies Program
- *The Creative Writing Program Endowment* to support our acclaimed reading series and increase undergraduate involvement
- *A postdoctoral position in African American Studies* to strengthen this department
- *An endowment for the Latino-Latin American Studies Program* to support existing work and bring experts to campus

## MAXWELL SCHOOL OF CITIZENSHIP AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- *The Global Affairs Institute*, coordinating a broad range of Maxwell's worldwide interdisciplinary academic activities
- *The Global Collaboratory*, an electronic lecture hall linking students to the world
- *The Alan K. Campbell Public Affairs Institute*, fostering cooperation between the public and private sectors
- Semester- or summer-long *Washington Internship Programs* for graduate and undergraduate students
- *Residencies* for distinguished visitors and visiting academics
- Long-term, secure funding for the *Undergraduate Education Innovation Program* already under way
- *The Faculty of the Future Program*, supporting faculty development in graduate and undergraduate teaching



RON TRINCA



# School and College Priorities

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

- *The Fund for Student/Faculty Enrichment*, supporting student research initiatives and undergraduate involvement in faculty research
- Full endowment for the *Ganders Lecture Fund*

## L.C. SMITH COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

- Endowed funds to support the unique and distinguished *Institute for Sensory Research*
- *The Institute for Manufacturing Engineering* to educate undergraduate and graduate students, conduct research, and facilitate links with industry
- *Programs Rooted in Developing Excellence (PRIDE)*, a variety of initiatives to improve services for all students, especially women and those from underrepresented groups

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

- *Future Professoriate Fellowships* for graduate students planning careers in university teaching
- *Teaching Associate Excellence in Teaching Awards*, providing travel and research funds
- *Faculty teaching seminars* for new faculty mentors in the Future Professoriate Project
- *Professional development aid* to support graduate students in their research

## COLLEGE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

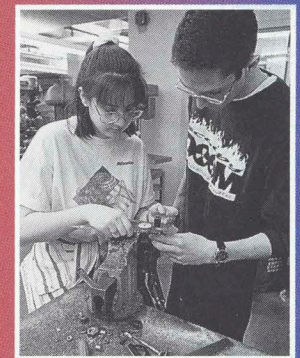
- *The Faculty Development Fund* to meet the resource and continuing education needs of faculty
- *The Fund for Student Learning*, supporting student-driven initiatives and an annual stipend for a graduate student from a traditionally underrepresented group
- Expansion of programs and solidification of funding through the new *Fashion and Textile Design Institute*

## SCHOOL OF INFORMATION STUDIES

- *Support for five doctoral fellowships*, along with the *Doctoral Advancement Fund* to aid doctoral research
- *The Institute for Information Policy* to propose improvements to national information policymaking
- *A distinguished lecture series*
- *Project Jumpstart* to help schools create technology-rich learning environments to improve children's problem-solving skills

## COLLEGE OF LAW

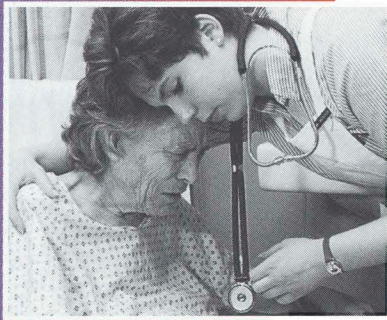
- Additional funding for the new *Winifred MacNaughton Hall*
- *Renovation of existing buildings* to provide more space for the library and student services
- *Programmatic endowments* to support library acquisitions and clinical programs, among other needs



Top: A middle school intern from the School of Education.  
Middle: Weaving class at the College for Human Development.  
Bottom: Students measure parts for an all-terrain vehicle at the machine shop of the L.C. Smith College of Engineering and Computer Science.



# School and College Priorities



Top: Sculpture in progress at the Comstock Art Facility of the College of Visual and Performing Arts' School of Art and Design.

Middle: A student from the College of Nursing provides clinical care.

Bottom: The broadcast journalism newsroom at the Newhouse School.

## SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

- *The Center for Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises* to focus on strengths unique to Syracuse
- Expansion of the *Career Center's* student services and networking capabilities
- *The Center for Research Support* to oversee the activities of all other research centers in the school, ensuring more effective program management
- *The Center for Computing and Information Technology*, providing a teaching center for new technology and applications

## COLLEGE OF NURSING

- *The Center for Nursing and Health Care*, providing a focal point for innovative demonstration projects and related research activities
- *The Learning Experience*, implementing student-centered initiatives
- Expansion of the *Semester Away Program*
- Support for *student internships*
- *Student Academic Success*, helping students adapt to the rigors of college
- *The Learning Resource Center* for instructional and simulation technology
- Increased support for *study abroad options*
- A proposed *annual lecture series*

## S.I. NEWHOUSE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

- *The Industry-Academy Exchange*, taking professors into the business world and bringing business professionals to Newhouse
- *The Fund for New Technology* to secure the latest equipment
- *The Gateway Initiative*, supporting visiting students and new faculty from traditionally underrepresented groups
- *The Center for the Study of Media and Democratic Values*, exploring the crossroads of the media and the state

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

- The latest computer hardware and software for the *Educational Exploration Center*
- *The Yenawine Institute for Corporate/Community Partnerships*, connecting businesses and social service providers
- Expansion of faculty support and awards through the *Faculty Advancement Fund*
- *The Center for Social Work Leadership and Innovation* to explore current issues

## COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

- *Renovation* of Smith Hall and Crouse College Auditorium
- *Funds for operations and equipment*, ensuring needed upgrades to the VPA environment
- *The Travel/Tour Fund*, enabling music ensembles to promote the School of Music nationally
- *The Debate Team Fund*, supporting a program that involves students from across the University
- Support of an in-house string quartet—which will aid recruiting and teaching—through the *Resident String Quartet Fund*



## Other Priorities

### SU LIBRARY

- Renovation of Carnegie Library
- Computerization of card catalog records from the library's older materials
- The Endowment for Library Collections, supporting acquisitions, accessibility, and preservation
- The Endowment for Library Automation to allow technological upgrades
- Support for Teaching and Research Assistantships
- Endowments for vital staff positions

### UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

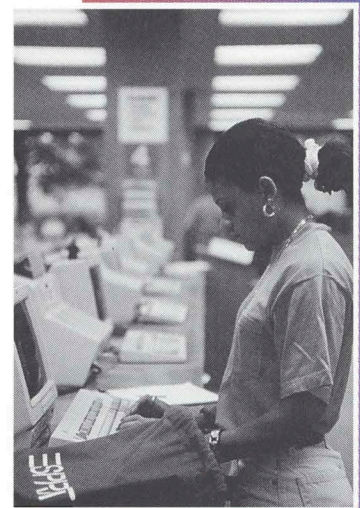
- To support students completing honors theses and projects, a naming gift for the Honors Program
- The Center for Instructional Development, a national model for change in higher education
- The Fund for Improvement of Teaching and Learning to support faculty assistance programs and student projects
- The Mentor Award Program, fostering mentor relationships
- Naming gifts for Division of International Programs Abroad centers

### SU PRESS

- The Press Endowment Fund, underwriting scholarly publications
- Support for new publication series
- Office renovation

### ALL-UNIVERSITY PRIORITIES

- Oasis Centers, spaces for social interaction, study, and reading
- Four Classrooms of the Future
- Additional funding for the new Goldstein Alumni and Faculty Center
- A naming gift for the Center for Public and Community Service, linking students to the community
- The Hendricks Chapel Endowment, supporting the operation of our interfaith chapel



A student accessing library records at Bird Library. Below: Students make life-changing community connections through the Center for Public and Community Service.



# Leadership

## THE CAMPAIGN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Twenty volunteers—the Campaign Executive Committee—have made Commitment to Learning a chief priority, devoting time, energy, ideas, and finances. Coming from across the United States and representing four decades of SU graduating classes, they bring wisdom, support, and resources vital to the success of this campaign.

The campaign chair is SU Trustee Marvin Lender A&S '63. Former owner of Lender's Bagels, president of M&M Investments, and a respected force in the philanthropic world, Lender is a model alumnus: devoted to his alma mater, connected to the University's present activities, and invested in its future.

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"Commitment to Learning" is a slogan that speaks for itself. Most of the "bricks-and-mortar" of Syracuse were finished before this campaign began. This campaign is about supporting scholarships and the notion of a *student-centered research university*.

That vision for the University means attracting and supporting strong students and faculty, funding innovative programs, and developing outstanding research. The funding priorities are grounded in the real needs of deans and departments creatively reviewing their places in higher education and positioning themselves for the next century. Those initiatives will help recruit the best students for Syracuse and enhance their stay.

We can give to a lot of causes, but we don't always see the results. Giving to Syracuse allows you to get your arms around the results of your contribution. You can follow your dollars, and you can see a student go through the University better off for your contribution.

During Commencement last year, I looked out on 5,000 students receiving degrees. It's rewarding to know you've had some small role in their education—because that's our future.



Marvin Lender

### CAMPAIGN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

H. Douglas Barclay LAW '61  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

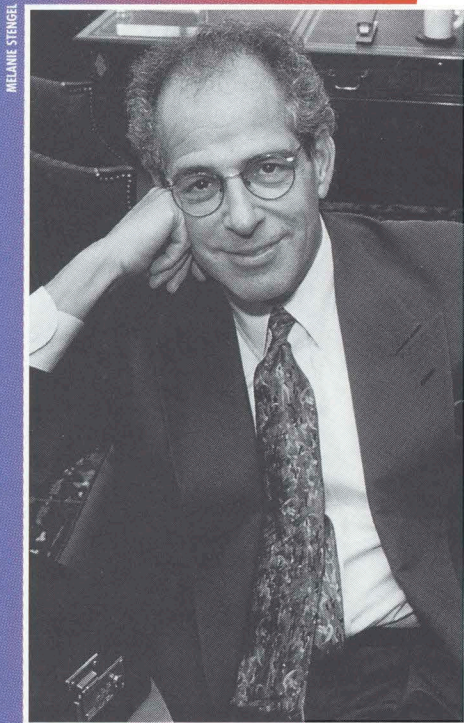
Marvin K. Lender '63  
*National Campaign Chair*

George H. Babikian '53  
Louis F. Bantle '51  
J. Patrick Barrett

Wendy H. Cohen '70  
John A. Couri '63  
Renée Schine Crown '50  
Richard Dulude '54  
David M. Flaum '75  
Marshall M. Gelfand '50  
Donald J. Giancola '46  
Paul Greenberg '65  
John L. Kreisler III '65

Joseph O. Lampe '53, LAW '55  
Robert B. Menschel '51  
Emanuel Shemin '52  
William J. Smith '50  
Allan D. Sutton '55  
  
E. Burr Gibson '47  
*Ex Officio*

Below: Trustee Marvin Lender, chair of the Commitment to Learning campaign.  
Bottom: Trustee Renée Schine Crown



MELANIE STENDEL





# Leadership

## THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COUNCIL

With the encouragement of Campaign Chair Marvin Lender and other campaign leaders, 45 friends of the University have volunteered for the National Campaign Council (NCC). While the campaign's executive committee represents the highest level of decision-making and commitment, NCC volunteers represent the broadening scope of campaign outreach.

"These volunteers multiply our hands," says Lansing Baker, senior vice president for University Relations. "They open doors we can't open, have knowledge about prospective donors, and give us access to people we couldn't otherwise reach."

### CO-CHAIRS

George H. Babikian '53  
David M. Flaum '75

Richard L. Haydon '66  
Doris (Greenberg) Payson '57

### MEMBERS

Mary Ann (Buell) Babikian '52  
Charles W. Beach '58, G'67  
Martin L. Berman '62  
Phyllis (West) Berman '66  
James A. Boehm Jr. '66, G'73  
Joan (Breier) Brodsky '67, G'68  
William J. Brodsky '65, LAW '68  
Craig L. Caudill '77  
W. Carroll Coyne '54, LAW '57  
Gerald B. Cramer '52  
Douglas D. Danforth '47  
Lt. Gen. Hans H. Driessnack, USAF Ret. '51  
Leonard Eisen '56  
Ilene (Birbaum) Flaum '76  
Professor Emeritus Eric F. Gardner  
Gary S. Greenberg '72  
Glen R. Greenberg '79  
Patrick J. Hennigan Jr. G'75, G'78  
Joyce Hergenhan '63  
Austin "Rocky" Kalish  
Irma (Ginsburg) Kalish '45

Peter C. Kissel '69  
Sharon (Murphy) Kissel '70  
Helaine (Gold) Lender '65  
Robert H. McCaffrey Jr. '49  
James R. Miller '63  
Kathleen Pavelka '82  
Richard C. Pietrafesa '50  
Anthony F. Renda '60  
Cathy Renda  
Bruce R. Ross '62  
Shereth (Landrum) Smallwood '64  
Stephen J. Smallwood '61  
Michael L. Somich '73, G'73  
Rosemary (Whitman) Somich '74  
Robert W. Tenney '82  
C. Jean (Terry) Thompson '66  
Richard L. Thompson G'67  
Linda B. Yenawine  
Martin A. "Marty" Yenawine  
Harold Zirkin Jr. '65



NCC volunteer Irma Kalish (left) and Associate of the Chancellor Mary Ann Shaw. Below (from left): Trustees and Campaign Executive Committee members David Flaum and George Babikian with NCC volunteer Gary Greenberg.







DAVID BRODA

## Our Commitment

Any university is a place in transition. New knowledge, changing social forces, shifting demographics—these make higher education a place of constant, driving movement.

At Syracuse today, you'll find even more changes, because as the University positions itself to be *the nation's leading student-centered research university*, dramatic leaps of imagination and commitment are called for.

We want you, our alumni, parents, and friends—all partners in this endeavor—to understand the breadth of our vision and the scope of what we've already achieved. As of Summer 1996, nearly \$140 million has come to the University in support of the campaign. But Commitment to Learning is not only about raising funds to secure the future; it's also about gathering together for a tremendous cause all those who care about Syracuse.

Our schools and colleges and our Office of Development want to hear from you. Staff there can more fully explain the many priorities of this campaign and the many ways of giving to support our vision and our students.

For more information, or to discuss how your giving interests can support the University's priorities, please contact me:

Sid Micek, Campaign Director  
Commitment to Learning Campaign  
Syracuse University  
820 Comstock Ave.  
Syracuse, NY 13244-5040  
(315) 443-2865  
smicek@suadmin.syr.edu

Our promise to you is that your interest will be engaged, your time well spent, and your gifts invested wisely. Please share our vision.

Sid Micek, Campaign Director  
Vice President for Development

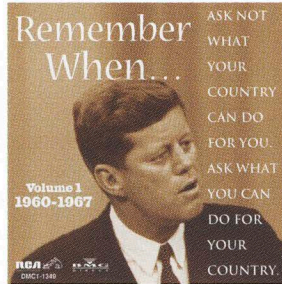


# Oldies But Goodies

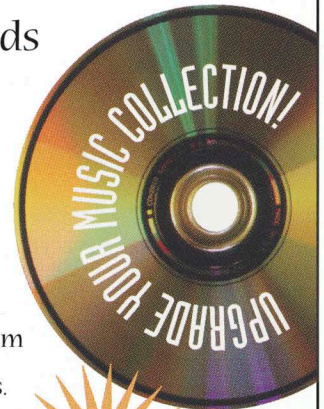
Support your Alumni Association and have fun doing it.

### VOLUME 1 1960-1967

- Respect—Aretha Franklin
- Shout—The Isley Brothers
- Wooly Bully—Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs
- Runaround Sue—Dion
- Louie Louie—Kingsmen
- Hey! Baby—Bruce Channel
- Somebody to Love—Jefferson Airplane
- He's So Fine—The Chiffons
- Hang on Sloopy—The McCoys
- You Baby—The Turtles
- Do You Believe in Magic—The Lovin' Spoonful
- If You Want to be Happy—Jimmy Soul
- I Will Follow Him—Little Peggy March
- Rescue Me—Fontella Bass
- The Lion Sleeps Tonight—The Tokens

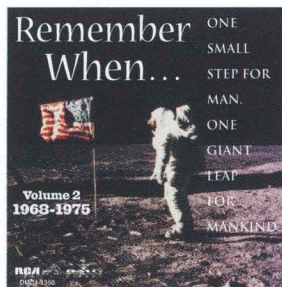


Good times, good friends and great music, that's what our college years were all about.



### VOLUME 2 1968-1975

- Midnight Train to Georgia—Glady's Knight & The Pips
- American Woman—The Guess Who
- The Rapper—The Jaggerz
- You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet—Bachman Turner Overdrive
- Worst That Could Happen—Brooklyn Bridge
- Born to Be Wild—Steppenwolf
- Crystal Blue Persuasion—Tommy James & The Shondells
- O-O-H Child—The Five Stairsteps
- Everybody's Talkin'—Nilsson
- Grazing in the Grass—The Friends of Distinction
- Rock the Boat—The Hues Corporation
- Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)—Melanie
- Get Together—The Youngbloods
- Cry Like a Baby—The Boxtops
- Vehicle—Ides of March



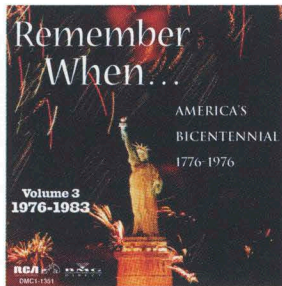
Our Remember When Music Program will bring back those great memories.



The program is easy. Select one or more Remember When CDs or Tapes and you can purchase a bonus selection of Christmas, Classical or Big Band music for a special, reduced price.

### VOLUME 3 1976-1983

- My Sharona—The Knack
- More, More, More—Andrea True Connection
- That's the Way (I Like It)—KC & The Sunshine Band
- I'm So Excited—The Pointer Sisters
- We Are Family—Sister Sledge
- Black Water—The Doobie Brothers
- Rich Girl—Hall and Oates
- I Love Music—The O'Jays
- Rock This Town—The Stray Cats
- Centerfold—The J. Geils Band
- It's a Heartache—Bonnie Tyler
- More Than a Feeling—Boston
- Turn the Beat Around—Vicky Sue Robinson
- Play That Funky Music—Wild Cherry
- Saturday Night—Bay City Rollers

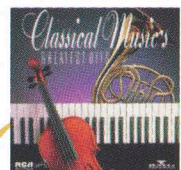


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By Douglas Holtz-Eakin

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# residential Politics and

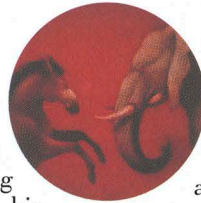
# the FLAT TAX issue

**T**he presidential candidacy of publisher Malcolm "Steve" Forbes Jr. galvanized a long-simmering debate over the merits of a "flat tax." But did proponents' dreams of scrapping the federal income tax die along with his campaign? Or will the flat tax issue re-emerge as Bill Clinton, Bob Dole, Ross Perot, and others spar toward the November election?

To most, the striking feature of the flat tax is a single, low tax rate. But, in fact, the critical feature of the Forbes flat tax, which originated from a proposal by Robert Hall and Alvin Rabushka in their book *The Flat Tax*, is a dramatic shift in the philosophical basis of taxation. No longer would families be taxed on the basis of their income. Instead, the flat tax would collect taxes in proportion to the amount of money families spend on their purchases—that is, on their consumption.

How would this happen? Suppose the government wishes to collect a 20 percent consumption tax. This requires a 20 percent sales tax on purchases by households for their consumption and an exemption from tax for purchases by businesses, which, as mere intermediaries in the economy, are not consumers. The tax payments could be sent in by the businesses making the sales, in much the same way retail sales tax is now handled.

To make things concrete, the example (see box) shows the expected kinds of payments for four typical economic actors. Bob and Carol each run a business that employs Ted and Alice, respectively. Bob's business has revenues of \$200,000, but under the direct consumption tax makes no payments because he caters exclusively to other businesses. Carol's business, in contrast, has a retail consumer base of customers, and owes payments of \$60,000, or 20 percent of her \$300,000 in sales. In this form of a consumption tax, the two indi-



viduals shown (Ted and Alice) make no payments to the government.

Of course, Ted and Alice pay taxes—as does every other household—in the form of higher prices for their purchases. They just don't make any tax payments. While they may not write the checks, they bear the burden of the government's decision to collect \$60,000 in taxes. In the end, using businesses as a convenient way to process the money should never disguise the fact that people pay taxes.

The sales tax seems a far cry from the flat tax. Not only would the flat tax require all businesses to file tax returns, but individuals would as well. To connect the two, notice that the retail sales tax only collects tax at the moment goods pass into consumers' hands. No other firms are involved in the tax system. Alternatively, one could collect exactly the same tax as goods and services make their way through the business sector to consumers. Each business would owe tax based on the difference between its sales and the cost of its purchases from other businesses, a system known as a VAT (value-added tax).

In a VAT, purchases by one company from another company generate no net taxes; the seller's tax liability is exactly offset by the buyer's deduction for the cost of the purchase. Only sales to consumers generate a net tax, just like the retail sales tax.

In our example, Bob's company now sends \$40,000 to the government, but this is offset by the reduction in taxes remitted by Carol's firm. The business sector still writes checks for \$60,000 in taxes. And, of course, Ted, Alice, and the others really pay the tax as it is built into the prices Bob's company charges to Carol's, and Carol's company, in turn, charges household customers.

The flat tax further divides tax collection between businesses and households by allowing firms to deduct wages and requiring individuals to file tax returns and send in payments based on their wages and salaries.



## ALTERNATIVE Approaches to a 20 Percent Consumption Tax

Thus, in a pure flat tax, the deduction for Ted's \$100,000 salary reduces Bob's company's tax payments by \$20,000; an amount offset by Ted's check to the IRS. Likewise, the \$50,000 Alice earns at Carol's firm leads her to write the IRS a check for \$10,000, balancing the \$10,000 reduction on the taxes of Carol's company. And, to be sure, the dramatically different cosmetic appearances of the tax system do not disguise the fact that Ted and Alice once again bear the full burden of paying the government's bills. This time, less of the tax is built into the cost of purchases, but their disposable income is reduced directly by the tax payments.

Is the flat tax fair? Since the pure flat tax is just a dressed-up sales tax it is just as fair—or unfair—as its familiar counterpart. But by bringing households into the tax system the flat tax gains the ability to tailor taxes to households' circumstances, a freedom that can be viewed as either a blessing or a curse. While it permits a deliberately progressive structure, it also raises the specter of a flat tax as pockmarked with indefensible loopholes and special provisions as the current system.

To date, flat tax proposals have largely eliminated all deductions for mortgage interest, charitable contributions, medical expenses, property taxes, and so forth. Instead, there is a standard exemption of earnings from tax. For example, consider the effects of exempting the first \$25,000 of earnings from tax, as shown in the last column of the chart. Alice's payments are cut by 50 percent, while Ted's fall by 25 percent, thereby introducing some progressivity into the system. The "burden" of the \$30,000 in business taxes will depend upon the spending habits of Ted and Alice. Since Ted is more affluent, one would expect him to consume more and thus bear a greater fraction of the burden.

In the end, the flat tax bears a superficial resemblance to the current system: households and businesses file returns, there is a system of exemptions, and other characteristics. But by now the secret is out: The flat tax is just a progressive sales tax. And it is not really flat; there are two tax rates (zero and 20 percent in the example).

Is America ready for the flat tax? Proponents stress a superior philosophical underpinning—you are taxed on consumption, what you take out of society, instead of what you put in—the effort that leads to wages, interest, dividends, and capital gains. People might save and invest more. Tax forms would be easier to fill out and process. And a flat tax would avoid interfering in economic affairs—no incentives for fancy financial

	SALES TAX	VALUE-ADDED TAX	PURE FLAT TAX	FLAT TAX
<b>BOB'S BUSINESS</b>				
Sales to Business	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000
Sales to Households	0	0	0	0
Purchases from other firms	0	0	0	0
Wages	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Tax Base	0	200,000	100,000	100,000
Tax	0	40,000	20,000	20,000
<b>CAROL'S BUSINESS</b>				
Sales to Business	0	0	0	0
Sales to Households	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Purchases from other firms	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Wages	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Tax Base	300,000	100,000	50,000	50,000
Tax	60,000	20,000	10,000	10,000
<b>BUSINESS PAYMENTS</b>				
Ted				
Wages	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
Tax	0	0	20,000	15,000
Alice				
Wages	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Tax	0	0	10,000	5,000
<b>INDIVIDUAL PAYMENTS</b>				
	0	0	30,000	20,000
<b>TOTAL TAXES</b>				
	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$50,000

shenanigans or employee compensation packages structured for mere tax advantage. On the other hand, skeptics are dubious that the gains from reducing interference in economic affairs are all that large, and make the counterpoint that the affluent simply cannot consume all their wealth. Thus, they will never pay taxes commensurate to their ability.

Is there any reason for either candidate to enter this cross-fire? Almost certainly. From a tax policy perspective, it is difficult to defend our current income tax. It is a maze of inconsistencies and inefficiencies. It raises tremendous amounts of revenue but at a sizable economic cost. For a candidate, say Dole, in search of an economic policy platform, tax reform is an alluring affair. And his opponent will not likely want to leap to the defense of the current system. The flat tax may not be perfect, but it provides a coherent, internally consistent (at least before Congress gets hold of it) approach to the nation's revenue needs.

Moreover, the post-election legislative agenda will almost certainly include tax reform. If Dole wins, he will likely push toward an overhaul of the tax system. If he loses, congressional Republicans will use a tax reform bill to put Clinton on record as a defender of the failed current system. In each case the flat tax will be prominent among the options. Since tax reform will be important after the election, it must inevitably seep

into the campaign itself. So get ready. The flat tax is not gone, is far from forgotten, and stands ready to re-enter the limelight.

*The author is professor of economics and associate director of the Center for Policy Research in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, and research associate for the National Bureau of Economic Research.*



By Nikki Ouellette

STUDENT

JOURNALISTS

GET A TASTE OF

POLITICAL COVERAGE

IN THE

GRANITE STATE

# P rimary

## EDUCATION

Dozens of campaign volunteers, journalists, and onlookers hover outside a New Hampshire coffee shop waiting for Republican presidential candidate Malcolm “Steve” Forbes Jr. to make his scheduled appearance. Fifteen minutes behind schedule, the campaign bus finally pulls up—and the blitz begins.

Camera operators jostle one another for the perfect angle. Reporters, poised for their fleeting interrogation, jockey for a place within earshot. Audio technicians wrestle with their mammoth mics, attempting to capture the perfect sound bite for the evening news.

And so begins another episode of life on the presidential primary campaign trail.

Such mayhem became the standard for 16 newspaper journalism students from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications who traded classes, M Street, and lake-effect snow for the harsh terrain of the New Hampshire presidential primary last February.

For one week, the seniors and graduate students lived, ate, and slept primary politics as part of Professor Joel Kaplan’s course in political reporting. Before their exhaustive week in the Granite State, each aspiring political pundit chose a candidate to cover. They then spent the weeks before the February 21 Republican primary researching the office seeker and his platform. Each student also sought out a newspaper from the candidate’s home state whose editor was willing to accept stories. Students unable to find a newspaper willing to accept stories on specific candidates opted to contribute “color” pieces to interested newspapers.

Peter Smolowitz '96 of Longmeadow, Massa-



chusetts, was among these students. “Nothing else I’ve ever done compares,” says Smolowitz, who had planned to cover Texas Senator Phil Gramm. Then, disaster struck. Gramm withdrew from the race the day the students arrived in New Hampshire. “It was months of preparation for nothing,” says Smolowitz. “But it turned out better than I could have hoped.”

A feature he wrote on Gramm’s endorsement of Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) for the nomination was picked up by the *Waco Tribune Herald* and ran on the front page. “I found out pretty early about the impending endorsement. I was on the phone with some of Gramm’s supporters, who called Gramm’s house for me and then called me back with the information,” he says. “I felt I was covering my beat well.”

Some students discovered that finding a new angle can be a problem when candidates incessantly reiterate their platforms at appearances. Kristen Nye '96 of Wilmington, Delaware, who covered former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander for the *Daily News Journal* (Murfreesboro, Tennessee), often found herself hoping for a little diversion to shake things up. “I thought once, ‘Maybe this candidate will fall flat on his face so I have something new and exciting to lead with tonight,’” she says jokingly.



This year's primary, won by Patrick Buchanan, presented quite a mix of candidates compared with four years ago, explains Kaplan. The main difference, he says, is that in 1992 most of the candidates were Democrats, who generally have different primary strategies. "Four years ago, Democrats did more retail politics, making more appearances," he says. "This year, Republicans relied more on commercials and made fewer appearances. Also, there were more media in New Hampshire this time. Since the economy is doing better, news organizations are more willing to spend money on coverage."

But limited access doesn't necessarily mean no access, as Josh Nanberg '96 of Needham, Massachusetts, found out. After covering a Forbes event,

Nanberg saw several vans weaving wildly through the streets. "I couldn't see who or what they were following, but I realized they were press vans so I drove into the lot," Nanberg recalls. "I saw a limousine and some security guards around it so I ran over and out popped Pat Buchanan. I was able to shoot him a quick question before he went inside. It was unreal."

Other students also made close contact with high-profile candidates. Mike Parent '96 of Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, and Kristen Nye met Lamar Alexander face-to-face on primary day. "He called a special meeting with the Tennessee media in his private suite," explains Parent, who submitted stories to the *Oakridger* (Oakridge, Tennessee).

Nye says it was interesting to watch the evolution of the Alexander campaign as the primary approached. "When we got to New Hampshire, there wasn't a lot of interest in him," she says. "You could tell because of the small amount of reporters surrounding him as he made his trademark walk across the state."

The relatively limited coverage allowed Nye and Parent to get close to the candidate and his campaign officials. That soon changed. "By the end of the week it was insane," says Nye. "He had about 100 reporters following him. Mike and I went from a nice comfortable spot on the press van to cramped seats on a tour bus. In the beginning, I spoke to a lot of people in the campaign, but by the end I was just one of many."

Reporters following Indiana Senator Dick Lugar's campaign encountered no such problem, says T.J. Siebenaler '96 of Bryan, Ohio, who covered Lugar for the Fort Wayne *News Sentinel*. "There was a huge difference between the crowds around Lugar and those around Dole, Forbes, and Buchanan," she says. "Lugar came up to us and was almost begging for interviews."

Siebenaler confesses that she found herself wondering why Lugar was overlooked by most of the press. "I felt he didn't get the attention he deserved," she says, adding that his platform seemed solid but lacked the "glitz and glamour" of other candidates' campaigns. "His campaign wasn't exciting enough, he entered too late, and he didn't have much name recognition," she

says. "It's really one big popularity contest...and he couldn't play piano like Lamar Alexander!"

Another memorable experience for the SU students was rubbing elbows with prominent professional journalists. The class was invited to sit in on two meetings with the editorial staff of the *Concord Monitor*, which included visits by nationally syndicated columnist David Broder, former *Chicago Tribune* reporter Jon Margolis, former Senator Bill Bradley, and others.

On the day of the primary, many of the students worked with the *Monitor* staff, gathering quotes from polling places and running errands. Smolowitz tagged along with *Monitor* political beat reporter M.L. Elrick the entire day, interviewing people across the state and at Buchanan's headquarters in Manchester.

"That night, I went with Elrick to cover Buchanan's victory party, and the excitement level was absolutely amazing," says Smolowitz. "I was running quotes from the party into the press room just before deadline, and we made it just under the gun. I felt like I really contributed that night."

After his experiences in New Hampshire filing stories on Bob Dole for the Topeka *Capitol-Journal*, David Frannecki '96 of Rockford, Illinois, is now confident he can handle the grueling life of a political reporter during the primary season. "Once you get there," he says, "it's pure adrenaline."

*Nikki Ouellette '95, G'96 covered the New Hampshire presidential primary as a student reporter.*

