

AN INTRODUCTION TO REUBIN ASKEW

A former prosecuting attorney, a former legislator, a former Governor for eight years of a large metropolitan state, a former chairman of two federal commissions, and a former Ambassador and member of the President's Cabinet, Reubin O'Donovan Askew has served at every level of American government during twenty five years of public life. Now, at 54, he is considering a campaign for the nomination of the Democratic Party for President in 1984.

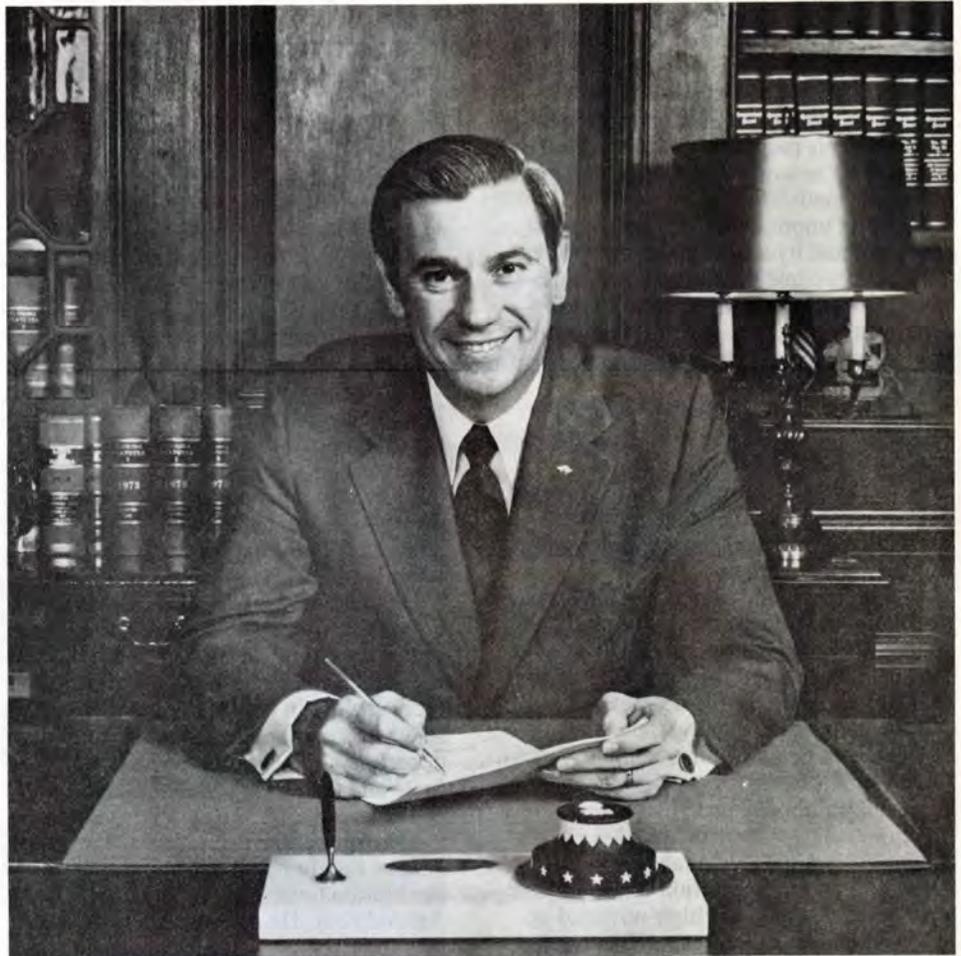
Last fall, Governor Askew became the first person ever to ask the Federal Election Commission for permission to "test the waters" to determine whether to become a presidential candidate. The FEC gave him a favorable ruling, and he began raising and spending money to finance travels throughout the United States to assess his potential as a possible candidate. Although he is not required to do so by law, he has filed public reports with the FEC of his contributions and expenditures while "testing the waters."

Since the first of January of this year, these exploratory travels have taken Governor Askew to every one of the 50 states in the United States. He has returned to a number of states several times. During these travels, the Governor has met with Americans from many backgrounds representing many interests. He has spoken with party leaders, civic leaders, labor leaders, business people, public officials, leaders of women's groups, representatives of environmental groups, educators, older Americans, and many others in an effort to comprehend fully the needs, the desires, and the opportunities of this nation.

Governor Askew knows what it means to be responsible for the actions of a sizeable government. He knows Washington and the ways Washington works. He knows foreign leaders around the world. He has the experience, the skill, and the insight to help lead America through a difficult time of transition.

His travels thus far have reaffirmed the Governor's faith in the American people and his confidence in the ability of the American people to rise above our individual differences and unite to confront the many challenges facing this nation. They have reaffirmed also his faith in the potential of the Democratic Party as a source for the leadership America needs to meet those challenges.

Governor Askew intends to continue his exploratory travels throughout the remainder of this year. Early in 1983, he will decide whether to seek the Democratic nomination. At that time, he will announce his decision.



Youth, Education, and Military Service

Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma, on September 11, 1928, Reubin Askew was the youngest of six children. As he has often expressed it, he "came from a family of very modest means — which is a nice way of saying poor." As a small boy, he sold his mother's homemade pies door-to-door in his neighborhood in Muskogee. In 1937, his family moved to Pensacola, Florida, where he entered the public schools of Escambia County and, beginning at the age of nine, worked in his free time to help his mother support his family. He delivered magazines and newspapers, bagged groceries, shined shoes, and sold men's clothing at a store in downtown Pensacola.

Graduating from high school in 1945, Askew, at 17, entered the Army as a Private in the paratroopers and rose quickly to the rank of Sergeant. Following his military discharge, he entered Florida State University on the G.I. Bill. While at FSU, he was active in ROTC and served as student body president. Graduating with a de-

gree in Public Administration, he entered the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant.

After a tour of duty in Europe, he returned to study law at the University of Florida, where he was president of his law school class and an editor of the law review. In 1956, he received his law degree and returned to his childhood home of Pensacola to enter public service as an assistant county solicitor. He remained active in the Air Force Reserve, rising to the rank of Captain.

Legislator

His success as a prosecuting attorney soon brought Askew public attention. In 1958, the people of Escambia County elected him to the Florida House of Representatives. In 1962, he defeated a veteran incumbent for a seat in the Florida Senate. Altogether, Askew served twelve years in the Florida Legislature, rising to a position of leadership as Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and President Pro Tempore of the Senate before deciding to run for Governor in 1970. His legislative service was notable in par-

tical for his vigorous work for fair legislative apportionment, public education, fiscal responsibility, and streamlined government.

Governor

In 1970, Askew was elected Governor of Florida, confounding experts who had dismissed the young legislator's aggressive campaign, which emphasized the need for tax reform. Although polls measured his public support to be as little as four percent as late as one year before the election, Askew nevertheless upset several better known, front-running Democrats to win his party's nomination. He then defeated an incumbent Republican Governor in a landslide.

After an impressive first term, Askew was reelected by a substantial margin in 1974. He became the first person to serve two consecutive four-year terms as Governor of Florida, a state which limits its Governors to a constitutional maximum of two consecutive terms.

The Askew years have been widely characterized as years of achievement, reform, and successful transition for Florida. In fact, one recent study prepared at Harvard University named Askew as one of the ten greatest American governors of the twentieth century.

As Governor, Askew earned a statewide and national reputation as a practical and progressive reformer, a straightforward man of integrity and firm convictions who believed fervently in the need to make government work. Among the many reasons why he gained this reputation:

The uphill battle for **tax reform** began on inauguration day in 1971. With his election as a popular mandate, Askew won legislative approval of a tax reform referendum on the imposition of a corporate profits tax. Despite the high-powered opposition of special interests, 70 percent of the voters cast ballots, at Askew's urging, for the proposed tax in what was at the time the largest referendum turnout in Florida's history. Askew repealed Florida's corporate net worth tax even as he imposed the state's first corporate profits tax.

Building on this initial success, Askew persuaded the legislature to repeal regressive consumer taxes on household utilities and apartment rentals. Additional state revenues were shared with school districts and other local government units to ease property tax burdens on homeowners. With Askew's strong support, the legislature also increased Florida's homestead exemption to \$10,000 on all property taxes levied on the elderly or disabled, rolled back income earned from local school taxes by two mills, exempted the first \$20,000 in intangibles from state taxes, and repealed the intangibles tax on cash savings.

Askew ran for Governor on a platform which stressed the need to protect Florida's fragile **environment**. Thoughtful attention to environmental issues characterized his eight years in that office. With

Askew's support, the legislature proposed and the people approved a \$240 million bond issue for the public acquisition of environmentally endangered and recreational lands, notably the historic state and federal joint preservation of the Big Cypress area near the Everglades.

Under Askew, Florida adopted a growth policy compatible with Florida's needed economic growth. Landmark environmental laws were enacted which provided for better management of the state's land and water resources. Environmental agencies were reorganized, the Cross-Florida Barge Canal was halted, and coastal construction setback lines were imposed to protect Florida's beaches.

Askew's fight to protect Florida's environment has been cited in several conservation awards, including a special award of the National Wildlife Federation and the Florida Audubon Society award as Florida's "Outstanding Conservationist."

Throughout his two terms as Governor, Askew was an outspoken champion of **equal opportunity and civil rights**. By appointing blacks, Hispanics, and women to important positions in state government, Askew ensured that Florida's government for the first time was truly representative of all the people.

He appointed the first black to the Supreme Court of any Southern State since Reconstruction. He brought more blacks into his administration than any of his predecessors in the Deep South. He selected some to serve as heads of major departments, including the Department of State and the Department of Community Affairs.

Throughout his two terms as Governor, Askew fought relentlessly for approval by the Florida Legislature of the Equal Rights Amendment. He has continued to advocate the ERA in the years since and participated in the unsuccessful efforts earlier this year to persuade the reluctant Florida Senate to endorse the proposed amendment.

As Governor, Askew chose women for important positions in his administration. He appointed the first woman to the Cabinet and the first woman to Florida's appellate courts. He proposed and appointed Florida's first Commission on Human Relations, which is charged with ensuring that neither public nor private employers discriminate because of race or sex in hiring or promoting individuals.

As a product of the public schools and of the G.I. Bill, Askew has always been a strong supporter of public **education**. During his two terms as Governor, state support for primary and secondary schools, community colleges, and state universities increased substantially. Special programs were created for gifted children and for those needing special instruction in basic skills.

In addition, school financing reforms were enacted to eliminate existing in-

equities and provide an equal educational opportunity for every child regardless of where he or she may live. And, at considerable political risk, Askew demonstrated his support for equal educational opportunity for all children by urging acceptance of court-ordered busing as preferable to the continued segregation of Florida's public schools.

As Governor, Askew gave special attention to **governmental ethics and election laws**. When the legislature refused in 1975 to pass a meaningful law requiring full and public financial disclosure by Florida public officials, Askew took the issue to the people, launching an historic statewide petition drive to place a strong and comprehensive code of ethics called "The Sunshine Amendment" in the Florida Constitution.

Nearly 220,000 Floridians signed petitions to place the amendment on the ballot — the first constitutional amendment in Florida ever placed on the ballot by popular initiative. In November, 1976, Florida voters approved "The Sunshine Amendment" by nearly 80 percent.

Under Askew, Florida's election laws were strengthened and made effective for the first time with the creation of a state elections commission. An ethics commission was also created and was given constitutional status by the Sunshine Amendment. Conflict of interest laws were tightened. Much traditional patronage was removed from governmental decisionmaking, judicial nominating commissions were created to screen and recommend judicial appointments, and legislation was passed requiring open, competitive bidding or negotiations for many state contracts.

As Governor, Askew pushed through laws lifting the mandatory retirement age for public employment and improving health and home care for **the aged**. He sought improvements in Florida's nursing homes. His leadership helped provide nutritional programs, social services, and area-wide planning for older Floridians.

Askew was the first Governor of Florida to seek a close and open working relationship with **labor**. Despite considerable political opposition, he fought successfully for the right of public employees to bargain collectively. He proposed and implemented increases in unemployment insurance and workmens' compensation benefits and generally gave heightened attention to the concerns of working people at the highest levels of state government. He appointed men and women from organized labor to various advisory positions and persuaded the legislature to recognize the importance of working people to Florida by creating a State Department of Labor and Employment Security.

Throughout his service as Governor, Askew vigorously supported the agriculture, construction, and tourism industries on which much of the Florida economy relies. Yet he also sought to expand and di-

versify the Florida economy to provide more and better *jobs* for Florida's growing population.

He supported manpower planning, industrial training, and apprenticeship programs to assure skilled workers for new industries. He sought to enhance the attractiveness of Florida as a growing center for international trade, investment, and finance through new laws to allow international banking and free foreign trade zones. In partnership with Florida business leaders, he conducted trade and investment missions to foreign countries on several continents. With these efforts, and with the state's rapid population growth, more than 1,600,000 new jobs were created in Florida during Askew's eight years as Governor.

Askew also encouraged the participation of Florida business leaders in improving the overall effectiveness of state government by establishing the Governor's Management and Efficiency Study Commission. The business leaders who comprised this commission examined the activities of state government carefully and critically and recommended changes to improve the delivery of needed services. With Askew's strong support, many of these recommended changes were implemented, either administratively or legislatively, resulting in substantial savings and cost avoidance to Florida taxpayers. A byproduct of this experience was an improved relationship between Florida's government and Florida's business community.

As a former prosecutor, Askew maintained a hard line on *law enforcement* during his years as Governor. He improved and expanded state prisons. He supported a strong State Department of Law Enforcement. He proposed and the legislature enacted many tough anti-crime laws, including an anti-racketeering law and a law requiring mandatory prison sentences for armed felonies. He created a statewide grand jury to investigate organized crime and, in addition, proposed and implemented substantial budget increases for law enforcement agencies and officials.

In the waning months of his administration, Askew went to the people a final time in a statewide campaign to defeat an attempt to legalize *casino gambling* in Florida. During the weeks prior to the election, and, once again, despite formidable opposition, he stumped the state urging voters to turn out and reject casino gambling. They did — by an overwhelming 72 percent.

National Spokesman

As his programs in Florida proved effective, and as his willingness to take difficult stands on controversial public issues became known, Askew received increasing national recognition. He served the Democratic Party — as Keynote Speaker to the 1972 Democratic National Convention, as Chairman of the Democratic Governors' Conference and as a member of the

Democratic National Committee. He became a national leader among the Governors — as Chairman of the Education Commission of the States, Chairman of the Southern Growth Policies Board, Chairman of the Southern Governors' Conference, Chairman of the Democratic Governors' Conference, Chairman of the National Governors' Conference, which is now the National Governors' Association, and as Chairman of the New Coalition, an umbrella organization consisting of the leadership of every non-federal, non-judicial organization of elected officials in the United States. Also, he worked with the President, the State Department, and the Congress — as Chairman of President Carter's Advisory Commission on Ambassadorial Appointments and later as Chairman of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. In these and other capacities, Askew became increasingly familiar with a multitude of national issues and with the many and varied dimensions of the nation itself.

Ambassador

His foreign trade missions as Governor, his stewardship in the areas of ambassadorial appointments and immigration and refugee policy, and his private practice as an attorney in Miami following the end of his second gubernatorial term exposed Askew firsthand to some of the subtleties of foreign policy.

This exposure broadened considerably with his appointment as United States Trade Representative by President Carter in 1979. As a member of the President's Cabinet, and as an Ambassador, Askew functioned as the President's principal advisor and the nation's principal spokesman on international trade and international investment.

Working out of the Executive Office of the President, he traveled extensively in many parts of the world, conducting and supervising trade negotiations between the United States and foreign countries and defending the trading and investing interests of American business. He negotiated personally and one-on-one with foreign leaders from such countries as Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, Egypt, Israel, Japan, China, Singapore, and Australia, among many others. He was primarily responsible for American participation in the ongoing work of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, an organization of 85 countries with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, which oversees much of the commerce of the Free World.

Ambassador Askew worked closely with the Congress, with the National Security Council, and with other departments and agencies of the executive branch on a vast array of commercial issues. Among the issues with which he dealt were: steel imports from Europe and Japan and their impact on the U.S. steel industry; automobile imports and the modernization of the U.S. automobile industry; international trade in textiles and

synthetic fiber; East-West trade; telecommunications and other high technology exports; trade in services; agricultural trade; export financing; export disincentives; direct investment policy both within the United States and abroad; the economic aspects of the Middle East peace process; and worldwide implementation of the treaties signed by nearly 100 nations at the conclusion of the Tokyo Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations in 1979.

As United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Askew earned recognition worldwide for his forceful and articulate advocacy of a freer, fairer, and expanded world trading system and recognition domestically for his candor, for his fairness, and for his strong support of improved productivity and increased competitiveness for the American economy.

Family

Upon resigning from the Cabinet at the expiration of the President's term, Ambassador Askew returned to the practice of law in Miami. He resides there now with his wife, Donna Lou. His son, Kevin, is a college freshman. His daughter, Angela, resides with her husband, Charles Cook, and their infant daughter, Rachel, in Central Florida. The Askews are active in civic affairs locally, and both are elders in the Presbyterian Church. Mrs. Askew currently serves on the Church Session and sings in the church choir.

Honors and Awards

Ambassador Askew has earned many honors and awards through the years. Among them are the John F. Kennedy "Profiles in Courage" Award for devotion to equal opportunity and justice by B'nai B'rith in 1971, the John F. Kennedy Award by the National Council of Jewish Women in 1973, the National William Booth Award of the Salvation Army in 1973, the Herbert H. Lehman Ethics Medal from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1973 for applying his personal religious and ethical values to his public life, the Herbert Harley Award of the American Judicature Society in 1975 for his leadership in strengthening Florida's court system and eliminating patronage and partisanship in the selection of judges, the Theodore Roosevelt Award for Outstanding Public Service in 1975 by the International Platform Association, the Human Relations Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1976, the Humanitarian of the Year Award of the Florida Commission on Human Relations in 1977, the Medal of Honor of the Florida Bar Foundation in 1979, the Champion of Higher Independent Education in Florida Award in 1979, the Distinguished Community Service Award of Brandeis University in 1979, and the Ethics in Government Award of Common Cause in 1980.

He has received honorary degrees from the University of Notre Dame, Stetson

University, Jacksonville University, Rollins College, Eckerd College, Florida Southern College, Saint Leo College, the University of Miami, Bethune-Cookman

College, the University of West Florida, and Barry College. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He has been honored as a Visiting Chubb Fellow at

Yale University and as a Visiting Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He has lectured both in the United States and abroad.

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