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TARGET AUDIENCES: THE 1976 TENNESSEE
DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL PRIMARY

David Walker

The setting was ideal for what should have been an exciting campaign in Tennessee. Senator Brock, the Republican incumbent, bore the image of being a Nixon-Ford rubber stamp. Two years before, in 1974, the Democratic party had broken the Republican stranglehold on the governorship by electing Ray Blanton; now it looked as though the time was ripe for Senator Brock's Senate seat to go to the Democratic side of the ledger.

In most states, the candidate tries to promise everyone a little bit of something to try to get a majority vote. This is not the situation in Tennessee where there is only one primary, with no runoff. The person with the most votes in the single primary gets the party's nomination. In a crowded field, this has produced some rather undemocratic results in past elections. In 1958, for instance, Buford Ellington succeeded Frank Clement as governor by winning the Democratic primary with only a little over thirty-one percent of the vote; his margin of victory over the second place candidate was less than nine thousand votes; the third place finisher was another three hundred votes behind.

An even more dramatic example was seen in the 1974 Governor's race. The Watergate era produced an ideal time

for Democrats to recapture the state house, and so a host of Democrats ran for the party nomination. Ray Blanton, who won the race, pulled a little better than twenty-one percent of the total vote -- only one hundred and forty-eight thousand votes out of a total of six hundred and fifty thousand votes. Just two years earlier, he had lost the general election race for the Senate to Howard Baker by over two hundred and seventy-five thousand votes in one of the largest landslides in Tennessee history. The name recognition factor, however, from that campaign was apparently enough to get him the party nomination for governor in 1974.

Therefore, a candidate running in a crowded field of five serious candidates and two non-serious candidates could seek to win the 1976 senatorial nomination by appealing to certain segments of the Tennessee population rather than trying to win everyone's vote. The Democratic nomination became even more attractive after Jimmy Carter sewed up his party's nomination for President; Tennessee had given Carter his second largest majority of the campaign trail -- seventy-eight percent -- in its presidential preference primary. Democratic leaders believed that if Carter carried fifty-five percent of the vote in November, any nominee would win the Senate race. What was the type of audience to which each of these five serious candidates appealed, and how successful were they? That is the thrust of this particular

paper.

There was a lack of real issues in this campaign, for the most part. Four of the five serious candidates were relatively liberal; the other was a conservative who preferred to call himself moderate. With so much similarity on the issues, a voter's choice had to rest upon something else, unless he was a Sadler supporter.

JOHN JAY HOOKER

John Jay Hooker was the only candidate who had made a statewide race before. He lost the Democratic primary for governor to Buford Ellington in 1966. Four years later, he won that nomination but lost the general election to Winfield Dunn. At that time, his business setbacks in the Minnie Pearl Fried Chicken franchise cost him a considerable number of votes. In a later business venture, however, Hooker, as president of the STP corporation, reportedly got a losing business into the money again.¹

The strategy for the Hooker race was to conduct a low-profile race and hope to win the nomination primarily upon name-recognition from previous races. Keith Hampton, the state coordinator of the Hooker campaign, and former commissioner of correction and of personnel for Tennessee, explained that the name Hooker is known throughout the state. His primary function, he noted, was to talk to people across the state

to see if they were still for Hooker; and, with few exceptions they were, he said. Thousands of people had been contacted by telephone and personal contact seeking their support.

Hooker had been criticized by some of his opponents for not getting out and shaking hands with people. Although Hooker did some of this during the last two weeks of the campaign, Hampton insisted that the telephone and personal contacts were more profitable. He said, for instance, in one shopping center that Hooker shook hands with thirty or forty people; only three of these, however, turned out to be registered Tennessee voters.²

Hooker was also criticized by some of his opponents for not showing up at Blanton-sponsored political rallies held across the state. Hooker's non-appearance at these rallies may actually have been justified by the actions of the other candidates, as on several occasions, they heatedly asserted that the rallies were rigged in favor of Jim Sasser, the man charged with being the governor's candidate.³ WSM-TV sponsored a forum on August 2, and Hooker was again criticized for his non-appearance. He later explained that he did not appear because he wanted to avoid party "divisiveness."⁴

Another important element in Hooker's strategy was to employ a media blitz. This again brought charges from his opponents that he was an "impersonal media candidate."⁵

Keith Hampton, in commenting on this charge, said: "How many more people will see you on that tube in their living room sitting there in the cool and they can look at you and hear what you got to say."⁶

Still another important factor in Hooker's strategy was to capture a large segment of the black vote. Hooker had scored heavily among black voters in his previous races, and Hampton said that he would do even better this time.⁷ In the 1970 Democratic primary, Hooker had carried large Shelby County (where forty percent of the state's black population resides) by a two to one majority. In the general election, he lost that county to the winning Winfield Dunn, a Memphis dentist, but he carried the black precincts heavily. In one such precinct, for instance, he outpolled Dunn 1,107 to 14; another precinct showed him ahead 735 to 7.⁸ Hooker's strategy in this area seemed to be failing when the Tennessee Voters Council, an organization of one hundred and twenty-five thousand black voters, endorsed Jim Sasser.⁹ This endorsement produced the only instance this writer could find in which Hooker attacked one of his fellow candidates. He charged Sasser with making inconsistent statements concerning the integration of private schools. Sasser was quoted in the Oak Ridger newspaper as saying at a June 25 press conference that "the right to go to a private school and exclude those you don't want seems to be a basic right to me." The following day, he commented to the Tennessee

Voters Council that "blacks ought to be afforded the opportunity to go to private schools if they wish." Sasser charged that the Oak Ridger quoted him out of context.¹⁰

The last weeks of the campaign saw Hooker rely quite heavily on testimonials from some of his friends, as he picked up endorsements both within the state and without. The Nashville Tennessean, a paper with a liberal tradition, announced its endorsement on July 25. Franklin Haney, a gubernatorial candidate in 1974, endorsed Hooker on July 22.¹¹ James Neal, special prosecutor in the Watergate case, endorsed Hooker on July 8.¹² But the most colorful endorsements came during the last days of the campaign. Muhammed Ali appeared in Memphis just five days before the election to endorse Hooker as a good man who was always trying to help people.¹³ "He's got the connection and the complexion to give us the protection," was Ali's poetic contribution.¹⁴ An interesting sidelight to his endorsement was the fact that Ali admitted he was not a registered voter, and that he didn't know whether Hooker was a Republican or Democrat. The two became friends when Hooker helped to start the Muhammed Ali School of Boxing in Louisville several years earlier.¹⁵

Three days before the election, Hubert Humphrey appeared in Nashville to endorse Hooker. Speaking at a

Voters Council that "blacks ought to be afforded the opportunity to go to private schools if they wish." Sasser charged that the Oak Ridger quoted him out of context.¹⁰

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Three days before the election, Hubert Humphrey appeared in Nashville to endorse Hooker. Speaking at a

press conference, he declared that he was a very personal friend of Hooker. Hooker had been loyal to him in time of difficulty and that was something he treasured. When he was asked if it was customary for public officials to endorse candidates in primaries, he responded that: "It may not be customary, but I'm not a customary fellow."¹⁶

Jim Sasser commented on Humphrey's appearance by declaring that Hooker had been using the campaign tactics of the past during the past several days. In a statement that no doubt made all Humphrey supporters close to Sasser's heart, Sasser said: "The Humphrey-Hooker days are over."¹⁷

Still another endorsement picked up in the last days came from Mrs. George Wallace. Unable to meet Hooker for a press conference in Chattanooga on August 2, she commented: "We think John J. Hooker is going to be the most dynamic and colorful senator that Tennessee has ever had."¹⁸

Where did Hooker stand on the issues? What issues? He supported the Humphrey-Hawkins bill;¹⁹ he opposed mandatory retirement laws and he believed that persons living on Social Security should be able to work without losing their benefits.²⁰ Just as most candidates, he wanted lower TVA rates;²¹ and he denounced Bill Brock on a number of occasions. These observations are not crucial, however, in assessing the Hooker strategy. Here was a man running on name recognition of the past, trying to hold what he had won in past elections. The strategy of the other candidates would have to revolve

around overcoming this.

JIM SASSER

It's time we started thinking about the way we're going;
It's time we put our trust in someone new;
And if we all pull together, Jim will make the difference;
Jim Sasser thinks it's time Washington heard you.

This television jingle of Jim Sasser's signalled a keynote of Sasser's campaign -- an appeal to trust, and someone new. Sasser's major contribution to Tennessee politics came from his serving as state Democratic party chairman from 1973 to 1976. On another television commercial, audience attention was captured by a picture of Sasser with his father, as the candidate declared that "from him I learned that public service is a public trust. A trust that must never be betrayed." As the picture shifted, then showing Sasser between two farmers next to a barn, with the candidate wearing working boots and clothes that looked as though they had never been used, he continued his discourse on trust by declaring that "We need a senator from Tennessee who will work to restore faith in government and I'll work to do just that." As part of his campaign on the basis of trust, he released early his personal financial statement and chided the other candidates for not so doing.²²

Sasser described himself as running a "positive campaign," (After making this statement on a television program, he almost immediately took a cut at Hooker for not appearing on the

program.)²³ a slogan probably borrowed from one of the other candidates; but apparently his definition of a positive campaign did not deter him from taking swipes at the other candidates. As did all the candidates with the possible exception of Harry Sadler, he had his say about Bill Brock: "I think Senator Brock is primarily a tool of the vested interests in this day and in this country."²⁴ He attacked, as noted above, other candidates for not disclosing their personal financial statements. His greatest wrath, however, was reserved for John Jay Hooker. He attacked him for being a media-style candidate,²⁵ for being a representative of the "politics of the past,"²⁶ and for getting endorsements from personalities such as Muhammed Ali, Richard Petty,²⁷ and Hubert Humphrey. It's interesting to note, however, that his opposition to Ali's endorsement did not deter Sasser from attempting to solicit black votes by touring Memphis and Nashville with singer Isaac Hayes; free Isaac Hayes albums allegedly were given away, according to the Tennessean.²⁷

Sasser had his share of other endorsements also. Five unsuccessful candidates for governor in 1974 -- David Pack, Mayor Jimmie Powers, Stan Snodgrass, and Tom Wiseman -- all openly endorsed him.²⁸ Sasser also claimed the support of eighteen newspapers, thirty-two members of the Democratic State Executive Committee, the Tennessee State Labor Council,

and as mentioned earlier, the Tennessee Voters Council.²⁹

Another unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1974, Jake Butcher, all but endorsed him.³⁰

Sasser had comments on a number of different topics, but they were not real issues in the campaign. He wanted to close the tax loopholes,³¹ reduce unemployment to three percent,³² he supported lower electric rates for residential TVA users,³³ and opposed the nomination of Thomas Longshore to the TVA board.³⁴ He supported more federal school funds,³⁵ and lower natural gas rates.³⁶ Finally, he opposed reduction or elimination of veterans' benefits.³⁷

Sasser did not have the name recognition advantage of Hooker. In fact, since his name and Harry Sadler's name were the last two on the ballot, voters often confused the two candidates -- not a very amusing problem for Jim Sasser.³⁸ Sasser was considered by many experts to be the number two man in the race. Ordinarily, one would expect the front-runner to receive the brunt of the attack from the other candidates, but not so in this race. Sadler, Kefauver, and Bolin repeatedly launched attacks upon Sasser which must have hurt him in the final weeks of the race.

One frequent charge was that he was the governor's candidate. Sasser repeatedly replied that the governor had told him he was staying neutral; and that if Blanton was supporting him, he didn't know it. He further commented

that "Winfield Dunn is giving me as much help as Governor Ray Blanton is Neither one is helping me."³⁹ Another charge was that he had borrowed without any collateral a vast amount of money from banks controlled by Jake Butcher. Sasser finally announced that he had borrowed one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars without collateral to finance about half of his campaign, but he insisted it was according to good business practice. He also declared that Jake Butcher was not financing his campaign.⁴⁰ There were also other charges -- some to be noted later in this paper.

DAVID BOLIN

David Bolin served as state campaign manager for Ray Blanton in 1974, and entered the race probably thinking he would get the governor's support. When he didn't, Bolin spent a great deal of time attacking Sasser as the governor's man.

There were two key slogans in Bolin's campaign. In the first place, he insisted he was running a "positive campaign."⁴¹ His "positive campaign," however, did not deter him from attacking on various occasions Brock, Sasser, and Hooker. Brock was characterized as being "inaccessible" and supporting "large, vested interests,"⁴² Hooker was described as a media-oriented candidate running an impersonal media campaign.⁴³ In attacking Sasser as Blanton's candidate

for governor, Bolin was quoted as saying: "On March 28, 1976, James Sasser hosted a gathering of about twenty people at his Nashville home and told them, 'I have the best of both worlds -- I have Governor Blanton's support without the stigma of being publicly associated with him.'"⁴⁴ Bolin charged that pressure had been put on his campaign workers not to support him; when asked for specifics, he declined to make any further comment because, he said, he was afraid further pressure would be put on them.⁴⁵

Another key slogan was "participatory." If elected, Bolin would take a participatory approach to representing his constituents. The other candidates, he charged, would ask people to elect them, and then they would do what they wanted to do, and then come back in six years and ask again for their vote. Bolin, however, believed the people ought to be involved throughout the six year term. To accomplish this, Bolin promised to go regularly into each county to meet his constituents and discuss their problems.⁴⁶

Bolin had a little bit to say about a lot of different topics, but again these were not real issues in the campaign. He wanted improvement in the Social Security system,⁴⁷ and wanted to improve the condition of the elderly in other ways as well.⁴⁸ He favored increased federal funding for education,⁴⁹ and wanted Congress to raise the minimum wage.⁵⁰ He wanted to

reduce government interference with farm operations,⁵¹ and opposed Henry Kissinger's approach to detente.⁵² He wanted anti-monopoly legislation to restore the health of the free enterprise system, because the "American Way" is not working.⁵³ He favored an increase in the number of directors for the TVA board,⁵⁴ and wanted to work for alternative energy sources, stabilized energy prices, and energy conservation.⁵⁵ He advocated raising benefits for veterans,⁵⁶ and supported programs which would create new jobs.⁵⁷

Bolin had some endorsements, but they were minimal for the most part. Bolin's strategy appeared to have been one in which he attacked the number two candidate vigorously, and then tried to appeal to as many voters as possible by promising everyone a little bit of everything. In a primary system such as Tennessee's, he probably spread himself too thin.

LESTER KEFAUVER

The name Kefauver is a magic one in Tennessee politics, and Les Kefauver apparently tried to cash in on it. At thirty years of age, Kefauver, a Lenoir City businessman, was barely old enough to make the race. He identified himself as the second cousin of Estes Kefauver. Speculation suggested that he was actually preparing the way for a race for Congress in 1978.⁵⁸

Although he insisted he had to run on his own merit, Kefauver nevertheless attempted to profit from name identification. At one time, he asserted that he was counting on one hundred thousand to one hundred and fifteen thousand votes because of the Kefauver name.⁵⁹ He wore, on occasion, a coonskin cap -- a symbol made famous by Estes Kefauver.⁶⁰

Kefauver also had his favorite slogan for the campaign; he was interested in "middle America." He had walked across the state of Tennessee in order to make contacts with this group of people. He described himself as running a "hearts and guts campaign," since he didn't have the airplanes or money some of the other candidates had.⁶¹

A strange thing about the Kefauver campaign was that he apparently tried to pull out of it to endorse another candidate, although he later denied this. Kefauver was appalled at a story which said he was pulling out in favor of Sadler, but Sadler declared that it was discussed, but he Sadler himself had discouraged it: "He is a liberal and I am the only conservative in the race. His endorsement would not help me. I told him to stay in the race."⁶² Earlier in the campaign, it had been rumored he would pull out in favor of Hooker. He was quoted as saying that, "I like John J. Hooker The only reason I don't pull out and get behind John is because I have this d___ gut feeling I might win this thing."⁶³ His admiration for Hooker must have

cooled rather quickly because later he wanted to know "why John Jay feels it necessary to bring in celebrities. They won't be able to help him in Washington. The next thing they will bring in Lassie."⁶⁴ In commenting on Humphrey's appearing to support Hooker, Kefauver said that Humphrey has been able to pick losers, so perhaps birds of a feather flock together.⁶⁵

Kefauver also attacked other candidates as well. He charged that Brock "cannot relate to the problems of the common man."⁶⁶ He agreed with Hooker that Sasser "was saying one thing to whites and another to blacks about basic philosophical issues."⁶⁷ He didn't believe that Sasser could communicate with the general public. Furthermore, he charged that Sasser was part of a plan whereby he would be senator and would be influential in the next governor's race and senator's race. This was his opinion, he said, and could substantiate it only on "gut feeling."⁶⁸

Kefauver spoke out on various topics, but again these were not real issues in the campaign. He wanted to reform taxation, revamp programs in Social Security, support those things that benefitted the "common man," improve teachers' salaries, close tax loopholes, have a Senate investigation of the TVA, decriminalize marijuana,⁶⁹ and support a national health care program.⁷⁰

In assessing Kefauver's candidacy, then, the major thrust of his approach centered around name identification. Although he said you couldn't elect someone who had been dead for thirteen years, the linkup attempt was obvious.⁷¹

HARRY SADLER

Harry Sadler is a Nashville businessman with a successful Chevrolet dealership. The only conservative in the race, his charges and bombastic statements injected color into a relatively lifeless campaign. Sadler hit hard on several key issues -- extravagance in government, big government, and the candidacy of Jim Sasser. His campaign made frequent use of patriotic appeals to his audience.

Harry Sadler spent more money in his campaign than any other senatorial candidate except for Bill Brock (who was unopposed for the Republican nomination). Full page ads came out in key newspapers throughout the state in which he reminded his public of "Harry Sadler's 20 point program," which he proposed to Winfield Dunn for Tennessee in 1970. Claiming that many of his points were put into operation and brought successes, Sadler printed a resume of his program and the results. His campaign manager declared that Sadler was opposed to "extravagance in government, encroachment on individual freedom, socialism, and communism." ". . . Harry Sadler has declared himself to be for the free, competitive

enterprise system And he has vowed that he will continue to fight, as he has for the past six years, big government, over-taxation, and too much government."⁷² He declared that if elected, he would donate his salary as Senator for the first year to charitable causes.⁷³ He declared in a television forum that, "Thank Goodness we don't get all the government we pay for." If the United States didn't turn around in the next ten years, he charged that the Communists would write our obituary.⁷⁴ Towards the end of the campaign, he again came out with full page ads in the major newspapers -- this time with a new twenty point program, but this time one for the federal government. This twenty point program included such items as: the right to freedom from big government, over-taxation, and too much government; the right to stop unfair and unneeded busing; the right to choose to have prayer in the schools; the right to worship God in one's own way; the denial of the right of any elected official to raise salaries while in office; a ceiling on how much tax the government could take from any taxpayer's income; the plugging of tax loopholes and tax shelters so the rich pay their fair share of taxes; the reorganization of the welfare system to include the increasing of the amount to deserving people by eliminating "all the chiselers and cheaters who are able to work but will not work if offered a job;" a review of the complete bureaucratic system in the federal government; a ceiling on the national

debt; and the right to freedom from arbitrary government regulation and control.⁷⁵

During the campaign, Sadler also called upon Governor Blanton to call a special session of the state legislature to repeal an additional one percent increase in the state sales tax that had been passed earlier that year. "Sales tax collections are exceeding estimates by a substantial amount, and there is going to be a big surplus."⁷⁶

Sadler also turned his guns on the campaign of Jim Sasser. In responding to other candidates' statements about running a positive campaign, Sadler said: "This deal about a positive campaign -- I'm not going to come out here and fight by the Kingsbury (sic) rules when somebody else is concreting both gloves."⁷⁷ In addition to the charges noted earlier in this paper about Sasser being Blanton's man, and also that Sasser had borrowed money without collateral from banks controlled by Jake Butcher, Sadler charged that Sasser was getting illegal free airplane service for his campaign.⁷⁸ On a television show in Knoxville, a television conference with four of the candidates (Hooker was absent), a viewer called up to ask if the candidates would support legislation legalizing homosexuality. Sasser's answer indicated that he thought protection was already afforded through our legal system. The program ended on a heated note, in which Sadler was asking: "Are you for or against it, Jim?" Sasser replied:

"For or against what?"⁷⁹

In many ways, Sadler seemed to be running for governor instead of senator, as he spoke often about his twenty point program for improving Tennessee. He justified this by declaring that "Local, state, and federal government is all one ball of wax. If you don't know anything about local and state, what can you do in Washington?"⁸⁰

He also relied heavily upon patriotic appeals. His full page ads made heavy use of red, white, and blue. One of his better television commercials showed the American flag flying, and then switched to a closeup of the Bill of Rights. His basic campaign brochure, of which a half million were printed, contained the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Monroe Doctrine, the Gettysburg Address, and the Pledge of Allegiance.⁸¹ On August 3, an insert ad in the Nashville Tennessean showed a campaign statement on one side, and on the other, using high quality paper suitable for framing, an American flag.⁸²

Although Sadler was the most colorful figure of the campaign, he had a name recognition problem. Perhaps this campaign actually laid the groundwork for a future attempt in another race. Perhaps, also, he put too much emphasis upon one or two issues.

CONCLUSIONS

As the race neared its end, several candidates had polls released showing themselves as the frontrunner. Early in the race, Lester Kefauver claimed sixty percent of the vote.⁸³ A number of polls were taken at Blanton's rallies throughout the state showing Sasser as the frontrunner; however, the method in conducting these polls was unscientific; furthermore, the rallies were largely attended by state employees who were backing Sasser.⁸⁴ Another poll released near the end of the campaign by Sasser showed him ahead by twenty-nine percent to twenty-seven percent over Hooker.⁸⁵ A poll commissioned by Bill Brock the week prior showed Hooker ahead of Sasser by twenty-nine percent to seventeen percent, with the others far behind.⁸⁶ Two days before the election, Jimmy the Greek picked Hooker as a three to two choice and indicated that he would run well against Bill Brock.⁸⁷

But Jimmy the Greek was wrong. Two and one-half hours after the polls closed in Tennessee, John Jay Hooker conceded victory to Jim Sasser. In a gracious speech, Hooker praised Sasser: "I have tremendous respect for his accomplishment I really admire him He's got guts When he got into this thing I was ahead, and he had to come from behind He deserved to win the primary." Pledging his support to Sasser, Hooker said

that he was going "to help Jim Sasser put a whuppin' on Bill Brock."⁸⁸

So what happened? Floyd Kephart, political analyst for WSM-TV, suggested that in a light turnout such as Tennessee experienced in this election, that organization as Sasser had was more important than name recognition.⁸⁹ Hooker attributed Sasser's victory, among other factors, to "energy, organization, character, and ability."⁹⁰ Hooker continued to carry the black vote heavily, as he had done in the past, but the black turnout was much lighter than had been anticipated by the Hooker organization. Also, it did not hurt his chief opponent to have the implied support of the state machinery.

Two other factors should be considered in a final analysis. Throughout the campaign, Jim Sasser had a hidden persuader -- a subtle link between his campaign and that of Jimmy Carter's. For his campaign posters, he chose Jimmy Carter green: "Choosing Jimmy Carter green just came naturally because I've known Jimmy Carter really since 1972."⁹¹ On numerous occasions, he would flash a smile that seemed very familiar to one seen at the Democratic convention. A favorite picture used during the campaign showed Sasser smiling on one side, Carter smiling on the other side, and Sasser's wife smiling in the middle. Following his victory speech on election night, in response to a reporter's question,

Sasser said, "I saw Jimmy in Memphis two months ago and he told me then, he said, Jim, I'm looking forward to running with you in November and I said, Governor, I'm really looking forward to running with you."⁹²

The final factor that should be considered is that Hooker's strategy just did not work. Hooker's campaign seemed aloof and impersonal to many. Instead of speaking on issues, he chose to remain silent. Instead of participating in television debates, his chair remained vacant. Simon and Garfunkel are well known for their great record, "The Sounds of Silence." In 1976, the Rhetoric of Silence failed.

NOTES

David Walker is a professor of speech communication at Middle Tennessee State University. Research for this paper was funded in part by a grant from the Faculty Research Fund of Middle Tennessee State University.

¹Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1976.

²Interview by the writer with Keith Hampton, August 2, 1976.

³Nashville Banner, July 21, 30, 1976.

⁴Nashville Banner, August 3, 1976.

⁵Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), July 8, 1976.

⁶Interview by the writer with Keith Hampton, August 2, 1976.

⁷Interview by the writer with Keith Hampton, August 2, 1976.

⁸(Memphis) Commercial Appeal, November 5, 1970.

⁹Jackson Sun, June 20, 1976.

¹⁰Chattanooga Times, July 7, 1976.

¹¹Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976.

¹²Nashville Tennessean, July 9, 1976.

¹³Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1976.

¹⁴Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), August 1, 1976.

¹⁵Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1976.

- 16 Hubert Humphrey and John J. Hooker press conference in Nashville at the Sheraton Hotel, August 2, 1976.
- 17 WNGE-TV (Nashville), August 2, 1976.
- 18 Nashville Banner, August 3, 1976.
- 19 Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976.
- 20 Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976.
- 21 Nashville Tennessean, August 2, 1976.
- 22 Nashville Tennessean, August 3, 1976.
- 23 "Channel 4 News Conference," WSM-TV (Nashville), August 2, 1976.
- 24 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 22, 1976.
- 25 Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976.
- 26 Nashville Banner, August 3, 1976.
- 27 Nashville Banner, August 4, 1976.
- 28 Nashville Banner, July 29, 1976.
- 29 Nashville Tennessean, August 2, 1976; Nashville Banner, August 4, 1976.
- 30 Nashville Banner, July 15, 1976
- 31 Nashville Tennessean, July 9, 1976.
- 32 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 22, 1976.
- 33 Nashville Tennessean, July 25, 1976.
- 34 Nashville Banner, July 19, 1976.

- 35 Nashville Tennessean, July 27, 1976.
- 36 Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), July 29, 1976.
- 37 Tennessee Democrat, July 16, 1976.
- 38 Nashville Banner, July 23, 1976.
- 39 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 22, 1976.
- 40 Nashville Tennessean, July 31, 1976.
- 41 Nashville Tennessean, July 2, 1976.
- 42 Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), May 30, 1976.
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- 44 Nashville Banner, July 8, 1976.
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- 46 Nashville Banner, July 7, August 2, 1976.
- 47 Nashville Tennessean, July 27, 1976.
- 48 Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1976.
- 49 Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), July 21, 1976.
- 50 Nashville Tennessean, July 31, 1976.
- 51 Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976.
- 52 Nashville Banner, July 28, 1976.
- 53 Nashville Tennessean, July 29, 1976.
- 54 Nashville Tennessean, July 24, 1976.

- 55 Nashville Tennessean, August 3, 1976.
- 56 Nashville Tennessean, August 2, 1976.
- 57 Campaign brochure, David Bolin For U. S. Senate.
- 58 Nashville Tennessean, July 25, 1976.
- 59 Nashville Tennessean, July 2, 1976.
- 60 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 30, 1976; "Channel 4 News Conference," WSM-TV (Nashville), August 2, 1976.
- 61 Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), July 13, 1976.
- 62 Nashville Tennessean, July 31, 1976.
- 63 Nashville Tennessean, July 29, 1976.
- 64 Nashville Tennessean, August 4, 1976.
- 65 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 30, 1976.
- 66 Nashville Banner, July 20, 1976.
- 67 Nashville Banner, July 8, 1976.
- 68 "Teddy Bart Show," WSM-TV (Nashville), July 30, 1976.
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- 70 Nashville Tennessean, August 3, 1976.
- 71 Nashville Tennessean, July 2, 1976.
- 72 Nashville Tennessean, July 14, 1976.
- 73 Nashville Tennessean, August 3, 1976.

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- 76 Nashville Tennessean, July 24, 1976.
- 77 "Channel 4 News Conference," WSM-TV (Nashville), August 2, 1976.
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- 79 Nashville Tennessean, July 24, 1976.
- 80 "Channel 4 News Conference," WSM-TV (Nashville), August 2, 1976.
- 81 WSM-TV, July 29, 1976.
- 82 Nashville Tennessean, August 3, 1976.
- 83 Chattanooga Times, July 15, 1976.
- 84 Nashville Tennessean, July 23, 1976; Daily News Journal (Murfreesboro), July 22, 1976.
- 85 Daily News Journal, (Murfreesboro), August 3, 1976.
- 86 Nashville Tennessean, August 1, 1976.
- 87 Nashville Tennessean, August 4, 1976.
- 88 Concession Speech at Hooker Headquarters, August 5, 1976.
- 89 WSM-TV, August 5, 1976.
- 90 WSM-TV, August 5, 1976.
- 91 Victory Speech at Sasser Headquarters, August 5, 1976.
- 92 WSM-TV, August 5, 1976.

THE 1976 UNITED STATES SENATE
CAMPAIGN OF DAVID BOLIN;
A SPEECHWRITER'S PERSPECTIVE

John J. Conner

David G. Bolin, Smyrna attorney, was a candidate for the 1976 Democratic nomination for the United States Senate. Informal polls showed that Bolin was the early frontrunner for the nomination.¹ Yet on August 5, he captured only forty-four thousand and fifty-six votes and finished fourth behind nominee James Sasser, three-time loser John J. Hooker, and Madison automobile dealer Harry Sadler.² What then were the factors which caused him to run so poorly in this Democratic primary?

This paper provides an analysis of the Bolin for United States Senate campaign. The author has attempted to present an overall campaign picture. Readers should be aware that he was very much ego-involved with Bolin. Starting in April, 1976, and continuing through August 5, the author either worked in the state campaign headquarters or traveled with and for the candidate practically every day. He wrote many of

the statements and press releases made by Bolin. In addition, he worked with the chief researcher to prepare the ten position papers released by Bolin during July.

In analyzing the campaign, this report will first discuss those **positive** factors which existed in the Bolin campaign, next suggest some serious liabilities, and finally examine the candidate as a speaker.

CAMPAIGN ASSETS

Bolin was the frontrunner early in the campaign because he got off to a fast start. He actually decided to run in late 1975 and began to put his organization together at that time. Because he started much earlier than the other candidates, Bolin was able to establish a campaign organization throughout the state at an early date.

In 1974, Bolin had been Governor Ray Blanton's state campaign manager. While this association proved to be a liability in some respects, it was a positive factor in the early stages of the campaign. As he formed his organization, the candidate enlisted many of the same people who had worked in the Blanton campaign. As a result of these and other state contacts, Bolin had organized approximately seventy counties with a committee chairman and at least two or three committee members by May of 1976.³ By election day, the Bolin staff had ninety-two of the ninety-five counties

organized. The remaining three had representatives who distributed literature and posted Bolin signs.⁴

Bolin was able to secure the services of able campaign aides. He chose mostly young people for his headquarters staff, and despite their political inexperience, the majority of them performed credibly. Significantly, the Bolin campaign had no payroll. Several of the staff members received expense money but no one was salaried. Many of the state headquarters staff received no financial remuneration for their contributions of time and effort to the campaign. They worked for David Bolin because they believed he was the man for the job.

Another significant plus for Bolin was his personal makeup. He was and is an extremely hardworking young man. He asked no one to work harder than he did. No member of his campaign staff labored more diligently than did the candidate. On many occasions he would return home from a day of campaigning at 1:00 or 2:00 A. M. and by 6:00 A. M. would be on the road again. He had a remarkable ability to be fresh, alert, and pleasant throughout the campaign.

This writer is convinced that Bolin was and is honest and sincere. He campaigned on the theme of honesty and faith in government. He believed in what he was saying, and had he been elected, without a doubt would have worked for the participatory government which he advocated. Bolin

campaigned for a government in which people could be involved after election day.⁵ He promised to establish a communications system which would make the office of the United States Senator accessible and available to the people of Tennessee. Again this author believes that this promise was more than campaign rhetoric. Bolin sincerely believed in what he was saying.

A final asset for the candidate was his ability to relate to citizens on a one-to-one basis. He exuded a self-assurance which made people respond to him very positively. He had an almost infectuous grin and once told the writer that one of the things he enjoyed most about campaigning was making people smile by being friendly with them. It is the opinion of this writer that Bolin's strongest asset was his ability to shake hands with the voters and make them feel good and important to him.

CAMPAIGN LIABILITIES

Unfortunately, only half of the picture has been presented at this point. The Bolin campaign also have some damaging liabilities. Two of those liabilities -- money and name recognition -- are of equal significance. The campaign was beset with financial problems from the very beginning. Bolin chose to take his campaign to the people and declined to seek the support of the strong financial

interests throughout Tennessee. Thus he relied mainly on contributions of one hundred dollars or less. The little interest in this race -- attested to by the low voter turnout on August 5 -- combined with small contributions caused the campaign to cut back its efforts in some very vital areas. While other candidates were buying billboard space, newspaper ads, and radio and television spots, Bolin was forced to rely mainly on handshaking and word-of-mouth publicity to win votes.

If the candidate had possessed high name recognition among the voters, the lack of publicity would not have been nearly as damaging as it was. One of his opponents, John Jay Hooker, did possess high name recognition and as a result engaged in very little publicity until shortly before the election. Of course, the fact that Hooker lost indicates that publicity is necessary even with high name identity. But the polls indicated that Bolin had about five percent name recognition in June -- hardly enough to win a statewide campaign.⁶ No formal polls were conducted to gauge name recognition later in the campaign, but it is likely that he failed to achieve more than twenty-five percent name identity by election day.

These liabilities worked hand in hand against Bolin. Had he been able to buy advertising, he could certainly have raised his name recognition level. By the same token, if he

had had more name recognition, he would have received more contributions from the electorate.

In addition to the two major liabilities discussed above, Bolin's campaign had other difficulties. His lack of experience as a candidate was damaging to his cause. This was his first attempt to win public office. He had great difficulty turning the campaign over to his staff and trusting its judgment while he took his case to the people as a candidate. In retrospect, Bolin might have been wise to begin his political career by seeking an office which would not have required a statewide campaign with its extensive time, financial, and organizational demands.

The candidate was experienced in political campaigns, having worked for John Kennedy, Buford Ellington, and Ray Blanton. But most of his efforts in those campaigns were in campaign organization. Thus his natural bias was to stress organization to the detriment of other important areas such as finance, research, speeches, press conferences, and press relations in general. This neglect led to serious problems with press releases and public statements, as is indicated in the next section of the paper.

A serious problem for Bolin was the strong support of Governor Blanton and his followers for the candidacy of James Sasser. As has been reported in the Tennessee press,⁷ Blanton was instrumental in raising money for Sasser and in influencing

people throughout the state to support him. Even though many polls indicated that Blanton was an unpopular governor in 1976, he was able to use the power of his office to provide much needed support and money for Sasser's candidacy.

It is extremely significant that in May and in June, Sasser possessed only about five percent name recognition -- almost exactly that with which Bolin started. But because Sasser was able to raise money and enlist broad Democratic organizational support, he increased that name recognition factor and became a viable option to John Jay Hooker. Results of the election indicate that the voters sought an alternative to Hooker. That Sasser became that alternative was the major reason for his victory.

One final liability leads to the third area of consideration. Bolin was not a strong public speaker. During the course of the campaign he did show significant improvement as he gained both experience and confidence. His speaking ability, nevertheless, was more of a liability than an asset. The final section provides an analysis of Bolin as a speaker.

BOLIN - THE POLITICAL SPEAKER

It is unlikely that Bolin's speaking ability or lack of it cost him the election. As indicated earlier, the two major factors in this unsuccessful campaign were a lack of money and low name recognition. Yet this writer believes that

Bolin could have influenced more people and increased the number of votes which he received had he been more willing to work on his speeches, interviews, and press conferences.

Earlier it was stated that the candidate was oriented to campaign organization as a result of his experience in this area. He is extremely good at campaign organization. As a candidate, however, he needed to leave it for others to do. In devoting so much time to organization, he neglected some very vital matters which a statewide candidate must attend to. It was difficult to get him to schedule press briefings or appointments for discussion of the issues. Although his research division formulated and published ten position papers, Bolin was never as knowledgeable about them as he could and should have been. Those times when he did attempt to read and digest prepared materials, he was so preoccupied with organization that he failed to absorb important issues and news items.

As a result of this lack of knowledge, Bolin often was reluctant to say anything of substance. He feared being caught in contradictions and erroneous statements.

To his credit, he did begin in July to discuss issues such as social security, energy conservation, alternative energy sources, and employment and inflation. One of his best issue statements was made in Murfreesboro at a Bolin rally on the issue of social security. Following is a portion of that statement:

The situation is thus bleak for the thirty-two million Americans on social security and for all of us who look forward to social security as a substantial part of our retirement income. What are we to do about it?

1. I would like to see the next Congress pass a resolution that would state its intent to guarantee the security of payment of benefits now and in the future.
2. We must view the system realistically. It is not an insurance plan but instead a tax. Our future policy should be based on that view.
3. We must formulate and fund programs that will ease the burden of unemployment and inflation. The Humphrey-Hawkins employment act is a good start. We need more legislation like it.
4. We must raise the maximum level of taxable income for both employers and employees. In order to better share the cost of social security among the poor, middle-class, and affluent in our society, we believe that the maximum level should be raised to \$28,000.
5. We must push for a repeal of the present law which provides for a double-index in computing social security benefits and support stronger legislation to protect our older citizens.⁸

Throughout the campaign Bolin preferred to rely on one set speech which usually began and ended the same way. The speech was between three and five minutes long and soon became rather trite and boring. Had there been some inspirational phrases in it which stimulated the listeners, the set speech would have been much more acceptable. But unfortunately he said little about which the listeners could get excited.

Bolin was either unable or unwilling to take new ideas and incorporate them into his speeches. Even if he had material which he realized would help the speech, he felt

that he had to know it thoroughly before using it publicly. Unfortunately his campaign priorities seldom allowed him time to learn new material.

His hesitation to depart from the set speech was due to extreme nervousness and stagefright in the early going. As the campaign progressed, he did overcome much of his fear of speaking. Yet he remained either unable or afraid to incorporate new ideas while delivering a speech. This writer considers this inability to incorporate new and timely ideas a serious deficiency in Bolin's speech preparation and presentation.

Although he had the aid of people who were politically knowledgeable and competent in research and speechwriting, Bolin was unwilling to accept material prepared for a speech or news conference as he received it. Inevitably, he would make lengthy changes in anything which he received. Oftentimes speeches, news releases, and statements which had been analyzed and approved by the entire communications staff would be changed drastically by the candidate. His justification usually was that the material just did not "feel right." These changes took a great deal of the candidate's time as well as that of his staff and were depressing for the staff members.

Certainly any candidate has the right to guide his own words. It is after all the candidate who is offering

himself to the public. Thus Bolin's penchant for extensive rewrites would have been acceptable had he been able to improve or significantly change the ideas or thrust of his statements. But usually he neither improved the material nor changed the ideas. Instead, his changes often ended up being little more than word selection, word order, or minor organizational changes. Many times he preferred to insert some of his time worn phrases in exchange for fresh and interesting approaches, a futile endeavor that only consumed valuable time. This continuous practice by the candidate was one of the most frustrating parts of the entire campaign.

Bolin's performance in the interview situation was a significant part of his campaign communication. In fact, he probably was involved in many more interviews than speech situations. His usual mode of operation was to dominate the interview with long-winded answers replete with stories and campaign experiences.⁹ Because he was unfamiliar with many issues, Bolin attempted to keep the number of questions small, thus minimizing the chances that he would contradict himself or be asked about something with which he was unfamiliar. Perhaps this strategy was sound for the candidate, but it certainly left some reporters and voters with the impression that he had little to say.

Thus, in general, Bolin's speaking was something less

than an asset for him. All of the preceding comments are not to say that he had or has no ability or potential as a speaker. The improvement which he demonstrated from April to August was significant. The major problem was that the last four months are not the time in a political campaign to be improving. Had he realized how much improvement was needed, Bolin could have polished his speaking ability prior to the buildup of the campaign pressures of May, June, and July.

Bolin's approach to the tone of his statements must be discussed at this point. Throughout the campaign he constantly reminded his staff that he wanted to run a positive campaign -- certainly a noble aim for the candidate. Bolin never really understood, however, what a positive campaign consists of. He was unwilling to state situations which existed -- with all of the negative factors involved -- and then talk about why he and his programs **were** needed to improve flaws in the status quo. Bolin was reluctant to criticize anyone or any program except on a broad basis such as the "social security system" or "national energy conservation." As a result, his statements and releases were seldom newsworthy and were often ignored by the press, much to the frustration of the staff.

As Brown and MaKay state in their book, The Rhetorical Dialogue, "Something is newsworthy if it is new, unique,

controversial, unexpected, or deals with conflict, attack or change."¹⁰ Bolin's concept of what was newsworthy was far different from the above explanation.

By June it was obvious that if Bolin were to have any chance to win the race, he had to rid himself of the stigma of his association with Governor Blanton, especially since Blanton had thrown his support to Sasser. Practically every exposure which he received from the media labeled him as Blanton's 1974 campaign manager. In light of Blanton's reported unpopularity and because Blanton had chosen not to help him, it was apparent that the campaign efforts were being harmed by this association.

Notwithstanding, Bolin was reluctant to criticize the governor or any of his people. He was very much concerned with party unity after the primary and did not wish to alienate any Tennessee Democrat. It was not until late June that he decided that he had to speak out concerning some of the campaign tactics being used by members of the Governor's staff. It was not the urging of his advisors which made him decide to criticize the Governor. Instead Bolin began to see first hand that pressure was being exerted on his supporters either to work for Sasser or to stay out of the race. The candidate decided that he could not stand silently while this pressure was being exerted on the voters.

Following Bolin's decision to speak out, sessions were

held at state headquarters on June 24 and 25 to plan the strategy. The first major statement was set for Tuesday, June 29, at the Governor's fundraiser rally in Blountville. At that time Bolin planned to criticize Blanton for violating his pledges of neutrality by working for Sasser and by exerting pressure on Bolin supporters. The statement read:

Power-broking is occurring in the back rooms in an attempt to subvert the will of the majority of Democrats across the state We cannot allow the power-brokers to subvert the will of Tennesseans in this Senate race.

When I decided to run for the United States Senate I didn't seek anybody's permission. And I didn't go to the power-brokers and money-changers to beg for their support.

My candidacy came from the people, and it is still by and with the people.

When I announced my candidacy, the governor promised his neutrality until after the August 5th primary. We were all promised that the power of Tennessee state government would never be turned against its own people, or against the Democratic party.

The time has come to demand that that promise be kept. I have no quarrel with any elected official or party leader who wants to work openly and positively for one of my opponents. That is their (sic) right and their (sic) privilege.

But I will not sit in silence and watch my supporters tell me with tears in their eyes that they are going to vote for me but they cannot work openly for me because they will lose their jobs or they will lose business with the state if they do. When our people are this much mistreated, it is a blatant abuse of power. It is both immoral and dishonest.

I challenge every public official and every party leader

to set this party free and let the people decide who the Democratic Party nominee will be.¹¹

Bolin also planned to attack the kind of politics in which party leaders attempt to influence the electorate to support a particular candidate through "behind the scenes maneuvering," or, in other words, "power-broker politics." These comments were to be made face to face with the governor and in the presence of the other candidates.

On June 25, however, Bolin decided to go ahead with these comments at a Democratic rally in Chattanooga. The effect was extremely positive for the candidate. Newspapers throughout the state reported Bolin's comments, some as a leading story.¹² Bolin had definitely made an impact in the race by going on the offensive and showing that, indeed, negative factors did exist in the status quo and that these things had to be rejected by the voters.

Campaign staff morale rose tremendously. Bolin had made a giant stride toward becoming a strong challenger to John Jay Hooker. Strategy was quickly formulated to continue with a stronger statement at Blountville. Unfortunately, it never happened. By June 29, both Blanton and Sasser were aware of the Chattanooga statement and had prepared their own remarks about party unity and those candidates who would divide the party. Instead of continuing on the offensive in spite of these statements, Bolin backed off and talked

instead about other topics.

From that time until election day, it was a continuing story of attack and retreat, attack and retreat. Bolin had found the issue that he so desperately needed but was unable to capitalize on it as he had to in order to show that he was definitely a candidate capable of winning the primary.

These statements -- even though they were not as strong as they staff recommended -- did succeed in ridding Bolin of the Blanton stigma. Other candidates began to brand Sasser as Blanton's hand-picked candidate. When it became apparent that Blanton was supporting Sasser, Sasser assumed the role of the Governor's choice. Blanton and Sasser continued to deny that the Governor was supporting Sasser. But, as was stated earlier, it is generally agreed that Blanton was very important in Sasser's winning effort. Perhaps it is possible to conclude from Sasser's strong showing that the Governor may not be as unpopular in the state as polls have indicated.

Thus the race continued with each candidate attempting to show that the contest was between John Jay Hooker and himself. The election remained very dull. Low voter turnout on August 5 testified to the sparse interest in the race. The issue became one of who could succeed in polarizing the race and become more attractive than the old standby, John Jay. The answer was that Jim Sasser was able to do just that.

In the last two weeks of the campaign, Sasser flooded the television with his promotional spots. The press began to comment that the race appeared to be between Hooker and Sasser, and in the voters' minds it became just that. Bolin's campaign, from that time on, was on a continuous decline.

Apparently, the voters of Tennessee were determined to put an end to the political career of John Jay Hooker. The anti-Hooker sentiment was far deeper than many people thought. Because of his massive television campaign, because of the help of Governor Blanton and the party regulars, and because he was a fairly attractive candidate, Sasser was able to project himself as a worthy alternative to John Jay Hooker. That left Bolin along with Kefauver and Sadler out of the picture. None of them was able to become an attractive candidate for the Democratic nomination to run against Bill Brock. These factors plus the low voter turnout combined to allow Sasser to win the nomination.

While Bolin could not be classified as a good speaker, he definitely improved as the campaign progressed. This writer believes that he profited from the mistakes of this first campaign. In order to be a more effective campaigner, Bolin must remember to mention those things which are wrong with the status quo and then show that he offers a better alternative for improvement. Bolin must be more willing to heed the advice of his aides. He must believe in their work as well as their

desire to help him and let them run his campaign.

If he does offer himself to the people, David Bolin certainly can be a viable candidate for public office in the years ahead. He is a bright, young man who has stated his desire to serve the people of Tennessee. He advocates government in which people are involved and in which people have a say about what government does. The writer believes that Bolin represents the kind of government which most people want in the years ahead. The experience of a state-wide race will doubtless be valuable if and when he runs again.

NOTES

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¹The writer had frequent conversations with Bolin and other staff members. Information which the staff received indicated that Bolin won some of the polls taken at the Governor's multi-county fundraisers. Because other candidates did not announce their intentions early, Bolin received notice as the senatorial candidate.

²Official total as recorded by the Tennessee State Election Commission.

³Bolin kept an up-to-date map of the state which was color coded depending on the degree of organization. In addition, written records were kept concerning the status of each county organization.

⁴The records referred to above indicated that all but three counties were organized by election day.

⁵Bolin believed that most politicians are interested in the people only until they get elected. He wanted to establish open lines of communication which would allow the voters ready accessibility to the senator's office at any time.

⁶This figure is based on a poll conducted by professional pollster Pat Caddell. Mr. Tom Griscom, political writer for the Chattanooga Free Press communicated this information to the Bolin camp and also ran it in his newspaper column.

⁷Nashville Tennessean, August 8, 1976.

⁸Excerpt from speech given at Murfreesboro Bolin-For-Senate Rally, May 28, 1976.

⁹This statement is based on personal observations. The writer accompanied Bolin when he was interviewed by the editorial board of the Nashville Tennessean, by Mr. Lee Smith, publisher of the Tennessee Journal, and by reporters for the

Cleveland Banner, Murfreesboro Daily News Journal and Nashville Banner. This statement is also based on the writer's impression of Bolin's appearance on the Teddy Bart Show, a Nashville afternoon radio talk show.

¹⁰John J. MaKay and William R. Brown, The Rhetorical Dialogue, Contemporary Concepts and Cases. Dubuque: William C. Brown Company, 1972, p. 451.

¹¹This excerpt is from remarks prepared for delivery at the Governor's Fundraiser Rally in Blountville, Tennessee. Because Bolin decided to launch his attack in Chattanooga four days prior to the rally, these remarks were never delivered.

¹²The Chattanooga Free Press and the Nashville Banner carried lengthy reports of the meeting and of Bolin's comments. Several smaller newspapers, both daily and weekly, reported the story during the following days. Bolin's comments were also aired throughout the state via radio and television.

ANALYTICAL DIRECTIONS FOR DEBATING

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Forrest Conklin and Michael Shultz

In recent years the forensic community has heard an increasing clamor from within its ranks to adopt a non-policy proposition as the national debate topic. Indeed, the National Developmental Conference on Forensics joined this movement when it recommended that the profession give serious attention to the study of additional types of propositions. Perhaps in response to these expressed desires, the National Question Committee has submitted to debate coaches an occasional value proposition for consideration as the national debate topic. Generally these questions have gathered little support and have been voted to the bottom of the preferential lists upon which they appeared.

The debate topic selection list for 1976-77 also included a value proposition. It, however, received the second highest number of preferential votes. Whether this showing for a value question resulted from an attempt by

coaches to adopt a non-policy proposition, or whether the vote represented a desire to debate the specific topic area of the question is not known. Regardless of the motivation behind the voting, forensics personnel almost became obligated to analyze a type of proposition that has received scant attention by scholastic debating.

Because we may soon select a non-policy proposition to debate nationally and the likelihood that it will encompass a value question, we believe that debate coaches should begin forming analysis on such propositions. Maturing this thinking now will ease the impact of value propositions on scholastic debating and ultimately will produce sounder approaches if and when we are confronted with a value question. This paper is submitted as a springboard into that analysis.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

Preliminary to a specific analysis of propositions of value, several observations should be made about the nature and importance of values within a society. First, fundamental values form the framework on which a society builds. These values may range from an unarticulated assumption to a formalized code. The former is illustrated by the concept that the strong and prosperous should assist their less fortunate neighbors and has led to such public functions as foreign aid and the war on poverty. On the other hand, many values

are embodied in our Constitution and code of law (i.e., the right of free speech, the right of due process of law, the limitation of power through a system of checks and balances, etc.) and has led to such public policy as limiting the powers of policemen, striking down Jim Crow laws, and redefining obscenity laws. In the public sector, we constantly debate these values, as illustrated by recent cases. The war in Vietnam raised questions about the worth of the United States' involvement in the affairs of other nations. The Karen Quinlin case caused some people to consider if we are justified in prolonging "life" artificially. The "Right to Life" movement questioned the right of a woman to govern the function of her body over that of the fetus to reach full term. While these examples are but a small sample of a host of values which we have recently confronted, they illustrate how events call to our attention the values through which our society operates and the need for public debates on them.

A second observation indicates that while the stability of our society depends in a large measure on the stability of its values and their structure most values remain kinetic. Probably dramatic shifts in our value structure would severely strain if not shred the fabric of the nation. On the other hand, a rigidity of values could lead to stagnation and could produce a death blow to any society. We should note, therefore,

that a society should tolerate, if it does not inherently need, an element of instability in its value system in order to meet the demands of changing times and situations. This condition is perhaps illustrated by our recent racial values. From the turn of the century we assumed that separate but equal facilities would provide adequate opportunity for our minorities. During the mid-nineteen fifties we became aware that this value reduced some people to a second class status, and only by shifting to more equitable policies could we attain our national value of equal opportunity for all citizens. To a large measure, the modification of our value structure is situationally bound. For instance, until recently it was believed that a college education would provide upward economic mobility for our youth. The recent closure of the job market, however, has denied many college graduates opportunity to work in their specialty and correspondingly has called into question the economic value of a college education. These illustrations demonstrate that changing events force us to make shifts in our value system and that these shifts will result from public consideration (debate) of the issue.

A third observation suggests that there is a link between social values and public policy. Most, if not all, societal values are reflected in the public policies which our people enact. Indeed some may argue that a value is

not viable in a society until it is translated into public policy. Therefore, they contend, we need not concern ourselves with arguments on value propositions unless they are inherently linked to specific policies; that only by examining the policies growing out of our values can we really determine the viability of the value itself, i. e., it is good only as it has practical application. We recognize that values provide the underpinning for any public policy. This perhaps is the position taken by presidential candidate Jimmy Carter when he argued that American foreign policy should reflect the "basic goodness of the American people." However, it appears that occasionally we need to examine the value independent of policy. For example, is it right to insist on prolonging a life when the terminally ill person is undergoing intense suffering? Or, is it right to use capital punishment to create the social good? Only as we determine these values can we really form justifiable public policies. Moreover, conflicts in values need to be settled at a specific point in time in order to give direction to our policies. A few years ago we placed restrictions on the power of police in order to maximize individual rights. The growing crime rate, however, is bringing this value into question as more people call for greater protection from criminals. To the extent that we resolve the conflict between these values, we can give

clear direction to public policy in the area of crime prevention.

Our last observation suggests that existent scholarship has largely ignored non-policy propositions and offers little guidance for value questions. Traditional argumentation theory as it has evolved from Aristotle through Whately has focused on policy considerations. Notions of presumption, inherency, harm, and causality all demonstrate a concern for legal structure rather than the values that underlie policy determinations. Contemporary debate theory, building on traditional notions, has led to such a specialized approach to policy propositions that the differences between two debates are nearly non-existent. We, therefore, feel that the forensics community is obligated to investigate alternatives that might revitalize debate and bring the process of invention to the front. This will concomitantly require an examination of traditional theories of argumentation vis-a-vis non-policy propositions.

DIRECTIONS FOR ANALYSIS OF VALUE PROPOSITIONS

While most of the discussion surrounding propositions of value has been of a "should we or shouldn't we" nature, we feel it is equally important to consider, "how do we debate propositions of value?" Such discussion can then aid us in making a rational decision concerning the use of value

propositions. An examination of the nature of values leads us to three different affirmative approaches for a value proposition: value application; value comparison; and evaluative judgments. We do not offer these as prescriptive formulae, but as suggested paradigms in constructing the resolution.

The value application is the simplest approach which an affirmative can take. It develops from our basic notion that society has certain values which have gained consensual confirmation. McCroskey¹ described this phenomenon when he defined values as "our enduring concepts of the nature of good and evil." Krueger² also spoke of values as "anything taken by general consent as a basis of comparison; an approved model." Both definitions express the notion that there are some generally static values that a society affirms; love, peace, equality, and opportunity exemplify these values.

With this concept the affirmative can discover the first model for development of their rationale. Initially, the affirmative should identify a value that has gained consensual confirmation. Some proof might be offered to demonstrate the value's preeminent nature. Second, the affirmative would identify those behaviors or practices which do not conform to the value. Last, the affirmative could implicitly or explicitly suggest modifying or eliminating those behaviors or practices which do not conform

to the value.

A sample proposition can help explain this threefold process. A current controversy surrounds the family viewing time on network television. A proposition might state: That the family view period is unjustified. While it would be possible to describe facts concerning programming, audiences, and attitude formation, a simpler approach would be the "value application." Following our three step development, the affirmative would indicate how the family viewing time limits the freedom of expression by prescribing what may or may not be presented. Finally, the affirmative could call for the elimination of the family viewing time. Through this process the affirmation would ask the judge to concur that the family viewing time is unjustified and that we need to reaffirm the right to freedom of expression by eliminating the viewing period.

Value comparison, our second paradigm, is a more elaborate plan than value application. It recognizes that a society employs several important values and that these values form a hierarchical structure. With this concept the affirmative would follow a five step process. First, it would identify a value which it felt is important. Second, it would indicate the value's current place within our present hierarchy. Third, the affirmative would demonstrate why

its value is inappropriately placed within the hierarchy, thus requiring a fundamental examination of values and their ascension to primacy within the society. A fourth, though optional, step for the affirmative would be to argue that the value with which they are concerned must replace values now above it, or that it could co-exist with other values. Finally, the affirmative could specify how the value could be moved up within the hierarchy.

Again a sample proposition aids our understanding: Using the abortion issue, we might be resolved: That the right to abortion on demand is an illegitimate right. Following the first two steps, the affirmative could advance the right to life as the important value, and show that it currently ranks low in our hierarchy as evidenced by the right to abortion. The affirmative could next compare the right to life value with the right to free choice. It would be necessary for the affirmative to demonstrate that the right to life should be considered more "inalienable" than the right to free choice. As an option the affirmative could, fourth, discuss whether the former right must replace the latter right in the hierarchy or if they might somehow be compatible. Last, the affirmative might specify what they would do about the practice of abortion. This process has been reviewed regarding propositions of policy.³ It recognizes that values are not always static and that

different situations require re-examination of our value structure.

The last paradigm to be discussed here, evaluative judgment, is different in its approach because it involves a different definition for value. Rather than looking at existent values, it seeks to define what has merit and how merit is determined. Ziegelmüller and Dause⁴ refer to propositions of value as judgments based on some list of evaluative criteria.

The process used by the affirmative would require five steps. First, the affirmative would point out the evaluative term in the proposition, (the evaluative term is the adjective or adverb modifying the issue under discussion). Second, the affirmative would specify the criteria by which the evaluation will be made. The next two steps work in conjunction. The affirmative would compare the concept or practice under discussion with the criteria depending on the direction of the evaluation. Last, the affirmative would suggest how practices might be modified to meet these criteria.

The issue of police power offers this potential resolution: That Supreme Court decisions have unnecessarily restricted law enforcement. The term "unnecessarily" makes this an evaluative judgment. After this identification, the affirmative would demonstrate the criteria that would

make restrictions on the police unnecessary. These could include no benefit to the society, no benefit to the individual, lack of logic in the restriction, etc. The affirmative would next compare restrictions on the police with these criteria and demonstrate how these restrictions meet the criteria for being unnecessary. Finally, the affirmative could suggest that the police should be given more power.

The preceding discussion suggests three methods by which the affirmative might develop the rationale for affirming the resolution. These methods vary in their emphasis and their notion of "value." Several important questions, however, remain after this discussion. While this paper cannot address all the issues involved in this controversy, several objections to our concerns about propositions of value should be considered.

Those who are reluctant to accept propositions of value maintain that such propositions avoid the real world argumentation and the political nature of our society. As we have indicated, the specification of policy changes is an option for the affirmative, not a requirement. While this might ignore the specifics of the policy implementation, it provides greater time within the debate to consider the values **which** form the basis for our political decision.

A second objection to debating propositions of value

is the alleged inconclusiveness of philosophical debates. Where the two teams argue from different criteria or different values, clash might be missing from the debate. If we are to debate propositions of value, it will be necessary for those who write debate topics to pay close attention to the "debatability" of a topic. Following this concern, the teams involved will choose a strategy which may ignore the opposition and supports their own arguments, or they may choose to attack the values and criteria of the opposition. Thus, while clash and conclusiveness may sometimes be avoided, it is not a necessary outcome.

The question of greatest importance involves the place of traditional notions of argumentation. It must be determined if traditional argumentation requirements are relevant to value discussions. A cursory analysis leads us to conclude that presumption becomes more important in value debate; harm returns to a level proposed by the original advocates of comparative advantages; and inherency retains its current attention to structural and attitudinal barriers to change. Some may argue that inherency will not be relevant in value discussions since our concern is only with what "should be" compared to "what is." Our assessment here remains equivocal.

Finally, the injection of judge bias into the debate

must be addressed. There is a valid concern that the decision made by a judge will not be made on the basis of who does the better debating, but who best fits their arguments to the judge's predisposition. The judging community will have to examine their ability to suspend judgments based on their values -- a behavior already expected when judging policy debates.

Our discussion of the relationship between values and society is of a preliminary nature. The models for the affirmative rationale are presented to open a more elaborate discussion of how a value debate should proceed. The concerns about debating propositions of value remain; we do not pretend that easy answers exist. Our hope is that the forensics community can build on this analysis and that a rational decision can be made about debating propositions of value.

NOTES

Forrest Conklin is Director of Forensics at the University of Northern Iowa. Michael Shultz is Debate Coach at the University of Northern Iowa.

¹James C. McCroskey, Carl E. Larson, and Mark L. Knapp, An Introduction to Inter-personal Communication, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971.

²Arthur N. Krueger, Modern Debate: Its Logic and Strategy, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1960.

³Tom Goodnight, Bill Balthrop, and Donn W. Parson, "The Problem of Inherency: Strategy and Substance," Journal of the American Forensic Association, Spring, 1974.

⁴George W. Ziegelmueller and Charles A. Dause, Argumentation: Inquiry and Advocacy, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1975.

MINUTES OF THE TSCA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

September 25, 1976

Vanderbilt University

The meeting was called to order at 9:50 a.m. by President Kovalcheck. Members in attendance were Hillman, Brooks, Schneider, Woodland, Dean, and Conner.

Kovalcheck first called for a financial report. Conner reported that the Association is in good financial shape. At the present time we have \$279.30 in the regular account and \$85.76 in the journal account. Conner indicated that based on past experience the publication of the next journal should run about \$185.00. Therefore, we need to shift funds from our regular account to the journal account. A discussion followed concerning \$25.00 yearly supporting patron memberships from our respective institutions. It was decided that all member institutions be encouraged to continue their contributions in order to support the journal. Members of the executive committee agreed to work toward this at their schools. Brooks agreed to send a letter to every school asking for this support.

Hillman/Dean motion to transfer \$168.00 to the journal account carried.

Woodland presented the report from the Committee on Awards. He explained what awards were being given: Speaker of the Year -- Jayne Ann Woods, Tennessee Commissioner of Revenue; Speech Teacher of the Year -- Mrs. Jane Eldridge, Madison High School; Honorary Life Memberships to Mr. and Mrs. Herman Pinkerton of Cookeville, and Mrs. Ruby Crider of Paris, Tennessee.

The Executive Committee discussed establishing standards for lifetime memberships and setting a limit on the amount of money to be spent on awards for honorees of the Association.

Kovalcheck appointed the nominating committee for 1977-78. The members are David Walker, MTSU, as Chairman, Randy Fisher, Vanderbilt, Jane Eldridge, Madison High School, Bill Yates, Roane State Community College, and Dick Finton, Carson-Newman College.

Richard Dean was appointed as the TSCA Representative to the SCA Convention in San Francisco, States Advisory Council.

Robert Woodland was reappointed chairman of the awards committee. He was given authority to appoint his own committee members.

Kovalcheck recommended that Professor Randy Fisher be given a token of appreciation for his untiring efforts in conducting the workshop for high school debaters. Fisher has never been compensated for his work. His efforts have been very instrumental in the involvement of many students. The executive committee voted to present Fisher with an honorarium of \$30.00

It was decided that Schneider and Conner would work together on membership efforts. Conner reported that we presently have thirty-three memberships for the 1976-77 school year.

Harold "Bud" Frank of ETSU was appointed chairman of the Committee on Professional Ethics and Educational Standards.

It was decided that the next Executive Committee Meeting would be held at the TIFA state tournament in Gatlinburg, TN, during the second week of February, 1977.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John J. Conner
Executive Secretary

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

THE JOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION is published twice yearly in the Fall and Spring. Subscriptions and requests for advertising rates should be addressed to Jim Brooks, Box 309-MTSU, Murfreesboro, TN, 37132. Regular subscription price for non-members, beginning with the Spring, 1976, issue, is \$4.00 yearly, or \$2.00 per issue. The TSCA JOURNAL is printed by the MTSU Print Shop, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, 37132. Second class postage is paid at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN.

The purpose of the publication is to expand professional interest and activity in all areas of the field of speech communication in Tennessee. Articles from all areas of speech study will be welcomed, with special consideration given to articles treating pedagogical concepts, techniques, and experiments.

All papers should be sent to the editor. Authors should submit two copies of their manuscripts, each under a separate title page also to include the author's name and address. Manuscripts without the identifying title pages will be forwarded by the editor to a panel of reader-referees who will represent the varied interests within the discipline.

All papers should be double-spaced, typed in standard type with a dark ribbon, and on standard typing paper. Margins should be standard and uniform. Notes need to be typed single-spaced on separate sheets following the last page of the manuscript proper. The first footnote should be unnumbered and should contain essential information about the author. This footnote will be eliminated by the editor from the manuscripts sent to the panel of readers. Any professional style guide, consistently used, is acceptable. Accuracy, originality, and proper citing of source materials are the responsibilities of the contributors. Articles from ten to twenty pages will fit best into the journal.

Institutions and individuals wishing to be patrons of the journal may do so with a contribution of \$25.00 yearly.