

Wyche Fowler Friends - Sims, Mead, Weltner, Craig, Baxter, Mitchell
November 1-2, 1991

Ed Sims: November 1, 1991

- Democratic State Chair - picked by Zell Miller (Gov.) - Georgia/Pacific Building, 44th Floor, 404/222-4600 (Mary Kish)
- Having made my appointments in Rochester on Thursday, I came down to Atlanta Thursday evening and started out Friday morning with Ed Sims, State Democratic Chair. (It was pouring; he lent me an umbrella, which got me through the rest of the day!)
- I told him how I happened to pick WF: tough race, first reelection, thoughtful, respected idea on policy and politics.
- "Wyche Fowler fits all three to a 'T'," he laughed. I told him that my book was solely from WF perspective and that nothing would be attributed without permission and nothing would be published for 2-3 years. He said he was relieved to hear that.
- In response to my "place WF in context of Georgia politics and party politics," he said, "let me go back further and tell you how I got to know Wyche Fowler."
- And he began.
- "Wyche and I met in college. We were fraternity brothers and classmates and we became pretty close friends. There were three of us: Donald Calhoun, who is an eye surgeon in North Carolina, Wyche Fowler and myself. When Wyche was in the Army and Don was at medical school in Chapel Hill, I was at law school. So Dick and I, whenever we got burnout, we'd hop in the car and go wherever Wyche was and the three of us would talk for hours and hours about our lives and what he wanted to do and so forth. I'm not doing anything like what I said I was go to do. But Wyche is doing exactly what he said he would. He always wanted to be a United States senator."
- "For a number of years afterward, we didn't see much of each other; Wyche got married-divorced-married. I got married-divorced-married. I became a lawyer. But about once every year, the three of us would go on a sailing trip. And we would talk about what we wanted to do with the rest of our lives. Calhoun wanted to open an eye clinic. And Wyche still wanted to get to the Senate. I rememebr we plotted a career plan for Wyche. He would broaden his base by running for the City Council and then by becoming President of the City Council. Then we planned that he would seek a state-wide office like Attorney General and go straight from there to the Senate."
- "Even when he got to the Atlanta City Council, he would go to the Georgia Municipal Association meetings even though there was no other reason for him to be there except to help him some day to get to the Senate. I lived in north-east Georgia at the time, and he would come up from Atlanta to

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Rotary Club meetings and Kiwanis meetings in Gainesville and Commerce and Toccoa and all those little towns - all preparatory to running for the Senate. There was a lot of careful, careful hard work and a lot of personal sacrifice on Wyche's part."

- "When he first ran for Congress, we talked about how it meant that he would forever give up the chance to be senator. People in Georgia want their senators to begin with their contacts here. Their view is that once you go to Congress, you can get reelected to Congress from your territory, but you are tainted state-wide. Bo Ginn, who was in Congress and ran for Governor, is an example. Members of Congress don't make it. I thought it was a mistake for him to run for Congress, that he would never be a senator. But he said that it was something he had to do, that he was going to do it and that maybe things would change, who knows and so forth. As you know, he lost his first race for Congress--to Andy Young. That was hopeless. I think he may have been the first and only Georgia senator to have come from the House."
- "I am in the public finance business, mostly the bond business. In all the years that he has been in the Congress, he has never cast one single vote in favor of the public finance industry. When he was on the Ways and Means Committee, every vote he cast that affected my industry, had a negative impact on that industry. I was always afraid he might get on the banking committee because I knew he would vote contrary to my wishes on everything."
- "William Faulkner had a great line. He said, 'People don't love because of; they love inspite of.' That's Wyche Fowler. People support him in spite of some of his views, with which they disagree. In that respect, he's an old-time senator, a throwback to the days when senators would vote nine out of ten times against the views of most Georgians--like Senator George on those votes for the New Deal--and still get reelected."
- That comment was sure hyperbole and wrong--but it shows what WF's reputation is. (George was opposed by FDR; and the one vote he cast with Georgians was on racial matters!)
- Get Ed Jenkins to tell stories.
- "Wyche is the best personal, hands-on, look-em-in-the-eye, out-in-the-street campaigner I've ever known (along with Jimmy Carter). He loves it. He thrives on it, just the way I do when I pull things together and complete a deal."
- "My job is to muster and pull together all the resources of the party 100% behind him."
- He spoke of the Unified Campaign Plan and he brought it out and worked from it. "I'll give it to you later, but I can't now--mostly because I'd have to get the permission of 20 other people."
- In defense of the plan: "We had a very unpleasant experience in the south and especially in Georgia in the 1988 race. Michael Dukakis was not

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popular in Georgia. The people who ran his campaign (long pause) lacked any understanding of how a campaign had to be run in Georgia. They jerked people into the state and then they jerked them out of the state, jerked them in and jerked them out again. In Georgia, you have to commit to people long-term. They had political novices in control. We learned a bitter lesson, that we cannot depend on the Presidential candidate or the national party to help us. The national party will write-off Georgia and put their resources elsewhere. Buddy McKay lost to Connie Mack in Florida because they depended on the national party. I don't want that to happen to Wyche."

- State party has one million to spend on Democratic candidates--Wyche-Al Scott for Labor Commissioner. First black to run state-wide for non-judicial office. "Important for party and racial that he not be defeated." House candidates hurt by redistricting and 25-30 state legislative races. State Senate going to single member districts. i.e., Cobb County has 7 of 10 Republicans now. Hopes to get 5-5 split next time and will put money there.
- Sums up saying: "We will protect Georgia since the national party will not be much help in Georgia."
- Re WF, he says: "I can smooth the coordination of Wyche Fowler's campaign with that of other offices, the governor, the other senator, other House members. Bill may call me to tell me what Wyche is going to do and I can talk with the others to make sure they will not get upset. Little things can make a big difference. Sometimes staff don't get along and that can be a big problem."
- "Wyche tends to alienate big givers. Since I'm part of the governor's team, I can talk to them, and reason with them as to why they should be supportive of Wyche."
- Also, "I can speak to the Kiwanis and the Rotary Clubs whereas he has no business doing that because they'll never vote for him anyway. I may influence one or two of those who aren't completely committed."
- Where is campaign at now? "We are in the money-raising phase--100% into the money-raising. And Wyche is going around trying to broaden his base."
- "Within a month or two after Wyche was elected, I sat down with him and said that 'we have to start raising money for your reelection.' He has a hot temper and he hit the ceiling. In a loud voice, he kept saying that he was a congressman and that he had spent every year raising money for his reelection to Congress, that now he was a senator and he shouldn't have to do it, that it was demeaning and on and on and on. A month later, we had formed a committee and we had a commitment from him to come home once every quarter to raise money. He finished the year with over a million--two years out--and that sent a signal. The fact that Miller and I are 100% behind Wyche and his million dollars, has foreclosed anyone taking him on in the primary. And there were lots and lots of people thinking about it. It has also had an indirect effect on Republicans."

- Re Mattingly: "I had lunch with him the other day. He told me he was in it again, that he had learned and that he would win. He's been putting out polls that show him six points, eight points behind Fowler." Sims shrugged his shoulders as if to say, 'I didn't know what to make of it,' and he said, "I have no idea why he told me." (Howard Mead does not take Mattingly seriously. Says he can't raise money because he's a loser--that he had every chance to win and blew it.)
- "I told Wyche, for God's sake, let's make sure that it's not the lack of money that causes your defeat. Four to five million is all he needs. Beyond that kernel, there is only a very marginal effect in Georgia. 1500 gross rating points is only marginally better than 1000 gross rating points. We're hoping to raise \$4 million for his campaign--\$3 million from him and \$1 million from us--whether we raise \$4 million or \$8 million makes very little difference; but whether we raise \$4 million instead of \$2 million makes all the difference in the world."
- "The Republicans have targeted him. They are going to concentrate their money here. Charlie Black told me...that Republican money will be more and more targeted here because there are so few races where their money can be used to advantage."
- Speaks himself of Black and says he's learned from him. "We used to be friends, now we're enemies." (politically) Calls Black's work on behalf of Helms first election and vs. Hunt as "two of most remarkable achievements in campaigning--at least in the south."
- "I've learned more about campaigning from the Republicans than I have from the Democrats. Using absentee ballots, we haven't touched them yet. Pete Wilson won with absentee ballots."
- He went and got a folder containing the campaign plan and read from it, and went through parts of it.
- Communications Director or Press Secretary. Someone, he said to act as a neutral spokesperson when things needed to be said that candidate ought not to say. He mentioned situation with Doug Barnard when his opponent turned out not to be Mr. Clean as advertised. Press Secretary for committee blew the whistle and not Barnard.
- \$40,000 for field staff of 15 people in the last two months. He called this, "mostly a waste, \$40,000 that would be better spent on TV. It's to placate party regulars all over the state, people who want to play a part and get excited."
- \$10,000 on interns in the last two months - young people who want to help.
- \$260,000 on voter files, on targeting and on absentee ballots. He talked a lot about absentee ballots, after saying how far behind Democrats were. They figure there are 118,000 Georgians who qualify for absentee ballots who don't usually vote, but who vote Democratic when they do vote. The over-70 group, military and some "others." Says WF only won by 21,000 votes in 1986 and that absentee ballot program could easily make that kind

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of difference. He said they got 15,000 such votes in 1990 and their goal is 100% in 1992.

- They plan four efforts: an initial mailing, with ballot emphasizing "get out the vote;" a follow-up phone call 10 days later asking if they got it, sending another if necessary, etc.; another mailing reminding them to vote; and a phone call, as part of the 500,000 calls, get out the vote, but done by special group who will give a different message than the normal message going to regular voting Democrats.
- They will start volunteer phone banks in February and March and set-up paid phone banks for last six weeks. (Didn't put a dollar figure on this.)
- \$650,000 for direct mail, \$250,000 of this will go to "swing households" in September and \$400,000 to Democrats to get out the vote.
- \$240,000 to blacks to get out the vote and to block workers and for black radio, which he said was very important in the black community--Andy Young, Maynard Jackson and John Lewis telling people to vote.
- I asked him about "early money" and he said, "special interests;" mentioning specifically groups whose interests WF supports, old supporters and wealthy individuals who are uncertain and insecure and want to make sure they have access to a U.S. senator.
- I asked him about the two votes. Re: the vote against the war he said, "It's a non-issue. I don't hear people talking about it. I just don't hear it out there. After all, he didn't really vote against the war; he voted to try the sanctions for a little while longer. And the timing of the thing has worked in his favor. By the time of the election, 18 months will have gone by. Now, when you look at what's happened over there, everything is all fuzzed up."

"The Thomas vote is a wholly different story. A lot of people are mad as hell about that; and Wyche is paying a price for it. The women are split down the middle, 50-50. The blacks are for Thomas and so are the men. Politically he did the right thing. Politically he had no choice. But I think he did the right thing on the policy. What I worried about and I think he did too, was that if Thomas was rejected, the next appointee would be a white Thomas and then you've lost the advantage of having a man with that experience on the Court. Don't forget Hugo Black. I don't care what you say, on civil rights matters, Clarence Thomas will vote the way we would want him to. There's anger out there and the women who are most angry are his women. But in the end, they won't have any other place to go. Do you think they would vote for Mattingly? Give me a break!"

- Sarah Craig used the exact same phrase, "Politically he had no choice." She emphasized (1) that he had voted with the majority of his constituents and (2) that he didn't think he could stand another vote after the war vote that went against the majority of his constituents. Then, he would have had everyone mad at him - whites on war vote, blacks on Thomas vote.