

Wyche Fowler
Staff Comments After 11/24/92 Runoff

Marty Smith - Savannah Field Director - 11/30/92

(Phone conversation)

- "Between the election and the runoff, South Georgia was offended by Wyche running to the blacks and the gays. A lot of voters didn't go back to him. We fought five and a half years to get them on our side. I guess you'd call them Reagan Democrats. They left us."
- Al Gore campaigned in three black churches the Sunday before the runoff.
- "The people running the campaign in Atlanta were out of touch. They didn't have their feet on the ground and were not listening to what we were telling them."
- He said that was true on Nov. 3, too. "I could see it coming. We had no signs here, no bumper stickers. Powers were not delegated well. We felt left out of it. The people who tried to coordinate, didn't work well with the local people in the area. The people in Atlanta spent time dreaming up things for us to do down here that didn't make any sense. It seemed like a very unfocussed campaign and it frustrated people here."
- In runoff, "Maybe Clinton was a distraction, but people were not focussed on Wyche Fowler."
- "Senator Fowler has quite a record, but it was not highlighted in the media campaign. The closest it came to hitting the target was the Nunn ad."
- Re the health care ad: "'If you want a tinkerer, don't vote for me.' People wanted a tinkerer! Don't ask people to vote against you! I was shocked when I heard that line. What are they trying to do? I compared it to Dukakis riding in a tank. You just don't do that. Show you are sincere and you care, that's the way to do it. It was very strange."
- "He did town meetings in 159 counties and some twice over. I've witnessed 20 of them. He acted very arrogant in those meetings. If he did that in every county, he lost votes there, too. Particularly in the last year. He carried a set of charts talking about Bush's economic performance and spent 15 to 20 minutes talking about Bush and blaming him. People are tired of the blame game and arrogance. People were turned off. Of the 20 or so I saw, that occurred in about every case. And there were 20 or 30, sometimes 150, in attendance."
- "His arrogance came out in the debates. It came across to me in the field here. When I visit small businesses, people would mention that. He was better in 1986."

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Hill McKemie - Albany Field Staff - 11/30/92

- "We got caught in a situation with that terrible Georgia law."
- "Georgia has changed in six years. North of I-20, it's mostly Republican."
- "Wyche got caught in a lot of cross currents."
- "The Thomas hearings lost him some women's groups. But I think it was a wash. Thomas was Georgian and black."
- "The war vote was a wash and not nearly as influential as everyone thought it would be. Wyche ran 7-8 points higher than Clinton."
- "Wyche was very strong in South West Georgia because of the agricultural vote. It's an historic Democratic vote, especially the black vote. But it has grown weaker in the towns--Albany, Moultrie, Valdosta, Thomasville. They are getting more yuppie, more actively Republican."
- He noted that Waycross Mayor Knox was active in Xian Coalition and NRA.
- "He may have been hurt by Senate Bill 55, striker replacement; but the unions supported him. So that was probably a wash."
- "I didn't think North Georgia would be so anti-Wyche as they were. North North Georgia is very different from South South Georgia."
- He thinks they would have won with lower turnout.

David Elrod - Delta Field Director - 11/30/92

- "The Christian Coalition came out again. When I heard that the turnout was 30-35%, I called Atlanta and said, 'We're dead!' I knew the Christian Coalition had come out again, stronger than we thought they would."
- (The idea that they only came out to oppose the lottery was a pipe dream!)

Fran Weis - 11/30/92

- Re weather on turnout day: "The weather could have been worse. It was not a drizzle, but pouring black rain--along with tornado sightings all around."

Susan Nicholson - Augusta Field Director - 11/30/92

- "He was done in so badly. It's incredible. The people here have bitten the hand that feeds them four times--Miller, Clinton, Fowler twice."
- "He was very gracious in the room afterwards, filled with his big supporters. What we've gotta do is get the staff together and get their resumes."

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