

MAY 30, 1980



the Mock Convention Report

W&L'S POLITICAL PROPHETS SAY IT'LL BE REAGAN - AND BAKER

New York state's mock Republicans—acting on direct instructions from real live G.O.P. leaders—cast a unanimous delegation vote for Ronald Reagan to put him over the top in the 17th mock nominating convention at Washington and Lee this spring.

There had really been no question that Reagan would walk away with the nomination. There had been hardly any surprises in the state-by-state roll call voting. Even some of the large northern industrial states that came before New York, notably Illinois and New Jersey, were in Reagan's camp.

What raised the eyebrows of veteran watchers of conventions, mock and otherwise, was the New York unanimity. Technically, the Empire State will go to Detroit in July with a third of its delegates uncommitted, only 73 bound to the former California governor.

But on the morning of the Mock Convention's nominating session, the word came down to Lexington. If the mock roll call developed in the way it appeared it was about to, then the mock delegates should jump in all the way with Reagan.

Because, the back-home party leadership said, that's what will happen at the real Republican

convention under the same circumstances.

Voting in the state-by-state Mock Convention roll call was based, as Mock Convention roll calls always are, on actual primary or caucus results, or on hard political research conducted by the W&L student politicos back in the actual grass roots, or on inside information—or, as in the instance of New York, on a combination of all these methods.



Nominee Reagan told W&L's mock delegates he will carry on his campaign for the GOP nomination and the presidency "with renewed spirits" as a result of his landslide convention victory at W&L.

Reagan addressed the Mock Convention by a telephone hookup shortly after he took the nomination. He told his audience from the other coast "You have honored me greatly" and "I couldn't be more pleased."

He said his campaign for the White House will be geared toward "reducing, not increasing, your debt to future generations." His goal, he said in his four-minute speech, will be to reduce the scope of national government to the point that it will take "only a proper share of people's resources."

The nation's well-being on domestic and international fronts alike "has never been more precarious," he told his W&L audience. But the root of the problem, he charged, is "not a lack of greatness" on the part of the people, but rather "the government itself."

Reagan paid lavish tribute to the Mock Convention keynote speaker, recalling Sen. Goldwater's "lonely walk" in 1964 warning the republic against "ever-growing government."

Now, Reagan said, Goldwater has been "proven a prophet who was right."

W&L's Bill Brock, former U.S. Senator from Tennessee and now national Republican party chairman, told the *Roanoke Times & World-News* after the Reagan nomination: "There are not very many mock conventions that are seriously considered. This one receives more attention because it's so thoughtful. [The students are] not trying to vote their own opinions; this is sort of a very sophisticated mini-poll."

(The newspaper reporter added that "most" W&L mock state chairmen were again this year "privy to what most [G.O.P.] leaders considered 'classified' information. Some of the guidelines the real Republican officials revealed will not be known



publicly until the Republican convention in Detroit this July.")

That the real politicians regard W&L's Mock Convention as unusually significant was proved almost the minute the balloting was over in Warner Center. An urgent telephone call came through to the podium; it was the chief of George Bush's campaign in the mid-Atlantic region. What had happened, he wanted to know—which delegations did what, and why, and on whose authority? He was impressed with the answers—not happy, but impressed.

To no one's surprise, Reagan moved out front with the very first delegate votes cast—Alabama's, where he captured 18 of 27. Former China envoy and CIA director Bush, the only other hopeful whose name was even placed in nomination by the mock Republicans, never had a chance.

In fact, Alabama—perhaps interestingly—was the least solidly pro-Reagan state in the old Confederacy, the consequence of a binding primary. Even the border states, except Arkansas—also perhaps interestingly—went overwhelmingly to Reagan.

Bush managed to take majorities in only 10 of the 53 delegations, and all of them except Michigan were tiny states numerically and most were predictable—



Connecticut, the District, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands in addition to Arkansas and Michigan. Bush's biggest single bloc came from Michigan, but even that state's majority of 43 in his favor represented a scant 4 percent of the 998 needed to win the nomination.

Reagan's nomination came only 21 minutes into the session—the speediest resolution of a Mock Convention in memory.

The student delegates, flawlessly faithful to their mission of trying to be accurate in every particular, launched a flag-waving celebration when Reagan went over the top.

But as they acted out that rôle, the W&L men and their dates, despite the student body's reputation for hard-core political conservatism, seemed not to have their own hearts wholly in it. The victory demonstration lasted less than two minutes, and in fact,

THE NOMINATION WAS MOCK, BUT EVERYTHING ELSE WAS REAL

It was, in the words of all who attended, a textbook model of what a Washington and Lee Mock Convention ought to be. Of course, each new convention aspires to be a little bit better than all its predecessors, and usually each is. But this year's chairmen—Craig Cornett, Dick Schoenfeld, and Sidney Simmons—see some particular areas in which the 1980 version exceeded even their wildest, fondest hopes.

Everyone *expects* a W&L Mock Convention to be accurate. But there are other considerations where a complete triumph is more elusive. This year's chairmen count five special successes: the parade, the speakers, the platform, the slick 52-page *Mock Convention Journal*, and convention-hall facilities.

As always, the parade set the tone for fun and games. There were, thanks to parade chairman



the cheering when W&L's lacrosse team was mentioned (twice: by Illinois and by Virginia) was notably more enthusiastic.

Perhaps because of the utter lack of suspense over the outcome of the presidential nomination, and perhaps also because of their predecessors' success in prophesying who would be tapped as running-mate four years ago (when Jimmy Carter too had pretty much sewn up the nomination by Mock Convention time), the 1980 mock politicians paid a good bit of attention to the vice-presidential nod.

And the word was Howard Baker. Again, in good measure it was inside information from real party pros that directed the W&L convention.

(Look for a focus on the vice-presidential nomination to become a fixture at future Mock Conventions. At W&L, once is a precedent, and twice is a tradition.)

Donald Swagart and float coordinator Scott Williams, brass bands, flags all up and down Main Street, thousands of townspeople and alumni and other visitors; there was the governor and there was Sen.

The steering committee: Countdown toward the opening gavel





John W. Warner riding with Miss Virginia. There was even a spectacularly beautiful sky, though not even with W&L pridefulness did anyone on campus take full credit for that.

And there were 10 very special animal guests.

Nine of those quadriped VIPs came courtesy of the Anheuser-Busch brewery in St. Louis—the famed Budweiser Clydesdale horses and their Dalmatian mascot. (The original Clydesdales were acquired almost 50 years ago to celebrate the repeal of the 18th Amendment—Prohibition. Now, two teams of the majestic beasts travel across the nation every year, making more than 300 annual appearances.) Drawing their familiar beer cart, the horses received thunderous applause all along the parade route. Parents from all over even went so far as to take their children out of school to see the famous visitors, who were also available for petting and rides in front of the gym before the first convention session.

Also on hand was a co-star of the forthcoming movie *Smokey and the Bandit—Part II*. It wasn't Burt Reynolds or Sally Field, but rather a 10-foot-tall pachyderm named Jewel. Securing the services of an elephant—registered Republican or not—proved to be one of the most frustrating and costly parts of the entire convention. Until it was discovered that Jewel would be passing through Virginia on her way from Florida to a northern movie set, literally everywhere that offered even the slightest chance of renting an elephant had been contacted. Jewel cost \$1,500 for the day, but everyone agreed it was money well spent after seeing the delighted looks that appeared on children's (and everyone else's) faces whenever she performed a trick.



Nearly all the money necessary to bring Jewel to Lexington was raised by a special "Subcommittee on Elephants" that received major contributions from the library and food services office, the Contact committee, the *Ring-tum Phi* and the Publications Board, Bigelow Sanford Inc., W&L's College Republicans, and vast numbers of others. The University Print Shop even staged a raffle of the special-edition Mock Convention bourbon to aid in bringing another "piece of the pachyderm."

Then there were the floats—better than ever before, perhaps, because the Mock Convention staff had wisely ordered all the materials last fall. South Carolina led the pack with a bevy of hoop-skirted lasses in red, white, and blue, and an enormous likeness of Ronald Reagan superimposed on an outline of the state. Pennsylvania brought W&L to Three-Mile Island and its three large nuclear cooling towers—the middle one a cleverly disguised beer keg. Washington had an erupting Mount St. Helens, Idaho a Volkswagen disguised as a baked potato, California the People's Temple and a salute to the "state of cults," Louisiana a Mardi Gras-style steamboat.

Tennessee saluted the hamlet of Chinatown, "population 24," in a float that won third prize, and New Jersey copped second with a salute to the return



of gambling at Atlantic City.

But the judges' favorite proved to be the entry from West Virginia—"Almost Heaven," highlighted by an immense rainbow framed with clouds, from which a starry spiral staircase descended to reveal local children dressed as winged angels. And riding in front were the junior and adult versions of Miss West Virginia. "A great undertaking," one judge described it, and a credit to state chairman Scott Bond, a freshman who didn't take very long to catch the Mock Convention spirit.

Real politicians abounded at the Mock Convention, and the big names were bigger than ever before. To bring together the Republicans' most venerable Senator, the party chairman himself, W&L's and Virginia's own Senator, a rising young representative from the once-solidly Democratic deep South, and the governor was no easy proposition.

Mayor Charles F. Phillips Jr., W&L's President Robert E. R. Huntley, Sen. Warner, and Gov. John Dalton each came to the podium in the first session to offer greetings to the delegates. Dalton confidently predicted that each of the delegates would "be fully converted to the Republican party by the time this is over." Judging by the response to his speech, most already were—at least for the duration of the weekend. And though Warner got good-natured boos from the crowd when he explained that his wife, actress Elizabeth Taylor, couldn't be present because of moviemaking commitments, he received an ovation for stating he was proud as a W&L man to be "guided every step of my career by the great Lee principles of excellence, duty and honor."

Arizona's Barry Goldwater, Senate patriarch and 1964 Republican candidate for president, brought several thousand delegates and spectators to their feet time and again with a keynote address filled with assaults on the "meat-headed liberals" and "knothead president" he regards as ruining the government.

"The word 'simple' just kills the press and the liberals," he began, "and when a conservative suggests that we try what has always worked, it scares the hell out of 'em."

America's decline in military power and its economic woes were Goldwater's chief targets as he slammed away at the Democrats. "We're losing. I don't like to lose." And the crowd roared when he jibed at President Carter: "I've known some pretty smart peanut farmers in my life. But this isn't one of them."

Henson Moore, the representative from Louisiana, followed Goldwater, describing the party platform as "a statement of principles and goals—almost a roadmap." A great electoral victor in a state famous for its affection for Democratic politicians—and the more eccentric, the better—Moore noted laughingly, "if you're a Republican in Louisiana, you'll be happy to speak to any group of two or more



Virginia's Governor Dalton; U.S. Sen. Warner (R-Va.), W&L '49

people—and if at least one doesn't walk away, you've scored a great success." As he hammered against governmental controls on individual liberties, the audience gave him a good deal more than the attention of a handful.

Saturday morning's session, where the actual nominating and balloting took place, began with a "unity" address by William E. Brock III, chairman of the Republican National Committee. "It's going to be a great year to be a Republican," began the W&L alumnus, who saw the Grand Old Party add some 300 state legislative seats in 1978, his first election year as national chairman.

Brock paid bitter tribute to the Carter administration: "Can you believe it? It's *good* news that we're in a recession? Well, I don't think it is, and I don't think most Republicans do. Recession is a euphemism for a man or woman out of work."

And at the climax of his speech—which, he said, was virtually the same as the one he will give at the real Republican convention this summer—he urged delegates to "elect a president, who for the first time in a long while, will have the integrity to demand the government live within its means."

Two other hit attractions throughout convention weekend were primarily the result of hard work by a single pair of students. Second-year law student Sam Flax (president of W&L's ODK chapter for next year) produced a *Mock Convention Journal* that old hands agree surpassed all of its predecessors in terms of creative design, as well as in providing a cornucopia of information. The convention hall itself—bunting, balloons, scoreboard, presidential portraits, and the like, not to mention telephones and typewriters—was the domain of facilities chairman Goetz Eaton. Judging by the heavy photo coverage of the convention hall in the newspapers, the pros found the Warner Center an exciting copy of the genuine article.

A real treat—and to Washington and Lee people the greatest sign of a superlative convention—came in the platform debate Friday night. To be sure, the

heavily Republican-conservative student body felt more at home with the slant of this year's platform than with its Democratic predecessor. But credit is due law student Edward Brown of Illinois and his committee, who distributed well-designed copies of the platform to the delegates and processed dozens of minority planks.

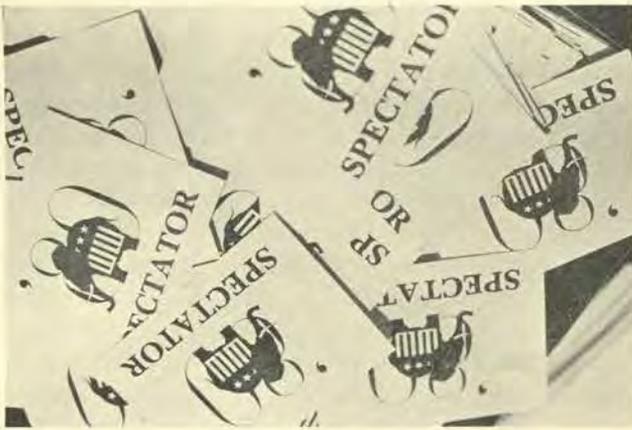
During platform deliberations, the Equal Rights Amendment was energetically voted down by the male delegates—amidst boos from their dates. Biff Martin, Ohio state chairman, led the crowd in the *W&L Swing*, to relieve tension over an anti-busing plank. Federally funded abortion was defeated by a large margin. The ayes had it on Social Security reform. And in a dramatic roll-call vote that closed the session, delegates actually rejected the legalization of marijuana, 576-432, with 240 abstentions.

The students retained their businesslike attitude throughout the Saturday nominating session. Phones stayed busy throughout the morning as state chairmen conferred with their real-life counterparts—numbers of whom stayed at home on Saturday to receive the calls. Much of the realism was made possible by a grant of more than \$20,000 from the Halton W. Sumners Foundation of Dallas, generous supporters of the Mock Convention for years. And the students were aware of that; when Sumners representatives were recognized by chairman Schoenfeld, the delegates jumped to their feet in a rousing ovation.

Of course, the roll calls had their usual moments of extravagant comedy. Florida described itself as the

GOP chairman Brock, W&L '53: *A voters' revolution in November*





“home of the newlywed and nearly dead.” Guam was “the gateway to the Orient and the home of the world’s largest Gucci retail store.” South Carolina cast its votes for president, “never afraid to succeed or secede.”

The general setting was the same for the whole vice

THE SUBLIME AND THE RIDICULOUS: FOOTNOTES TO THE MOCK CONVENTION

There wasn’t much of a horse race for the nomination at W&L’s 17th Mock Convention, but—scrupulously maintaining another venerable convention tradition—there was no lack of unscheduled drama and buffoonery.

At the parade reviewing stand, pyrotechnics magnate Francois Blot stands poised on the roof of the Robert E. Lee Hotel with a fireworks display—watching stray fragments set the Wisconsin float on fire. The incendiary float, which began as a salute to the dairy industry, is one of the last floats in the parade, and the city fire department’s truck (in line anyway to close the procession), is ready to douse the rather spectacular flames. But not to worry. Cool-headed spectators and delegates calmly douse the fire with glasses of milk, or other libations, even before the Lexington firefighters can move into action.

There was parade chaos even before the parade started. Fifteen minutes after it was supposed to have stepped off, when nothing had happened, convention officials learned that (1) the elephant had overslept, and there was some question about how to remedy such a situation and who would do it; (2) the ceremonial ribbon Sen. Warner was supposed to cut was too short to reach across Main Street; (3) it almost didn’t matter, because the Senator himself was late and almost stranded, having stopped in the fire lane at a supermarket outside Roanoke for a carton of milk,

presidential nominating session, which tapped Tennessee Sen. Howard Baker to be Reagan’s running-mate at the end of the first ballot—but not before almost everyone and everything under creation had been nominated or received a vote. Among the nominees were Jack Lord, star of the television series *Hawaii Five-0* (who darn near stole the nomination from Baker at one point), Strom Thurmond, Lowell Weicker, W&L history professor Holt Merchant, and the entire U.S. Olympic hockey team.

The votes were always ingenious, wildly funny, and a high-spirited end to the convention. Florida cast one each for aerobics coach Norm Lord, Rupert Latture and Fidel Castro. California remembered Johnny Carson and Ricardo Montalban. And Pennsylvania matched the most improbable political bedfellows of all, casting one vote each for Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo and “10” girl Bo Derek. But little Rhode Island had the last word: “In concern for our presidential nominee, we cast one vote for any national expert on gerontology.”

leaving his student driver momentarily alone—to be accosted, inevitably, by the police. (The driver’s response: “Listen, I’m driving a Senator to W&L!” The constabulary was about to put the student in the tank to sober up when Warner returned and settled the situation impressively.)

Clark Mollenhoff, the Pulitzered investigative reporter turned W&L prof, is overheard in the press gallery, muttering “Only one thing’s wrong. This is so darned much better organized than any real convention.”

When Jean Baxter—third-year law student, western states co-ordinator, the first woman ever to sit on a Mock Convention Steering Committee—is brought to the podium, the male delegates greet her with a barrage of jovial boos, then rise in a happy





ovation that lasted a full three minutes, longer than any other at the convention . . .

Everyone has his favorite thrill at the convention. It was difficult to find out what the big one was for treasurer Chip Arnold, until that consummate accountant let it be known: "I'm so glad. I got to use my new electronic calculator."

Greatest collective heart-stop of the weekend: *actually losing Ronald Reagan on the telephone* when he called to make his acceptance speech. About ten minutes of unbelievable tension, until the gracious Governor called a second time and asked "Don't you guys *want* me to say a few words?"

Judge Charles E. Long Jr., a member of the board of the Summers Foundation, overheard on the VIP balcony: "Every dollar we gave these men has been seen in the work they've put out. This really is practical politics and *I love it practical.*" (The judge later declared his intention to go back to the foundation and recommend that another \$20,000 be appropriated right away, to insure the stability and success of the 1984 W&L convention.)

State parade-float slogans—Hawaii's "Aloha y'all"; Iowa's "Cheaper Crude Or No More Food"; North Carolina's rueful "Number 10 in Lacrosse; Unrated in Love"; Idaho's "French-Fryin' Legion Marching Kazoo Band and Chowder Review Society";

A DAY IN THE POLITICAL TWILIGHT ZONE: OUR REPORTER VS. THE TEEMING MASSES

Each of the members of the Mock Convention staff has his own particular high point to remember—a parade float, a witty line during the roll call of the states, the moment Reagan went over the top and the balloons cascaded down.

But for three of us, getting Barry Goldwater off the podium is the one for the books.

The Warner Center was jammed beyond capacity

Wyoming's "Disco Buffalo."

And the states' self-characterizations during the roll-call votes! California: "Home of two great faults, the San Andreas and Jerry Brown." Indiana, asserting that its basketball team is the best in the nation, drawing the weekend's biggest spontaneous raspberry, and Oklahoma, "home of the finest football team money can buy," and Ohio, "home of Woody Hayes and the recession." Virginia, "home of nine presidents, counting Jefferson Davis," and Wisconsin, "unfortunately bound by law to cast six votes for that political chameleon, John Anderson." Connecticut, voting predominantly for Bush, declaring its interest in electing "experience that can't be found in a peanut field or on a movie set."

President Huntley, jumping from the car with Sen. Warner and Miss Virginia after their early leg of the parade, then walking back to the Robert E. Lee Hotel to see the rest of the pageant. As they cut across Main Street, co-chairman Simmons despaired: "That's gonna disrupt the entire parade. Everyone will mob around them." Junior W&L publicity official, semi-veteran of Mock Conventions of old, responds, "No one is even going to notice those three with those big floats on the street." No one did. Two points for junior PR man. And a crashing victory for the convention parade.

The articles in this special issue were written by Robert S. Keefe, director of the W&L news office, and M. Gray Coleman II, assistant director. Clark R. Mollenhoff, professor of journalism and Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter, collaborated on the political report; Ralph Ownby III, intern this spring in the news office, contributed coverage of speeches. Romulus T. Weatherman, director of publications, edited the copy with his usual jeweler's eye. The photographs are by Sally Mann, the University's much-honored chief photographer.

for the Goldwater keynote address—three thousand or more filled the floor, the bleachers, the press galley. The Senator's speech brought all assembled to their feet in a great ovation, and as Louisiana's Henson Moore stepped on to the podium to deliver the next speech of the evening, we thought things would quiet down and business continue.

Not so.

After about five minutes, *Journal* editor Sam Flax dropped into the platform chair nearest mine and said, "Catch the movement down there!" Just left of

the podium, a mob was forming—Goldwater groupies, autograph hunters, overanxious spectators—each frantic to have a minute with the grand old man of the Grand Old Party.

We laughed only a moment. Security lines were falling back fast, and we signaled co-chairman Sidney Simmons from across the hall.

"We think the Senator should leave the podium," we said.

Simmons replied, "He really wants to stay up here to hear Rep. Moore's talk"—and then he saw the throng around the podium, well in excess of a hundred pressing forward. "Let's get him out of here. How about the press gallery for a quick news conference?"

Neither Sidney nor Sam nor I ever had much experience in crowd control. In fact, none of us ever really believed that a Senator, however revered, could provoke a nearly hysterical assault from people usually quite sane. We know better now. Our education came quickly, once we began to leave the podium.

Sidney and two students on the security staff in front, then Goldwater, then Sam and I. Sounds pretty basic. It was, in fact, until the first fan made her presence conspicuous. A middle-aged female, clutching a set of glossy color photos of Goldwater, gushed, "I've kept these in my dresser ever since I campaigned for you in '64." Before she could finish, Goldwater was already being hit from the other side. This time a young woman, probably Hollins or Sweet Briar—"This fall will be my first time working with a big campaign. Would you autograph my *Journal*?" And the aging businessman—"Senator, I met you at the Press Club in New York ten years ago . . ."

By now, the mass of fans had separated Sidney and the security men from Goldwater. Sam's eyes were bigger than breadplates—and I was later told that I was shaking pretty bad, too, when I turned back to the podium. Rep. Moore was continuing with his speech; most of the delegates were listening closely. But at the rate things were going in our corner, the whole convention was going to grind to a halt.

And we couldn't move one step further.

It was Milton Colvin of the W&L politics faculty who came to the rescue. Rushing off the dais, he bellowed, "What do you people think you're doing? Resume your seats!" The shock value was effective—for about 10 seconds, just enough for us to catch up with the others and slither out of the hall.

But the fans weren't giving up yet. Some two hundred followed us out, and raced us for the elevators. We barely made it inside. Goldwater was calm, collected. He looked at us and grinned, "When you guys claim you provide authentic convention atmosphere, you don't mess around, do you?"

The press gallery was quieter—but about fifty degrees hotter. Within three minutes, the gentlemen

of the Fourth Estate had the Senator literally up against the wall with microphones from every direction. We three self-appointed guardians of his safety decided this was also too hectic. "The man must be tired, and he's got a plane to catch back to Washington tonight," someone urged.

We were about to break up the conference—but the huge bulk of Clark Mollenhoff got in our way. "He's got a book in his hands," one of the students nearby cackled. "do you suppose he's gonna present the Senator with a copy of *The President Who Failed* [Mollenhoff's newest book]?"

Not at all. Mollenhoff was bearing a copy of Goldwater's memoirs, *With No Apologies*. It turned out he's quite a fan of the Senator's. And once we got out of the gallery, heading for Goldwater's limousine (with 15 security guards by now—Sidney and Sam and I won't ever make that mistake twice), we discovered that the feeling is mutual.

"My God, that was Mollenhoff!" the Senator exclaimed. "I had forgotten entirely that he came to Washington and Lee. Hot damn, but he's a good newspaperman. One of the ones you can believe. You listen to me, gentlemen—anyone who has a chance to take a course from Clark Mollenhoff and doesn't is nothing but a fool." About half of the students around Goldwater had already done so. The rest probably signed up the next day.

This entire procedure has taken something like 20 minutes—but it seems like hours when we finally get to the Senator's car. Goldwater says a warm farewell to each of us. "Gave you a little excitement back there, didn't I?" A passer-by recognizes the Senator's voice, runs over, cries out: "Senator, why do these damn committee chairmen in D.C. feel they have to know everything?" The reply: "Well, sir, I guess you'd have to be a committee chairman to understand. It's kinda like having the power of the Lord." And he laughs, louder than ever before. "Once you've got it, it's hard to go back."

The car drives off. The crowd vanishes almost instantaneously. Security gets back to the job inside. And without attaching undue importance to this series of occurrences, Sidney and Sam and I now know why they call this weekend an exercise in "practical education."

—M.G.C.



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