

Three Years of Preparation

Since its beginning in 1908, the Mock Convention has been planned, organized and conducted by the students entirely. The work for the 1976 convention has been underway for three years under the direction of co-chairmen Reed Morgan and Rick Wolf. The initial task was to secure the necessary funds, which were gathered from alumni, parents and interested individuals throughout the country.

During the school year '75-76, the Mock Convention has brought prominent party leaders and journalists to the campus to speak about the pending convention in New York and how it relates to the students' efforts during the Mock Convention. As the year progressed, most W&L conventioners picked-up valuable insights, references and testable theories. The University also heard from two of the contenders, Terry Sanford and Rep. Morris Udall. More candidates are expected on campus before the May event.

The research for the nominating session for the convention is handled on three



fronts. The greatest responsibility lies with the student state chairmen. Through letters and telephone correspondence, each chairman and his staff evaluate the delegates-selection process in their respective states. Students must establish contacts with reliable state party leaders and other Democratic personnel who are likely to be selected as delegates. Naturally, the primaries and state conventions conducted after May (accounting for 50 per cent of the actual delegates) demand greater attention and a broader base of information to correctly forecast the results.

To aid the state chairman in defining trends of nation-wide significance, the Mock Convention has established a Credentials Committee consisting of regional coordinators who provide an overall perspective on the 15 months of campaigning. The committee starts with information coming from published reports and questionnaires returned by national Republican and Democratic officials. This is supplemented with material from labor leaders and lobbying groups.

Finally, the Mock Convention organizes a campaign for each of the announced candidates. By working with the respective campaign offices, students project the candidate's appeal and strategy and define his support through the primaries. The candidate survey people also make the student delegates aware of the positions of all the campaigns.

As the Mock Convention nears, students return to their sources and ask if the early primary trends will carry into the actual convention.

On May 8, in Doremus Gymnasium, Convention Hall, the thousands of hours of student work will be synthesized and the priorities debated for the first time. Delegates on the convention floor compare notes and try to rectify differences. Like any assembly, there is wheeling-and-dealing and Robert's Rules of Order as the conventioners acclimate themselves to the political atmosphere. Every delegate vote decision is supported by telephone calls to contacts throughout the nation.

A mock convention remains a valid, worthwhile undertaking for the Washington and Lee students, because the real national convention, whatever its faults and excesses, is still a characteristically American institution. No matter how we regard those institutions, we remain ignorant of them at our peril. One university community working alone cannot, of course, restructure American politics — but its members, working together, can learn about the nominating process in a manner that will permit them intelligently to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the national convention. Only in this manner can the individual student acquire the information and perspective to judge whether or not this process serves the purpose of finding the best national leadership.

"Working within the system" can be appealing only to those who understand the system.

Speakers to Address the Convention

Three prominent symbols of the Democrats' new appeal will deliver speeches before the W&L delegates at the two-day convention. Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire, Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers and Michigan Representative Don Riegle Jr. are regionally diversified leaders of their party. All have been mentioned as possible running mates for the 1976 Democrat nominee.

The Keynote Address will be delivered by Sen. William Proxmire during the convention's second session on Friday. Considered unorthodox at the beginning of his political career in 1957, Proxmire has led many investigations into unnecessary spending of the Pentagon and Congress. He was the first member of Congress openly to campaign against the Boeing Supersonic Transport. The project was finally killed in 1971. Today Proxmire is highly respected by his peers on Capitol Hill, and observers believe his influential role will expand with the announced retirement of Majority Leader Mike Mansfield.

Sen. Proxmire's appearance at the Mock Convention will take place after Congress recesses for the night. This stipulation was necessitated by the Senator's history-making perfect record on roll-call votes since April of 1966.

A man who could not live with the Nixonian-Republican philosophy, Don Riegle Jr. has been invited to give the Friday night Platform Speech. Riegle switched parties and became a Democrat in February of '73.



First elected to Congress in 1966, Riegle has been labeled as one of the young politicians to watch in the seventies by Time Magazine. Riegle's political conduct, like Proxmire's, was defined as unusual in relation to his constituency. Riegle, from the outset, paid close attention to the needs of the district's blacks. During his first two terms his liberal record became more pronounced; he won neutrality and then, in 1970, endorsement of the United Auto Workers—something previously unheard of for a Republican, especially in class-conscious Flint, Michigan.

Riegle opposed the war policies of both Presidents Johnson and Nixon. In 1972 he was the only Congressman to support Pete McCloskey's primary challenge against Nixon.

On Saturday morning before the convention begins the nominating process, Sen. Dale Bumpers will give what is labeled a 'Unity Address.' The purpose of the talk will be to define the requisites of the Democratic nominee. Serving as Governor from 1970 to 1974, Bumpers was an aggressive and imaginative leader of Arkansas. He forthrightly declared in his campaigns segregation to be 'immoral.' Bumpers initiated growth by establishing new industries in the state's high unemployment areas.

In 1974 Bumpers opposed J. William Fulbright for the Senate. Running with no out-of-state donations, Bumpers challenged Fulbright on a broad range of issues and easily won. In the past two years the Senator has earned the praise of the media and his fellow Congressmen for his political honesty.



Tentative Schedule

Parade — Friday May 7, 1976: 11:30 a.m.
Parade Marshall, Mr. Henry Howell

Opening Session — Friday, May 7: 2:30 p.m.
Doremus Gymnasium

- Call to Convention
- Invocation
- Parading of Colors
- Welcoming Remarks from:
 - W&L President Robert E. R. Huntley
 - Lexington Mayor Charles F. Phillips, Jr.
 - Virginia Attorney General Andrew P. Miller
- Opening Remarks of the Temporary Chairman, Richard S. Wolf
- Report of the Committee on Credentials, Harry W. Wellford
- Election of the Permanent Chairman and Vice Chairman
- Report of the Committee on Rules and Permanent Organization, A. Charles Thullberry, Jr.
- Benediction
- Adjournment

Platform Session — Friday, May 7: 7:30 p.m.

- Invocation
- Keynote Address, Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire
- Platform Address, Michigan Representative Donald Riegle, Jr.
- Report of the Committee on Resolutions and Platform, Stuart W. Coco
- Benediction
- Adjournment

Nominating Session — Saturday, May 8: 9:30 a.m.

- Invocation
- Parading of Colors
- Opening Address, Arkansas Senator Dale Bumpers
- Nominations for President
- Roll Call for Presidential Nomination
- Acceptance Speech for the Presidential Nominee
- Nominations for Vice-President
- Roll Call for Vice-Presidential Nomination
- Benediction
- Adjournment