

News Bureau
Washington and Lee University
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immediate release

LEXINGTON, Feb. 28---Senator Alben W. Barkley of Kentucky, former Vice-President of the United States, will be the keynote speaker at Washington and Lee University's 1956 Democratic Mock Convention on April 30-May 1.

Senator Barkley's acceptance of the university's invitation was announced today by Carl D. Swanson, intermediate law student from Kansas City, Mo., who is student chairman of the convention.

"We are extremely fortunate in having Senator Barkley come to Washington and Lee, and we feel his presence will lend added significance to what seems destined to be one of our best Mock Conventions ever," Swanson said in behalf of members of the student convention steering committee.

Although the topic of the keynoter's address is unknown at present, the possibility of a major political speech by a key Democratic spokesman is adding flavor to convention preparations. Because the Mock Convention always nominates for the party out of power, keynote speakers in the past have used the occasion to take healthy election-year swipes at the incumbent administration.

Senator Barkley's speech is scheduled for Monday afternoon, April 30, following the mammoth "kick-off" parade, scheduled to begin at 2 p. m.

This year's mock balloting will mark the first time Washington and Lee students have conducted a Democratic convention since 1932 when they correctly chose Franklin D. Roosevelt as the party standard-bearer. The Mock Convention tradition at Washington and Lee began in 1908, and except for 1920 and 1944, it has been a quadrennial event which grows in interest and spectacle each time it is held.

Besides giving W & L students a "do-it-yourself" experience at nominating a presidential candidate, the convention is watched closely by politicians and

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political experts. The method by which the balloting is carried out excludes personal preference by student delegates and emphasizes adherence to probable courses of action which state and territorial delegations will follow at the summer bona fide convention.

For Barkley, the role of a keynote speaker will not be new. He had the job at the real Democratic convention in Philadelphia in 1948 which saw him win the nomination for the vice-presidency.

The prototype of the ideal American politician, complete with log cabin birthplace, Senator Barkley is best remembered for his popularization of the term "Veep" in reference to the nation's second highest elective office.

After having been prominently mentioned as a possible presidential candidate in 1952, he was briefly out of the public spotlight until 1954 when he regained his Senate seat with defeating incumbent Republican Senator John Sherman Cooper.

Barkley is now in his fifth term as a senator, having been elected first in 1926. He was majority leader from 1937 to 47 and minority leader 1947-49.

In 1932, he served as temporary chairman of the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, and in 1936 he held the same position in Philadelphia. He was permanent chairman at Chicago in 1940, and again temporary chairman at Philadelphia in 1948.