

*Negroes*

# BLACK CANDIDATES

Southern Campaign Experiences

By Julian Bond

Library

JUL 16 1969

The New York Times

Voter Education Project  
Southern Regional Council, Inc.  
Atlanta, Georgia

# FOREWORD

Early in 1968, the Voter Education Project engaged Julian Bond to make a study of how selected black candidates had run their campaigns. The plan, which was originally suggested to VEP by Mr. Bond, called for interviewing a number of recent candidates. These interviews then would become the heart of a booklet that could be used as a guide by other black candidates in the South.

Dozens of races were studied in the search for a balance of campaign circumstances so that a wide range of potential candidates could find a campaign to relate to their own. Many more were interviewed than appear in the final publication.

Ten of those whose stories appear sought office in rural areas or small towns and the rest ran in cities. Five of these had lost their races. Thirteen—of whom five lost previous or subsequent campaigns—were holding office at the time Mr. Bond talked to them. One had been elected but was removed from office on a charge which was later struck down by the courts.

Mr. Bond's interviews, conducted in person and transcribed on a tape recorder in the summer of 1968, centered on several questions: What was the racial makeup of your district? What motivated you to run? How did you raise funds, and what campaign tactics did you use? What kind of help did your campaign get from blacks, whites, paid workers or political party? What effect did your running have on the Negro community and prospective black candidates? Why do you think you won or lost your race? And what advice would you give to other black candidates?

Their answers to these and related questions are set down in these chapters exactly as they responded to Mr. Bond.

The booklet's conclusion, written by VEP research director Marvin Wall, summarizes not only the experiences of the persons interviewed by Mr. Bond but also the problems of black candidates to which the VEP has been a witness over the last several years.

There is perhaps no better illustration of the problems and promise of the black elected officials in the South than the career of Julian Bond himself.

First elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 1965, he was twice refused his seat by the members of the House of Representatives because of his public concurrence with a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee denunciation of the war in Vietnam. He was elected three times within a 12-month period before the U. S. Supreme Court ordered the House to seat him at the 1967 session.

Completing his work on this booklet in the mid-summer of 1968, Mr. Bond went on to become co-chairman of a racially integrated group which challenged the regular Georgia delegation to the Democratic National Convention in August. In Chicago, amid chants of "Jul-ian Bond, Jul-ian Bond," dissident Democrats proposed his name for the office of vice president of the United States.

Although he declined to be nominated—at 28 he was seven years below the constitutionally required age—he nevertheless received 48½ votes. Today he is probably the best known of the South's 400 black elected officials.

The Voter Education Project of the Southern Regional Council wishes to stress that none of the material presented herein is intended to be partisan in any way. On the contrary, it is intended as a representative sampling of experiences, and for that reason a wide variety of candidates was interviewed. Our purpose was to collect material to assist prospective black candidates in need of assistance, feeling as we do that their full participation in the political process means a healthier democracy.

VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

Director

Voter Education Project

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . . .	Page 1
------------------------	--------

### Rural Candidates

Lucius Amerson . . . . .	Page 3
Felton J. Capel . . . . .	Page 6
Mrs. Geneva Collins . . . . .	Page 7
Eddie Davis . . . . .	Page 8
Charles Evers . . . . .	Page 10
James Jolliff Jr. . . . .	Page 13
Jesse E. Lawrence . . . . .	Page 15
Ledell Mackie . . . . .	Page 16
Dan Nixon . . . . .	Page 18
Peter Smith . . . . .	Page 19

### Urban Candidates

Elijah Coleman . . . . .	Page 23
F. Malcolm Cunningham . . . . .	Page 25
Earl M. Johnson . . . . .	Page 27
Miss Barbara Jordan . . . . .	Page 30
Mrs. Athalie Range . . . . .	Page 32
Clarence L. Townes . . . . .	Page 35
Horace T. Ward . . . . .	Page 38
Q. V. Williamson . . . . .	Page 41
Thomas E. Wrenn . . . . .	Page 44

SUMMARY . . . . .	Page 47
-------------------	---------



# INTRODUCTION

This booklet will not tell anyone how to get elected. It does tell how a group of black people—two civil rights workers, a school bus driver, some lawyers, businessmen, farmers and others—ran their election campaigns, as they recall it.

The campaigns described here took place between Negroes or with Negroes running against whites in both rural and urban sections of the South. They ran for offices ranging from magistrate to U.S. Congress. Some won and some did not.

Their stories are printed here from taped interviews in which they answered questions about the racial makeup of their districts, the cost of their campaigns, their methods of winning votes, the mistakes they made and their advice to other black candidates. Except for brief biographical introductions, all of the accounts are in the words of the candidates themselves.

We hope that you, the reader, can learn from this booklet. You may read of mistakes you won't want to make. You may read of successful attempts made in another part of the South that could work in your part as well.

Most important, you will learn, we hope, that it *can* be done. It has been done before, and it will be done again. And you may be the person in your community to do it.

JULIAN BOND  
Atlanta, 1968



# Rural Candidates



## Lucius Amerson

*When Lucius Amerson was elected sheriff of Macon County, Ala., in 1966, he became the first Negro recorded to hold that office in a Deep South state since Reconstruction. Amerson was born in Clinton, Ala., in 1933 and attended Tuskegee Institute for three years.*

The Negro-white population ratio in Macon County is seven-to-one. Negroes are about 23,000 in the county. Registered voters are 12,000. From 7,000 to 8,000 are Negroes.

In the first primary, I got 87 votes more than my nearest opponent, in the runoff I got 387 and in the general election I got 1,800. Each election I got more and more votes. My opponents were white. There were four of us in the race.

What motivated me to run for office in Alabama and more especially for the position of sheriff was the fact that it is time for Negroes to start participating more in political action. Negroes must run for these offices, they must run to win, and they must have a lot of determination and a lot of courage. I encourage all Negroes in the South, where they have an oppor-

tunity, to run for office.

I didn't know if I could win, but it was a matter of trying as hard as I could. There was a lot of apathy among the Negroes in the community. They didn't know what would happen if a Negro got elected sheriff, and of course some felt that a Negro just possibly could not do the job or that he would not get the cooperation from the white element.

This is something that I would like to point out to other Negroes running for office in the South, in Alabama or elsewhere: You cannot rely on what people particularly want you to do. You have to make up your own mind, you have to have determination, and you can't think in terms of what element in the community is going to like it. The fact is that you are an American and a citizen and a registered voter, and you have just as much right to run for these offices as anyone else.

When I ran for office, I didn't have any experience at all in running and didn't know a lot of techniques or how to solicit funds. A person who has a nominal amount of funds of his own could probably wage a pretty good campaign. There will be a lot of people who will encourage you, and they will solicit funds for you. It depends on how wide an area you have to cover and how many mass meetings you go to where you have to give out literature or printed cards or posters, or whether you're going to utilize the news media or TV or radio or the newspaper. It costs a lot of money, because this is one way these media have of making money—off of political figures.

In Macon County, Tuskegee Institute has a lot of white instructors who were from other parts of the country serving as poll watchers and passing out campaign literature. If you can get the right type of white people to help you, the kind who really want to see things progress, and really have no feelings one way or the other—that is, they just want to see a good man win—they will help you actively. They'll also help you financially, behind the scenes.

My campaign organization consisted largely of myself and about four other key persons when I first started out. After the campaign got under way, more people became interested and more people started talking in my behalf. I did not have any paid workers. They worked because they wanted better law enforcement and they wanted to see me win. They had never known in their lifetime of a Negro being elected sheriff, and this was one time when it could happen. I had a lot of volunteers after the runoff election when I won the Democratic nomination.

The type of campaign material I used was little personalized cards, pamphlets and flysheets, the sort of sheet where you hand it to a person and he looks at it, folds it up and puts it in his pocket or looks at it and remembers. I used the radio; and I used a loudspeaker on my car, as well as a sign mounted on top of my car. I moved around quite a bit, shaking hands and going all over the county, playing a combination of music and talking. The Democratic Party did not help out much in the way of funds or printed material. Toward the end of the campaign, the Democratic National Committee from Washington did send in some bumper stickers.

If at the end of this term, if I have made up my mind to run for sheriff or some other office, perhaps I would conduct it the same way, the same

method I used before, except that I would be more vigorous at it. I would not take for granted that Negroes are going to vote for me simply because I've already been in the office or because I'm a Negro. It would require my going back, contacting all of those people that I contacted before, as well as those I did not contact the other time. I most certainly will be trying to get white votes as well as Negro votes, even though the Negro people are in a majority. I'm interested in representing all of the people of Macon County as sheriff, and I will be soliciting all the votes.

I won because I had determination and because the people knew I could bring a better day in Macon County as far as law enforcement and protection go. I wouldn't say I had more money than my opponent, I wouldn't say I had less. His method of campaigning was not as good as mine; and, of course, he was quite reluctant about going into certain segments of the community. It was the sort of thing where many people who have held public office for many years have not been able to go into the Negro community and sincerely solicit votes. They've always been dropping off a few cards with key people, people who are supposed to be leaders in the community, people who are supposed to have influence over the masses.

You will find as the years go by, people are going to get away from having centralized community leaders, preachers and so forth. Everybody, as time goes on, is going to have the ability to think for themselves; and they're not going to rely too much on endorsements, because many times some Negro leaders in the community give out the wrong kind of endorsement simply because they've received some kind of compensation to do so. It pays you to wage your own campaign in your own way.

The most important thing is to meet the people personally. You cannot expect someone to tell them for you, you cannot expect to throw out a few cards in a cafe or a poolroom or a service station. You have to get around to these churches on every meeting day; you've got to meet the people, rich, poor, young and old; you've got to meet the kids, the ones in elementary school, the ones in high school, in college. It pays to meet the people personally and shake their hand.

The immediate effect of my campaigning was that I had to prove to people beyond a reasonable doubt that Negroes could do these jobs and that not a lot of education is required in order to do a lot of these jobs. It is indicated from a survey which I made that there are many people doing these jobs now who never finished high school. The registration in my county was increased by my election. Many people who did not have enough initiative to come up to the courthouse and get registered before my election thought it was a good idea to do so.

I strongly encourage Negroes to participate in all areas of public life—that is, running for state senate and house of representatives, as well as for mayor of cities, sheriff of counties, commissioner of boards of revenue, city councilman, school board, tax collector, tax assessor, anything to be of service.

The only advice I can give to other Negro candidates is that it's a good thing—you should always be fair and square with the people, and they will never forget you for it.



## Felton J. Capel

*Felton J. Capel, mayor pro tem of Southern Pines, N. C., was first elected to the city council in 1959 and has been re-elected four consecutive times. He was city treasurer from 1963 until 1965. Mr. Capel, a native of Ellerbe, N. C., attended Hampton Institute and is sales director of a metalcraft corporation.*



Southern Pines has a population of 5,198 with 37 per cent Negro. The ratio of registered whites to Negroes is about two-to-one. Approximately 70 per cent of the registered Negroes vote at each town election. In past elections we have had only one Negro candidate seeking one of the five council seats during an election. Each time I have been a candidate I have had the endorsement of the Civic Club of the Negro community before filing.

Before I became a candidate, I had served as commander of the local VFW Post, was an active member of First Missionary Baptist Church, and was president of the West Southern Pines Civic Club.

The West Southern Pines Civic Club is an organization whose membership consists of all social, professional and religious groups in the community. The purpose of the Civic Club is to promote progress in all phases of community life and serve as the voice of the Negro community on matters to be brought before the city council, board of education and other policy-making bodies.

In my first election there were 13 men seeking the five council seats. I was the only Negro and received the third highest number of votes.

I was not aware of any organized opposition to my candidacy because of my being a Negro, but I assume that there were feelings. I have tried to serve the entire town. I felt that I could not help the Negro community without helping the white community at the same time. Being a Negro, I had an obligation to bring out the things that were needed but had not been brought before the people.

Streets in the Negro community were in deplorable condition and presented a burden on the town budget to maintain. An ordinance prevented permanent surfacing without special taxation by property owners. This ordinance had to be changed. We also felt the need of Negro policemen.

My chances of winning depended upon my getting most of the Negro vote and a percentage of the white vote.

My first year we estimated that I received approximately 20 per cent of the white vote. This estimation was based on my total votes received less the number of Negroes who voted.

Most of my campaign funds and volunteer work came from the Negro community. We had housewives canvassing and making telephone calls, and high school students, Boy Scouts and other youth groups distributing campaign material for us. We organized all city blocks with captains and got volunteers to use their automobiles for transportation. Electing a black

man was a victory for the Negro community, and we tried to get everyone involved. Unity was the key word.

Total involvement by everyone was a must. The campaign united the Negroes, and the community was awakened to the power and strength of the vote.

Southern Pines is the only town in Moore or surrounding counties that has a Negro elected official in any capacity. Presently in Southern Pines Negroes serve on all committees and boards and participate in the affairs of government.

Negroes planning to enter politics should have a background of public service and be prepared to give up time with family and give up personal interests to serve their fellow citizens. The Negro community should then be organized and mobilized for action. The candidate should understand that he is to represent the views of the Negro community. He should be selected by the Negro community and not be self-appointed or selected by the white community to be the candidate to represent the Negroes. Before any candidate files for office, he should bring together the leaders in the Negro community and get their endorsement. Campaign workers should include representatives from all segments of the population.

You should campaign on issues that will benefit the entire town as well as the Negro community. Point out conditions that will help the town but that have been neglected by the absence of Negro representation. Pledge to do something about this neglect.



### Mrs. Geneva Collins

*Mrs. Geneva Collins was elected chancery clerk of Claiborne County, Miss., in December, 1967. Mrs. Collins was born in Port Gibson, Miss., in 1922 and was graduated from Alcorn A&M College in Lorman, Miss. She completed work on a master's degree at Tennessee A&I University.*

There were 8,239 Negroes to 2,600 whites. That was the population. The whites had 1,679 voters, and we had 2,908. I only had one opponent, and he was white.

One of the most important things that motivated me to run for office is that the Negro here in our county is a group of people without representation. Our people need inspirational leaders. The first step is difficult, you know. We just don't have many people who are willing to take the first step. I felt like I would win. Our people here are strongly together, and they felt like they wanted some representation.

Most of the campaign money came from inside the community. A few people gave donations from the outside. If any white people did help me, I don't know anything about it.

We organized a political action committee and got volunteer help. These people worked together. We had barbecues and campaign speeches where

we raised funds. After we got the funds, we got together and decided what kind of materials we would use, such as billboards. Some of us sent out letters, and we used different other things such as match books. We couldn't possibly have afforded any paid workers.

I don't think it would have made any difference if I'd been an independent. With the support I had, we just outnumbered them.

Right now I don't see too much I'd do differently. I made campaign speeches and things like that. My opponent didn't do anything that I know of.

It seemed to give the Negro race the feeling that they had made the first step toward overcoming discrimination, poverty and neglect in every area. They feel like they can progress, and this in itself made more people run for public office. It really helped them and encouraged them. And we will have more each time to come in and register who didn't have time, didn't have interest before, who just didn't pay it any attention.

As for advice, the only thing I would say that possibly could help would be that preparation comes first. You've got to prepare for these positions, you know. Of course, we don't have too many ways we can prepare; but I feel if you give the people facts about what you are saying, this is the best advice that I could give them. And everything else will be taken care of.

## Eddie Davis

*Eddie Davis was elected police juror of West Feliciana Parish, La., in November, 1967. Born in West Feliciana in 1909, Mr. Davis was educated at St. Paul B.C. Church School and is employed as a school bus driver.*



There were 136 registered Negro voters and 26 whites. I ran against a white man who had been in office for more than 15 years.

I'd worked hard with the civil rights movement—I started with it in 1963. We had such a hard time registering and there were so many other things we had problems with. We had no voice in the courthouse; we didn't have a voice in anything that we undertook to do. All days were the white man's day; the Negroes had no voice in anything. We just had to do what the white man said.

I made up my mind that whenever I got in power, got to be a registered voter, I would run for office. After I registered and voted, there came up an election; and I decided I would run for something. It didn't make any difference what it was; if it was something I could manage, I was going to run, whether I won or lost. I was doing it to let the white man know that the Negroes in my community wanted their rights. Not for what I could get out of it; I wasn't running for that. I was only running to develop my race, so I decided to run.

I visited my meetings regularly. I went around and talked to the people and showed them it was a new day, it wasn't like it used to be. I asked them if I would run, would they support me? They all told me yes. I didn't make any big talk about it. I just talked to people as I went to meetings. They thought I would make a good police juror, or a good sheriff, or anything that I undertook to run for. But I told them, the police juror, I would try that first and see how it worked out; and then I might try the high sheriff.

Just a few Negroes told me not to run, about four or five. There wasn't enough to hurt. But the majority pushed me on. The campaign money came from my ward. They put on parties, they raised the money. I didn't have to put up anything.

We invited people from other wards, we invited the whites. I had quite a few volunteers. They just volunteered and came on in. What happened was that they so admired my nerve to run, that they just backed me up. They were surprised I had the nerve to stick my neck out and run for office.

I had cards made, my picture on them. I had on the back my platform, what I would do if I got elected. There were so many things that the people needed and didn't get, such as commodities and better roads. That was my platform—to see that the ones who were in need of commodities or food stamps would get them. Trade schools. I told them I was 100 per cent with anything that would develop my parish.

I don't think I could find a better way than the way I did it. I went along with the white people. I had plenty of them to come to me and ask me why I ran. I talked to them nice and told them, but I told them facts. And after I got elected, I had them come to my house. A white man came to my house and asked me why I wanted that office and told me how good they were to us. I told him the time has come for the Negro people to develop themselves.

The man I was running against did it a little different from me. I didn't go from door to door. He did, after he found out about me. He wasn't too particular; he was an old fellow, a nice man. We get along like two brothers. He wasn't even going to come out, but the white people asked him to come out. They supported him. He went from door to door, asking the people to vote for him. I never went door to door. I only made my speeches in little parties and at our lodge hall where the voters league would meet about once a week.

I would tell the people what I would do, tell them to stay together. That's the only way we're going to advance—to stay together, to vote for the black man. I said: "There are some white folks you can vote for, but be sure, when your color runs for office, be sure to vote for him. When you go in the booth, you don't have to tell the white man you're going to vote for me. Let your conscience be your guide. You don't have to tell anyone who you voted for; just go and vote, and go home and hush your mouth. I know some of you are living on these white people's places. You're going to tell them you'll vote for them, but you don't have to do it."

"Everybody's got the go-ahead gift now. The white man has changed. He has made up his mind to go along with us."



If I was going to give some advice, I would tell them this: When you get out there, if you're going to run, stand up and be true to your people. Don't let the white man lead you. If you're going to do that, then I wouldn't run. If you're going to run for office you've got to be a clean man. You ought to stand up to what you tell the people. Now don't tell the people any more than that.

To run for office, you've got to be polite to people, give everybody a smile. You've got to be smiling with everybody, the white and the colored. If you think people won't vote for you, go out and talk to them. Talk to the leading people, the strong people. Talk to the preachers. But most preachers won't cooperate with you. I never got more than one or two preachers to cooperate with me.

You can't do it by yourself. You have to have some strong friends. You have your mind made up. Sometimes when I can't change a fellow's mind, I have a friend who can change his mind. Those things help.

## Charles Evers

*Charles Evers took a leave of absence as field director of the Mississippi NAACP in February, 1968, to run for Congress from the state's Third District. Born in Decatur, Miss., in 1922, Mr. Evers was graduated from Alcorn A&M College.*



The whites had us out-numbered racially about 120,000 to about 75,000, I guess. In the first primary I had 30,000 to 35,000 votes, I believe it was, and my closest opponent had about 28,000. In the runoff, there were about 45,000 votes for me, and my opponent was about 82,000.

Actually, I never wanted to run for public office. I feel I can do more in civil rights and in business than I can in politics. But we got to the point where there was nobody else in the district, and they said you gotta run. I refused for two weeks. We had meetings for two weeks, the whole district. Finally, one old lady was sitting there, and this was what really changed my whole feeling. She said, "Mr. Evers, we have done everything you have ever asked us to do. We have gone to jail with you, we've marched with you and we picketed with you. We have boycotted for you, we have done anything you asked us. Now we are asking you to do one thing for us and you are refusing."

Well, that did it. I said if that is the way you feel, then I am going to run.

I guess there were some who thought I shouldn't run, because they all didn't vote for me. But no one actually came out publicly and confronted me and told me not to. It was a unanimous decision from the counties that we have in this district: I was the number-one choice. For that reason, I felt like I had a majority of the Negroes with me.

Plenty of them didn't vote; there are many whites who don't vote. I don't

think it was because I ran. I think they just don't care enough, and they don't know the importance of voting. The thing we gotta work on now is to get our people used to going to the polls and that was another reason why I ran. I had to go in and break the ice so that it would give us, my people, something to vote for, someone to vote for. And maybe, after I decided I would run, I could uncover some things that people didn't know about, both black and white, and maybe change some of the minds and attitudes of some of the whites.

Well, you wouldn't believe it; we raised my campaign money mostly ourselves. I wouldn't accept much big out-of-state money. I get a sort of feeling on that. I wouldn't accept any big funds, because I didn't want anybody to have any strings on me, had I won. So I mostly raised it in churches, around on street corners, and we had street rallies; and I had quite a few people across the country to mail me dollars and dollars-and-a-half and five dollars, like that. But most of my money came from right here, from the poor people here—50 cents and 25 cents. I ran a very cheap campaign, I did that.

I didn't do any billboards. We did a lot of handbills, we did a lot of bumper stickers—you know, the cheap way of doing things. Then we did door-to-door, town-to-town, county-to-county. We marched up and down the street with a band. A lot of school bands: almost every county, just about, furnished me their band. They were marching up and down the street playing, and that got a lot of people out.

Then I would go up and down the street and visit as many poor people as I could find, particularly those who were bed-ridden. That's just the way we did it. I went into all the pool halls, honky-tonks every day and had dinner in all the rough Negro restaurants. I'd carry four or five and buy dinners in different places. And if someone was drinking beer, I would buy a quart of beer—things of that sort. It was more or less a person-to-person sort of thing.

I must have had about 20 or 25 whites in all working really openly for me. We were able to count 3,600 white votes which were in predominantly white precincts. So we know that we got at least 3,000 to 4,000 white votes in the run-off. There was quite a bit of white participation—more than you would expect, particularly for me, and then in Mississippi, too.

I think the only person who got paid was a full-time secretary, who got out most of the memos. The rest were college kids and high school kids and housewives.

We had quite a few of our security boys—we don't name them—but they did most of the advance guard, going in and getting things clear. For instance, if I had to be there at two o'clock, we mostly had a group that went in that morning around 10 to check out the area and be around there before the people.

Then we set up what we called the campaign canvass committee, the campaign committee, the finance committee, the telephone committee, and the program committee, made up within the organization. It was named the Political Action Group. It was all volunteer. We spent well less than \$20,000 on both the campaigns, so you know we didn't spend much money.

And most of that was on TV, radio, handbills, bumper stickers, placards and telephone. So you see we couldn't have done much to run a whole congressional campaign, in both primaries, with less than \$20,000.

We are trying to change this Democratic racism structure, this white supremacy. I feel maybe I'm being criticized by a lot of people, but I feel always to change anything is to become a part of it and destroy it from within. That is why I ran as a Democrat, to let them know that we are challenging them, that we will meet them head-on. We also wanted to let them know that they didn't have the Democratic Party to themselves anymore, that every time they run, they are going to have to beat one of us. And if they stay at home, we are going to beat them. That's why I ran, because I know that the Democratic Party has to be changed in Mississippi, and I just can't see where a third party can make it. And I feel like we gotta become a part of the two major parties and make them right, and we can't make them right by staying on the outside cussing them. We gotta get in there and fight for what we believe in, fight for what we know our people are entitled to, and settle for nothing less.

Another reason why I ran—and I am not being braggadocious because I was able to run financially—I didn't have to worry about somebody foreclosing me, somebody putting a lien against something that I may own. They couldn't buy me off. They offered me \$50,000 dollars to get out. So now if I had been hungry and needed something, that would have been a heck of a temptation. So that was another reason I wanted to run.

I also ran because I wanted to prove to Negroes that a Negro can run and they can win if they get out, because we won the first time. If they didn't have that crazy (runoff) law, I would be in Washington now. I might have never been re-elected but I certainly would have been up there now getting some poverty programs and some low-income housing and getting some work programs from industry in here for our people. By this law they have, a Negro will never win here in Mississippi.

I don't know of anything I'd really do differently. I don't know whether I could. We ran a hard, clean race, we talked about nothing but the issues. I didn't even bring the white folks up, because I didn't want to give them any credit at all. I never discuss them. All I discussed was what we gotta have and what we are gonna do and how we are going to change the system and what we are going to do for the poor people. I mostly ran a poor people's campaign. And I think mostly the white votes I got were poor whites, because they know that they are subjected to the same type of things that Negroes are — maybe on a different basis, but it is still the same denial and discrimination.

I don't know of anything other than that I possibly would do. I might go a little more on TV, because this gets over to people better. And you can get to more people than like I did—door-to-door, house-to-house, street-to-street, county-to-county, town-to-town—and you can get on TV for 15 minutes and you can get to more people than you can in the whole six months. That may be the only thing that I would add to, is try to get money and get TV time to really spell out the issues—what we really want and what we gotta have.

I think it (the campaign) meant one of the greatest things that you could mention. It gave them (Negroes) hope, because for a while Negroes believed that the vote didn't count; and the mere fact that we won the first primary. . . . you could just see it. Since my election we have been able to register in Hinds County alone over 2,000 Negroes. That has just been in a little over a month, and we are doing it all over the district. So we are encouraging Negroes to go out and register, because they thought I was going to run again in November and they are trying to get ready so that they can vote for me in November. It inspired Negroes to become more involved in politics. And it is gonna help to elect Negroes and change that rotten system.

Don't become a racist. Talk about the issues and the problems of the Negroes and what you gonna do to change them. Once you are elected, don't turn white and forget the Negro. I wouldn't accept many invitations. I turned down hundreds from big cities because Negroes there (and I hate to say this) Negroes in most cities are mostly there for good times and to pop off and don't really want to go out and fight for it, like Southside Chicago, Westside Chicago. If Negroes would get together in those places, they could control and rule something. My feeling is that Negroes gotta control somewhere in America, and we've dropped anchor in these three counties. We are going to control these three counties in the next ten years. There is no question about it.

My advice is to control something. Control the economics of the county, control the ballot of the county, the politics of the county—in other words, control the entire county where we are predominant.

In Mississippi we have 29 counties predominantly Negro. We are going for broke.

We don't holler Black Power—but watch it!



### James Jolliff Jr.

*James Jolliff Jr. was born in Wilkinson County, Miss., in 1941. Mr. Jolliff was graduated with honors from Natchez Junior College in Natchez. In November, 1967, he was elected to the Wilkinson County Board of Supervisors, but was removed from his seat after being convicted of a felony. However, he appealed his conviction and later was reinstated.*

There were about 1,350 Negroes registered in the district I ran in and about 750 whites. I ran against two whites and one Negro.

I decided to run for office simply because of the fact that the Board of Supervisors has very influential powers in the state of Mississippi. They promise Negroes they will fix or gravel their roads, but they never promise anything on the administrative side, such as appointing Negroes to the welfare department, appointing Negroes to various other departments in the county—the library board and others like that. I felt that I, as a Negro,



would be able to see the inside of the Board of Supervisors more than I could just by being president of the NAACP.

I didn't find any Negroes against me because they said it wasn't time for a Negro to run. But I did find some against me because I had made some enemies—Negroes—as president of the NAACP. So far as the idea of qualifications, nobody could fault me, because I had better qualifications than the other three combined.

In the August primary, people at rallies and campaign meetings raised money, mostly for gas. Charles Evers gave us bumper stickers and leaflets to pass out. That was sponsored by people from the North. During the November general election I ran against a white man, and funds came from Michigan, New York, California and various other places.

I would say I got about 30 white votes each time I ran. There were young people and old in the campaign together. Some of the young people would go to church and Sunday school to campaign. The old people would do the same thing. Some of the young children would campaign with teachers at school. They weren't paid—just a volunteer effort.

In the general election in November, I used signs saying: "Elect James Jolliff as Supervisor, First District, Wilkinson County. Old Enough To Know; Young Enough To Go. Former Radio Announcer—Newspaper Man."

I ran as a Democrat. The reason wasn't because I'm that much in love with the Mississippi Democrats, but I more or less like the national Democratic Party better than I do the Republican. I had some whites approach me to run on the Republican ticket, but I always thought the Republicans want to remain with the status quo. I couldn't see myself joining another minority in Mississippi, the Republicans. So I decided to run as a Democrat to try to break down racial barriers in the state Democratic Party.

There's nothing I'd do differently. I'd do the same thing that I did before. I'd run on the same platform that I ran on before. I must admit that in order to win in the South, you've got to convince a lot of Negroes who are illiterate and who don't seem to know the importance of Negroes being in office. You have to more or less run a racist campaign, in a way of speaking. You have to prove that you have done a lot for him. You've got to say you've done more to help Negroes than this white man has. You say, "Well, I got out there and campaigned and begged you to register to vote. Has any white man done that?"

That's the way I ran my campaign. I'd ask if the incumbent had been here today, and they'd say "Yeah." "Did he ever come to your house and tell you to go to the courthouse and register?" "No." "Well," I'd say, "I'm here to ask you to register and to ask you to vote for me." "Well, that's two different things. I never thought of it that way."

The effect my election had on the Negro people was rejoicing! For the first time since Reconstruction, a Negro would be a supervisor. This county has 8,000 Negroes and 2,000 whites, and a Negro has never even been dog-catcher in this county.

I would give this simple advice: Go out and mingle with the people and don't sit in your office and depend on your people. Go out to churches, go

out to other civic organizations and talk to the people. Tell them that slogan, "Black Power," simply means for the people to get economic power and political power. Once you have this, you don't have to go around the country screaming "Black Power." You've really got the power when you've got that ballot. You can put Negroes in office and you can do something to really help Negroes and whites, because Negroes will never do the things that the white man has done to him.



### Jesse E. Lawrence

*Jesse E. Lawrence was an unsuccessful candidate for the South Carolina House of Representatives from Williamsburg County in June, 1966. Mr. Lawrence, a life insurance agent, was born in Salters, S. C., in 1917.*

I decided to run due to the fact that the officials we had elected before weren't doing anything for our people. I decided to run to see whether or not I could do anything for them.

The Williamsburg County Voters League backed all the candidates who ran in 1966. We had a hard time getting registered, you see. I was working with the groups that were trying to get all the Negroes in the county registered at that time. After we had put in all this effort, that, too, encouraged us to put someone in the race.

I was selected by the Williamsburg County Voters League to be one of the candidates to run for House of Representatives from Williamsburg County.

We had approximately 6,000 Negroes registered. There's a funny thing here. At that time there were about 6,000 whites eligible to register, but they had about 9,000 registered to vote, almost 110 per cent.

We set up a campaign organization. We had a campaign manager who set up meetings at various centers—community centers and churches such as we have here. Then all the candidates came to these meetings and made little campaign speeches to the people who were there.

We had the paper carry some articles on the candidates. We made it our business to be at all of the meetings that were set up and encouraged the registered voters to vote for us.

We had some people here from CORE at the time and they were helping us. The only thing that it cost us at the time was \$150 for qualifying, and the Williamsburg County Voters League put that up. It didn't cost me anything but time and a little money.

We used posters. We ran off some flysheets. We distributed them around every meeting we went to. These were gotten out by the Williamsburg County Voters League.

No one discouraged us in so many words, but they didn't help us either.

They'd start off by saying it's best to run just one candidate. We explained that the reason we ran two was that we had no assurance that the whites would vote for one of us at all. Of course, they had about seven people in the race in the primary.

One local white man gave us some money to put in the pot. No whites said anything concerning us not running.

The white candidates didn't come out openly and campaign among the Negroes at all. They had one meeting at the courthouse, and I didn't attend that meeting. But other than that, they didn't come out and get on the stump at all.

I made statements at our meeting that I would accept anybody who was willing to give me their vote, but I didn't get out and make any appeal for white votes or go on the radio or anything like that.

I had 4,186 votes. In the primary runoff, I had around 5,000 votes. The funny part about the thing, when we protested the runoff, our count varied a lot. We got an opportunity to go through the records, and we found that there were a lot of irregularities in the primary runoff.

If I gave advice, I would say to get someone who is dedicated to the cause of electing some Negro to represent them at the polls as a poll worker—someone who is up on the laws of how elections are supposed to be run. They should follow the law to the letter.

### Ledell Mackie

*Ledell Mackie, a farmer in St. Francisville, La., was elected police juror (county commissioner) in 1967 in a rural area where Negroes only recently began to register and vote. He was born in Plettenberg, La., 61 years ago.*



This place is set up in wards, and in my area where I was campaigning, I imagine the population is about 3,000. Well, it should be somewhere about 80 whites and about 205 Negroes registered to vote.

Negroes started voting here in 1963. I registered in '63 around November. It was rough when we first started and they turned us down. At the time, they had such hard tests until we all couldn't register at the same time. In the year of '63, we only registered about 70 voters. But it got higher each year.

I keep in touch with the Voters League, and I was trying to assist in my ward by trying to get the people to register and vote. And in 1963, they decided that they wanted to run some colored people for office; and I had been there, and they called for someone for the tenth ward. After no one would stand up, I stood up, and I told them that I would run.

From then on, that's how I come to be a police juror. In other words, my real reason that I wanted myself or someone else in my neighborhood

or in the tenth ward to run was because there are lots of things that we're not getting here in this tenth ward. There is a lot of aid and assistance we're not getting. Road assistance—we couldn't get that. Absolutely, we couldn't get the things we were supposed to get.

I'll tell you the reason I didn't know if I could win was because I didn't know how the people were going to stand up for me. I didn't know; but I tried and did the best I could, and I got on my campaign. And the longer that I was campaigning, the better progress I could make.

I'm out in the rural section on a farm. The people live all scattered about.

I could hear a few Negroes speak against it. Some spoke against it, but the majority was for me.

My campaign money came from the people in the community; and I had a bunch of children from New Orleans who came and put on a big drive for me and helped to raise money. And I had some people in this area who put on a drive to raise money for my campaigning. I imagine it cost about \$250.

Well, there were a few whites who told me that they were going to support me. They asked me if I was still going to run, and I said I was, so they told me that if I would work with them they would work with me. I promised them I would do the best I could for them, and they said that the ones of them on the jury weren't doing anything for us. I imagine about three white people voted for me.

I had cards made, and I sent out the cards around to the people whom I met at the churches and societies and congregations where people would meet. I would have the ministers to speak sometimes for me to the congregation, but most of the time I would get up myself and speak when the church was going on. I still went around to houses and talked with the people to try to get them.

I've been living here in this parish all my life and I never have been in any trouble. I've never been in court in all my life. I've been a good citizen of this parish. I try to do, in my duties, the best I can; and the people seem to have confidence that I would do and I would serve the best I could for them. There was something that was offered that tried to get me not to run, but I wouldn't accept; and that gave the people more confidence that I would stand up regardless of whatever, and I would stand up for my race.

At the time I ran, the people were scared to run, and they thought that something would happen to them—because at the time there were homes and things that were being bombed about the country, you know. In other words, they felt that at that time they just couldn't get elected. They got in their mind that people wouldn't go to the polls and vote for them and thought that some of them would be bought out and wouldn't get the support. But now it seems that most people's eyes have come open and that they are ready now (I mean the colored) because they see what progress they're making, and they see how much help and how much good they can do. I believe that we won't have any trouble about the people running in the future. I think we'll have most any special office that has not been open in the past. We'll have some colored person that will be able enough to run for it.

I'd tell others who want to run to sure enough have a made-up mind that



they're going to run and try to stand firm, to try to do the job right and make a good campaign. And try to get them to be watchful, because a lot of people will try to get them to step down, and they will offer them money to step down. Tell them to try to stand fast and be unmovable, because now they're trying to work on the progress of the Negro race.

A lot of the Negroes are really proud of this success because a lot of them, before I was elected, had it in their minds that I wouldn't get elected. They didn't think the people were going to vote for me, but the people stood up for me and made it possible for me to win this election.

## Dan Nixon

*Dan Nixon, a magistrate in Haywood County, Tenn., has had his home bombed because of his participation in politics and civic affairs. A farmer who calls himself an "independent Republican," he was elected from a majority Negro ward in August, 1966. He was born in 1907 in Haywood County.*



There were three hundred and something registered Negroes and about two hundred and something whites when I ran. I got about 290 votes. I ran quite smart ahead of my opponent; he ran about 190 votes. He did get some Negro votes, and I got some white votes.

I made up my mind to run for office because I knew any change in the administration would be good. Of course we ran independent, A. D. Powell and myself, and decided to stay in there and see what we could do. As a result of our staying in there, we went out and got the endorsement of our candidacy among 25 of our fellow citizens.

Coming up to time for voting, I began to get threats. Threats began, asking me to get out of the race, not to run. But I was determined. I told my wife I was going to stay in and see what the end would be. As a result of staying with it, we came out very well; we beat our opponent. There were four of us, two colored and two white, for two seats.

On one occasion some fellow citizens came 'round to advise one of us to get out and one of us run. They advised us, A. D. Powell and me. They came to our house and had a conference with us on it.

I told them the thing I would do. If one of the whites would back out, then one of us colored would back out. You know, that was a kind of complicated question for them to ask. I was determined to stay in there; that's why I answered the question like I did.

I beat the highest one here, who had been in office 18 years.

Different people furnished me gas just to drive around. I did this in the district. You see, the district consists of so many miles wide, not too big. We had about five or six weeks time in our running to do very well. I think the most successful thing in our running was we waited just a few days before the deadline to qualify. Then it was cut down and nobody could get

in. They had no chance to knock us out.

The campaign was during farming time. We just caught them in the fields, anywhere we could catch them. Some would be on the tractor, and we would get them. We would visit nearby churches.

I did go into neighborhoods where the white people were, but it was mostly the white people in the neighborhood who were against us.

If I did it again, I believe it would be just a little more. We didn't have the know-how so much to start with, we just felt our way into it. I believe we would have had a little better success.

My advice to others would be this: Since you don't know, go ahead and try and see what will be the results. That is the way I had to undertake it. I didn't have any knowledge of the function of it. I would just try and see what will it be because opportunity is more available now than it was when I started.



### Peter Smith

*Peter Smith is mayor pro tem of Grand Coteau, a Louisiana town with a population of about 1,200. Born in Grand Coteau in 1928, Mr. Smith attended George Washington Carver High School in Sunset, La., and was elected to the Grand Coteau town council in April, 1965. He is a contractor.*

In the town here the Negro percentage is about 47 per cent. We won in the first primary. There were three Negroes, or 13 people running for five seats. The three Negroes were elected in the first primary.

This time, it was the first time that Negroes had ever gotten together and decided to run candidates. We had a group of about 18 men. We called a community meeting, and I had no idea that I would run. It was held at the meeting that candidates would be nominated by the people. We first thought we would run only one Negro. Someone from the audience said, "Why run one Negro?" He cited the example that if one Negro ran and won, he wouldn't be of much benefit to the Negro community anyway because he wouldn't hold the deciding vote with four whites. If you run more than one Negro, the chances might be better to get one elected. So we decided to run three Negroes instead of one.

There were about eight Negroes nominated that night to run. It was felt that some should withdraw to get it down to three. I was one of the first to withdraw, and they wouldn't accept it. So I stayed in at a sacrifice.

That night the community decided to support us. As a matter of fact, they put up the finances for our race. Our campaign as individuals didn't cost us a single red penny. Just about everybody from the Negro community was there. I would say that except for the old people, everyone was there.

Very few told me not to run, but one Negro I'll never forget. Everyone looked to this man as a leader, but one reason he gave was that the meeting was called the night before the last day to qualify. We did it for a purpose, to keep from having any pressure put on any candidate; and he said he felt we had waited too late and that the time wasn't right for a Negro to run for office.

We had some threatening messages sent, but we didn't know whether to take them seriously or not.

Here in the parish, for some years, we had a sheriff who was kept in office by the Negro vote. He had some 30 or 40 Negro deputies. He had campaign leaders among Negroes. Negroes have been deep in politics even though the candidates were white. White candidates would race to see who could get to that group of Negroes to get support out of them. I can't think of any candidate who ran in this parish who was criticized by Negroes or who criticized Negro policies who won, even though some of the whites who got elected didn't stand up for Negro policies.

Our campaign was different in terms of money. Our campaign was supported by Negroes. Instead of our having to raise the money, Negroes pledged more than enough to carry out the campaign. This is a small town; we walked door to door, we talked to people. We offered to help people who didn't have much education if they needed assistance. Some people were uncertain and thought that we were choosing the white candidates that we wanted elected with us. But we got young girls who had the proper information, people who could be relied upon, to help them with the other candidates.

We were candidates of the people. We didn't get up and announce; we were drafted to run for office. The people of the community said it's time to have Negroes elected.

We had no criticism of the present administration. We realized that the white administration respected our votes. We had 47 per cent of the votes, and they knew it. We wanted a chance to prove that we could serve all of the people. We got 18 per cent of the white votes.

The parish is divided into sections called wards. If we had to run on a parish level, I'd do it differently. According to the services that are asked for by the white members of the community, we'd have to capture instead of that 18 per cent some 38 per cent of the white community. What we campaigned on, we followed that stream into office. We listened to everybody's grief, we looked into things personally. The things we could do, we did them.

I'm skeptical about what effect we've had. In some sense, it has made Negroes feel they should run against each other, rather than picking out someone and sticking behind him. We need a lot of education in politics. We have a youth council, and we are instructing the youth on how to go about it and what to expect from their government. One or two people, some of the people who talk loud, felt that just because there were Negroes in office, every street could be black-topped and gutters put in within a year. They didn't understand that in a municipality the funds come from the

people. We can only give justice, but some people want it all today, without extra taxes or paying anything for it.

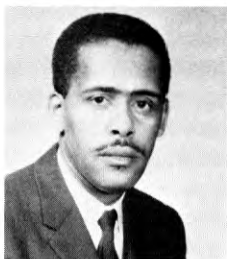
I don't know whether from our experience in our little town my advice would help. I would have to say try to get not only the Negro vote but the white vote. Try to run with dignity. On a larger level, in the parish or county, I would say you would have to counsel the Negroes who offer themselves as candidates and take a poll on them— whether Negroes think he's the kind who should run. He should seek advice from his own people, and if he can carry that support, then he should run. Some Negroes feel that you can't represent them. Sometimes you'll get a person involved with politics with the white man for money. They'll get a few votes, but then will fall out.

I would advise him to campaign to everybody.





# Urban Candidates



**Elijah Coleman**

*Elijah Coleman, director of the Arkansas Council on Human Relations, was an unsuccessful candidate for the Jefferson County, Ark., school board in March, 1968. Mr. Coleman was born in Chidester in 1924 and holds a master's degree from the University of Arkansas.*

As near as we can come to it, the population in the district is more like 51 per cent Negro and 49 per cent white. It was our opinion that we had a greater number of registered voters, and we just didn't get them out. I've had two elections—the first in September, 1967 and the other in March, 1968.

I live in the school district—and had been a principal for 12 or 15 years; and at that time they only had one Negro on the board. He himself was an educator, and I thought maybe what we needed was a little more balance from the standpoint of educators versus businessmen and laborers. No Negroes opposed it at all. I was encouraged by the majority of Negroes to run.

My money came from the community, just in that school district, more or less. Some of it came from the city at large. We have four school districts

in the same town, a town of about 60,000. I got some financial help from white people—and some votes, I'm sure, because in the box that was predominantly Negro, there were eight whites who voted in this box and my opponent only got six votes out of that box. There's no way of telling about the white box, but we probably got a few votes out of that box.

It was strictly a volunteer organization, made up of a cross section of people in the district, who had assigned to them specific responsibilities, such as car pools. The college helped a lot—A. M. & N. College. The students helped a lot on the door-to-door. Before the election, they had worked very actively on getting people registered. It was a combined effort of the community and the college and the high school.

My first and second campaigns did not differ to a great degree. I think we made more of an effort on the last time, but the weather was kind of against us. We had snow and rain, whereas in the first election we had a beautiful day. We got out something like 50 votes less, but it was the same campaign with just a little more knocking on doors and a little more personal persuasion to get them out. On the second time, we did appeal to white voters, hoping we would be able to get more votes from the white community—which we evidently didn't do.

One thing I think I'd do differently—and I did do this to a certain extent in the last campaign—I would try to find some whites who would be receptive to a Negro candidate and get this person to go into the white community and work more actively. This was done to just a small degree during our last campaign with only one individual. If I had to do it again, I think we would make a concerted effort to try and persuade some of the white votes our way.

During the first campaign, we ran against a 20-year incumbent who has three substantial businesses in the district. He had been president of the board for about 16 years. This is the man I made a better showing against than the second man. The second man had been appointed by the school board members who were in office to serve an unexpired term. He was a car salesman, and he had a lot of friends in this district. They used the telephone quite effectively. You know, "We have one black on the board, and we don't want to turn the school board black." I think they came out more to vote against another black man on the board instead of voting for the candidate himself.

There were several good effects. We succeeded in getting the polling booths integrated. Up until the last election they had Negroes in Negro boxes and whites in white boxes. It did serve, too, to unify the Negro voting strength in the district. In fact, they are quite confused now as to why they lost. Even though the books don't designate color anymore, we know where most of the Negroes live in the district. We thought we could just out-vote them by strength and that we didn't have to form any coalition to win. We still think this is true. Efforts are being made to decide if we will take this route again; if we just are going to vote by sheer numbers and not try to form any coalitions here. If we do this, more Negroes will be registered and we'll make a greater effort to get them to the polls.

When you get into politics, you shouldn't presume anything. I had gone

on the assumption that most people here knew me for 16 years. Maybe what we didn't do is see enough people from the grass-roots community. I don't believe we really involved enough people. We were top-heavy with college people, with affluent people, whom we thought could solidify the community. What I'm trying to say is that we didn't have enough activity in the grass-roots community.

### F. Malcolm Cunningham



*First elected to the Riviera Beach Fla., City Commission in 1962, F. Malcolm Cunningham was re-elected in 1964 and 1966 and ran unsuccessfully for state House of Representatives in 1968. He was born in Plant City, Fla., and attended high school in Tallahassee. Mr. Cunningham also attended Florida A&M University and received his A.B. and law degrees from Howard University. He ran for office the first time in 1956 and lost.*

Back in 1962, we had two-thirds white voters and one-third Negro. We got 80 per cent of the Negro votes out then, compared to about 50 per cent of the white votes. That was one of the many factors in my winning the election. I received about 15 per cent of the white votes that were cast. My opponent was white; he had been serving on the commission for 12 years.

My percentage of the Negro vote decreased and the percentage of the white vote increased for me in subsequent elections. By the same token, there was no increase in Negro votes for white candidates.

I filed for the first time for the city commission in 1956. I lost by only 80 votes at that time. Thereafter I didn't bother with it, because I had to devote a lot of time to my practice. I thought the time was ripe in 1962. I had more time to put into it. I had been working very closely with voter registration. I had been president of the voters league in the area and president of other civic and charitable organizations throughout the whole county, so I thought that it could be done. In addition, I had a lot of people urging me to run in the initial election and working very closely and very hard with me as far as the initial election in 1962 was concerned. They did it in subsequent years, too.

In 1956, some of my closest friends, teachers and some of the old heads got afraid. In 1956 there were two or three crosses burned in the Negro community. Rumors spread. A lot of Negroes became frightened. There was strong feeling against my running. During that time, we were filing a lot of school integration cases. Our so-called leaders at that time said we were "trying to change things." They were kind of apprehensive of us. But that didn't stop us, because we had a lot of young fellows who were willing to go and work with us. So they just moved aside.

Initially, we had a club and an organization. I paid my filing fee out of my own pocket. As for other expenses, the organization donated all their work free and didn't charge a nickel. A lot of people donated their cars.

Some people gave a tank of gas. There was little or no expense in the first election. I would say that I didn't spend over \$150 or \$200. In 1966, I spent \$50 to file, and I spent about \$40 on handbills, and I gave some boys about \$15 to take them out. That was it.

What happened is this: I didn't spend much money, but the white candidates who were running were hiring people to drive cars and other things. It's a bad situation when white candidates can come over in the Negro area and spend a lot of money and hire the most workers. Regardless of what he stands for, he will control a lot of Negro votes.

Anyway, I didn't have to worry, because even though they were spending the money, the people who were working for them were working for me. There was no such thing as a Negro person openly working against me in Negro areas. They would have been outcasts—if not physically, then from a social standpoint. That's just how strongly people felt about Negroes working against a Negro candidate in favor of a white candidate in that area.

I got a considerable amount of help from white people in my 1962 campaign. I had a lot of white people working in white areas. I had some driving for me in the white neighborhoods. But that situation has changed since 1956. I didn't have that then.

As a matter of fact, in 1956 the whole city hall was fighting me. They brought out fire trucks and sirens on election day to get white people out to vote to defeat me. That didn't happen in 1962. We had a changed sentiment in the white community as far as getting a Negro elected. We still worked on our registration. We brought it up to nearly 40 per cent of the whole and our population has increased. There is still a lot of apathy in the Negro community.

I campaigned by making the Chamber of Commerce meetings, the Jaycee meetings, all the political forums. I got my handbills out in the Negro and white communities. I didn't get on the radio or anything like that. I'm doing it now in late 1968 in my race for state representative.

It was difficult for my opponent to campaign in the Negro community against me. He got 162 votes in Negro precincts, and I got almost half the votes cast in white precincts. I received 90 per cent in the Negro precincts. He didn't bring up racial issues. However, in one instance where another Negro was elected, his white opponent brought up the racial issue. I think that brought Negroes to the polls, but it didn't bring out whites; and as a result, the Negro defeated him.

The campaigns encouraged voter registration, and it encouraged other Negroes to seek office. In a town near here, a place called Delray, a fellow by the name of Youngblood was able to get elected in that city. We had a fellow who ran in Belle Glade in this county.

As for advice to others, the person must be the kind who can get along with all factions. He must be the sort who doesn't get offended when they disagree with him. I think personality has a lot to do with it.

Number two, he must know what he's talking about, he must know the issues. If he doesn't know the issues, he can be made to look like a fool.

In addition to knowing the issues, he must have some time to devote to the problem. It's the kind of job that he's going to find will pay him little

money and will be little help to him financially—unless he's going to go into something undercover, and that I don't advise.

My suggestion is to involve yourself in the community. People have to know you.

By the same token, you have to have certain convictions. After you study something and come out with a position, stick with it. If you're changing here and changing there, no one can put any confidence in you one way or the other. A lot of times I've taken positions that a lot of Negroes fought me on, but I had to stick to it. I knew I was right. In the end it paid off dividends, and those same people who were fighting me have come to be my best friends.

Another thing I suggest for the person running for public office: he's got to have freedom, he's got to have independence. He must be in a position where he can't be pressurized so much, because they will try to pressurize you. And he's got to have his community together.

I find a lot of envy among your so-called professionals and pseudo-professional Negroes. I can't understand it. You find a lot of bickering and jealousy. They have run quite a few Negroes in this area and none of them have been elected because the Negroes can't get together. We fight each other too blasted much.



### Earl M. Johnson

*Earl M. Johnson, elected to the Jacksonville, Fla., consolidated City Council in 1967, had previously been an unsuccessful candidate for the Duval County Commission and for the Florida House of Representatives. He was born in Huntington, W. Va., in 1928 and received his higher education and law degree from Howard University.*

I ran in 1962 for a county commission post. It was a county-wide seat. The ratio was about four white votes for each Negro vote. I finished third in a field of seven. All of the other candidates were white.

I'm not at all sure that I ever made the decision that I wanted to hold elective office. I think I was more or less projected into it because of my other public service in civil rights, as a civil rights lawyer primarily, and as a lawyer period.

I suppose deep down there was some interest in holding public office. There weren't many Negroes running for public office, if any, that I recall—particularly county-wide. This was thought unreachable. Someone had to start to get the white people oriented toward the possibility of having a Negro hold county-wide office. Those sorts of considerations went into that judgment.

There was quite a bit of Negro opposition in 1962. Not only that, one of the so-called political leaders here, who had been the man that governors and mayors and others looked to for delivery of the Negro vote, actively



supported one of my white opponents.

I had the support pretty much of everybody, as my vote indicates. When I ran for the Legislature, I garnered some 47,000 votes, which is more votes than any Negro had ever gotten, I'm told, in the state. That may not be accurate, but at least it's true in this county. Not only that, most of that vote, some 26,000, came from the white community, which was also unheard of.

The difference is, it seems to me, attributable to a change in attitude, resulting from a change in law and behavior. My running in 1966 was in the perspective of a new attitude toward civil rights, toward the need for Negroes in positions of public responsibility. Even the white people fear what the absence of Negroes in these positions means. I have since 1962 demonstrated an ability to appeal to white people, and I have not done anything to alienate the Negro community since I've been in the forefront of civil rights litigation. I've not had to compromise my positions on civil rights issues to get white votes.

Each of my races has been county-wide. I've had to appeal to the whole area, the whole county, and my money has come from everybody. I have always received more money from the white community than from the Negro community. There is less money in the Negro community. We are less attuned to the business of giving for politics. (This is not to say that I haven't had more in numbers giving in the Negro community.)

In 1962, there wasn't much white support, except some persons would privately tell their friends, "I'm going to vote for the Negro," or they'd say, "I'm going to vote for that nigger" on the theory that this would not make them seem liberal even though they were going to vote for me. They didn't really want it widely known that they were. If they did, they wanted to do it in a condescending way.

Now they support me openly. I got the endorsement of the local newspaper, for example. Many of the people who have now been involved in the new power structure of the area gave me coffees and teas in their white homes, they put my posters and billboards in their yards in the white community. This has never happened before for a Negro, but it happened for me in the City Council race. White women manned my office during the last campaign. They made a great contribution in terms of work in 1966, but the 1967 race really involved a lot of white people.

I've never paid anyone to do any work, unless it was on election day when we had to arrange for transportation. We've had considerable support from the NAACP, from whatever voter groups there are. We used leaflets always, sample ballots whenever we could afford them, little brochures describing the family and showing my credentials. The last time we mailed them out to all registered Negroes, so we could feel at least that every Negro knew I was running.

We had big billboards in 1966; that is, these big neon lighted things that reach up to the sky. We had other placards and posters wherever we could get them up. When I ran for the Legislature, we did do considerable door-knocking. We had a supply of students from the local college and others in the community, and we did attempt a really vigorous door-knocking cam-

paign. We didn't do quite so much of that this last time, principally because we didn't have the manpower available. We hoped we could achieve the results of the door-knocking by the direct mailing.

In the white community, there was some door-knocking done, not by Negroes, but by white persons working for me. I don't know how we could have achieved the good results in the white community without that kind of manpower there—white manpower.

I'm sure I must have made some mistakes. I don't know if there's anything I could have done in 1962 to get elected. Frankly, this was an exercise in education—to get white people looking forward or preparing themselves for the time when a Negro would be acceptable in their eyes. In 1966, everybody thought I was going to win. We had considerable radio and television time, and we also did this last time. I think getting a Negro on radio and television who can articulate is important. You've got to get that kind of broad coverage so he can sell himself as an articulate candidate. If he does that, I think my experience tells that he can get elected.

I don't know specifically what I would not have done, as I think about it, except that I would avoid some persons, an alignment with some persons, or even soliciting the support of some persons who had made reputations—I hate to say “bad” reputations—but who had reputations which can cut both ways sometimes.

My opponents were always white—different appeals were available for them. One of my opponents in the last election talked about bloc votes and he dealt in racial issues. As a matter of fact, there's always been at least one of my opponents who would do that. Being a Negro, I've always drawn more opponents, and they would try to make capital out of that.

I don't know how you would contrast what I would have to do and what a white candidate, similarly qualified, would have to do. He has a naturally larger number of supporters to start out with. I've got the job of trying to persuade some of them either of the need for Negro representation when there is no Negro representation or that somehow I have better credentials.

I've tried to avoid talking about the race issue—even such statistics as that there were no Negroes in the Florida House of Representatives, for example. I had to avoid saying that, while at the same time, by innuendo and other subtleties, saying it nonetheless. It just rubs people the wrong way. I even think Negroes don't want to hear you talking about colored folks. At least they haven't in the past. Perhaps they may now some.

In a word, the effect has been good, not only from the standpoint of educating the Negro, but from the standpoint of making him aware of the likelihood of getting Negroes elected. No one ever believed a Negro could get elected county-wide. I was the first. This was quite an impression on the Negro community and on the white community.

It made the white community know they were a little better than they thought they were. Some people wouldn't want to hear me say that, but it's true. Many of them were not as bad as they thought. They really could vote for a Negro. The awareness in the mind of the Negro people that white people would vote for a qualified Negro is a good and wholesome thing.

It seems to me your campaign hinges on the amount of money available. Regrettably, you've got to spend a lot of money. The leaflet isn't as effective as television and radio. Speaking at rallies is not effective for the reason that nobody comes to rallies but the candidates and their followings.

Television and radio is the answer, and newspaper coverage. I, for example, during the last campaign, had a \$500 ad on Sunday which carried the endorsement of some 50 to 100 prominent people—most of whom, incidentally, were white and who had considerable personal following themselves. For instance, a bank president who says, "I'm for Earl Johnson because he served on the Local Government Study Commission, which helped to develop the new government."

People called white doctors and said: "Well, if you're going to vote for that nigger, then I will too." That kind of thing.

I think you've got to get a broad sweep. You've got to get the endorsement of local organizations, labor unions. But to do that, you've got to sell your own qualifications, your reputation as a good, stable, mature person. I think race cannot be sold. I think you cannot sell a candidate by selling him as a Negro, frankly, even in the Negro community.

We had a Negro who ran, and it was always thought that if a Negro threw his hat in the ring, he got the Negro vote. But that didn't happen, he didn't get it. He went down to a miserable defeat.

## Miss Barbara Jordan

*Miss Barbara Jordan of Houston, an unsuccessful candidate for the Texas House of Representatives in 1962 and 1964, was elected in 1966 as the only woman and first Negro member of the state Senate. Born in Houston in 1936, she was graduated from Texas Southern University and from Boston University School of Law.*



I have about 46 per cent Negro, and the rest is white. The registration breakdown was 45 per cent Negro and the balance white.

I ran for the Texas House in 1962 and 1964. In '62, I received 46,000 votes in a county-wide race and the winner received about 65,000. In '64, I received 64,000, and the winner, again in a county-wide race, received about 75,000 votes. Reapportionment broke the constituency down so I could run from about one-fourth of the county.

I had worked in prior political campaigns, starting with the Kennedy-Johnson campaign in 1960, and worked through our local Democratic club, the Harris County Democrats. In working with them I could see a real need for more candidates taking an interest in politics—certainly more Negro candidates to help stimulate political interest.

As a result of my efforts in working to get out the vote in 1960 in the presidential contest, my interest became rather keen. I felt that I had a reasonably good chance of winning. I was realistic enough, the first time

that I ran, to know that there was a real problem of name identification and that the Negro vote was in the great minority as far as the county-wide vote was concerned and that it would be highly improbable that I would win. But I felt that if I intended to make future races with a firm belief in winning, I had to start some place. In the first race, I had one opponent, in the second I had two, and in the third race one. In all instances, the opponents were white.

I had no public, obvious opposition from Negroes in either one of those races in '62 or '64. I would sometimes get rumors about some individual who felt that this was not the thing to do, but I never saw any influence on the part of Negroes in opposing me in either of those two races.

In the main, most of my campaign money came from local sources with small contributions from other Negroes. In both the '62 and '64 campaigns, we designed a little button with my name on it and sold them for a dollar each. In the '62 campaign, we raised about \$15,000 that way.

I have a small campaign organization which I have kept intact since 1962. As a general rule, we only have one full-time paid worker. This is usually a secretary who can do general office work. As you get into the latter stage of the campaign, you would bring in about half a dozen ladies to do telephoning and that kind of thing. But in the main, the help has been volunteer.

We have concentrated daily, in all of my campaigns, on a block-worker program, which we have found to be the most successful thing that we have done in any of the races. We start with the precinct judges and get them to submit to us a list of workers in their precinct who are willing to work their blocks. Once we get these names, we ask for a street captain who will oversee the activities of the street workers on a given street. Breaking that down, each worker has been furnished with a block-worker's kit, a letter of instructions as to what he is to do and campaign material.

We used buttons and bumper stickers, and in the last campaign, the one for the Senate, we added billboards. In the '62 and '64 campaigns, we did a considerable amount of radio and television. It was a county-wide effort, and it was just impossible for the candidate to appear in person before a lot of groups. When we got it broken down to districts, we did not put any funds into television and only into radio for the two Negro stations that we had. In '66, the block worker program was the primary factor.

The Democratic Party organization here as an organization takes no hand in primary contests. It's just liberal versus conservative. Persons who vote in the Democratic primary as a general rule will vote along those lines. I had no help and no participation by the official party organization in Harris County, but no other candidate had the official help of the party organization. In surviving the primary in May of '66, I did have support from the regular Democratic organization for the general election in November, because the liberal-conservative contests were ended and everyone was on a "vote-straight-Democratic" program.

I would do more personal campaigning, right now, than I did in any of the other campaigns. I believe it has been a mistake to rely on rallies and the news media primarily as exposure vehicles. I would hit the streets my-

self, walking and talking and shaking hands with as many people as I could see at the bus stops or supermarkets or other places of public gathering.

During the last campaign, my opponent concentrated on the white vote, I felt, and interjected the racial issue into his campaign, whereas I did not see race as an issue for debate or discussion. I concentrated on a maximum turnout of Negroes, because I knew I had to get better than 90 per cent of the Negroes and rely on about 30 per cent of the whites to win. My opponent was thinking that he would get at least 25 or 30 per cent of the Negro vote and a higher percentage of the white vote, which would give him enough to win. As it happens, he got about one per cent of the Negro vote and about 65 or 70 per cent of the white vote, which was not enough.

One immediate effect was a new awareness of politics on the state level among Negro voters in particular. By and large, Negroes had not known what a state senator or state representative did. Upon my election, there was an awakening to politics on the state level. This interest has encouraged people to follow the papers and become interested in bills pending before the Legislature. The emphasis had been on local races like for city council or for school board, but now that has been broadened to include state-level politics.

I would say that no Negro candidate for public office ought to automatically write off the white vote. There is, I have discovered, a substantial white vote that does go to a Negro candidate out of some feeling of justice or equality on the part of the white people. Some interest or energy ought to be directed toward the white community.

Also, the Negro vote should not be taken for granted. It doesn't just automatically come. There are some people who will just automatically go out and vote for a Negro candidate, but there are still great numbers who have to be stimulated every time.

### Mrs. Athalie Range

*Mrs. Athalie Range is a city commissioner in Miami, Fla. Mrs. Range, a successful funeral director, was defeated in her first bid for office and then appointed to finish the term of a retired commissioner. She won election to the City Commission in November, 1967.*



When I first ran, I was in a race with six white opponents. I was the biggest vote-getter by some 1,100 to 1,200 votes. When it came to the primary runoff, it became a white-black situation; and I was beaten in the runoff by 1,400 votes.

It was quite evident that there was very definitely a racial circumstance here; because in the primary where there were some 15 people seeking



office, and I was one of the only two Negroes among them, there were 37,000 people who came out to a city election to elect from 16 people. In the runoff, when there were only two people running, myself and my white opponent, 38,000 people came out, which means there was far more interest because of the racial situation here.

Two nights before the election, a loudspeaker went through the community stating, "Unless you vote on Tuesday you will have a Negro on the City Commission." As a result of this, I can very easily imagine that people who had not voted in some time and who had no interest in city elections came out, and I was beaten by a margin of 1,400.

Following the election in which I was defeated, some few months later, one of the commissioners resigned. I was appointed to his seat. Then I won an election by a very large margin.

Of course, I've always felt that Negroes needed greater involvement in government and civic affairs that we simply have been so terribly lacking in. However, the manner in which I came out as a candidate was that a group of lay people and ministers felt the same way I did about Negro participation in government, and they began looking around for someone to whom everyone could cling, and really do a good job of putting this person in office.

The novelty of Negroes in public office will eventually wear off, however. When this occurs, it will be an even greater burden upon those who offer themselves as candidates to be as well versed and as fully prepared as their strongest opponent. For once elected, you are expected to perform as ably as any and all others in a similar position or office. I have found, and rightfully so, that the public is demanding, merciless and non-compromising regarding the political behavior of those whom they have elected to serve them.

There were several names brought up, and it just happened by the process of elimination that I was the one to whom everyone felt they could give sole support in the community. Of course, I can very easily imagine that they might have approached other people, preferably a man, who for some other reasons, known only to themselves, did not want to seek the office at this time. When I finally made up my mind that I would accept the draft, because it was indeed a draft from the Negro community, then I went out with the intention actually of winning.

We waged a full-scale campaign. That is, we did not go out thinking we could win on sympathy alone. We sought funds, we opened a campaign office, we had publicity people and everything that goes along with a full-fledged campaign. We got very good support from both white and Negro.

I think the greatest mistake that might have been made in the primary was that the group of people who felt that we should have representation began to work very, very late. We were only six weeks in the campaign before the primary election. This means that my opponents were all out and running, had all solicited some support, and of course this was marked up on the negative side for me. There were some Negroes who had given their word of support to some of the white candidates, principally the person who eventually defeated me; and of course, they could not go back on their

word once they had given their word to the other person. This was one of the outstanding factors, I believe, why I did not win the first time out. But I got very, very good support.

We used every medium other than television. TV is too expensive, and we simply did not have that kind of money. I did have at least one paid person I can think of at this moment. This was my publicity man. He came rather high, to my way of thinking. My manager was a minister who was not paid at all. All of my campaign workers were volunteers.

We did quite a bit of door-to-door campaigning. I went with some of the gentlemen who were kind enough to go with me out to the masses of people. We stopped in every poolroom, we went into nightclubs, into whiskey places where they sell whiskey all day. This was the type of campaigning I did throughout the predominantly Negro area.

I spoke to large groups wherever I had an occasion to, and I went into homes where there were just a few people gathered. In the white community I did the same thing. I did not go into white poolrooms or white bars. As far as churches, home gatherings, lawn parties, political gatherings—I went to all of these. I missed a lot of places because I had only six weeks to cover the entire city.

I campaigned in much the same manner the second time that I did in the first election. I knew it was necessary to set up a headquarters. I knew it was necessary to have even more persons out working for me. I think because I did have, through my appointment to the City Commission, an opportunity to build a record, I could run with far more ease than having to break the ice for the first time. Consequently, I think many of the things I did the second time around were not really mandatory. I think I would have won if I had not campaigned so hard.

But I enjoyed campaigning; I think it's something that's due the public. You ought to get out and let yourself be seen and let your voice be heard.

The effect these campaigns have had among Negroes is that Negroes came out to the polls because they had something to come out for. In my first campaign, more Negroes came out to vote in that primary election than had come out before in any city election for a number of years in Miami. It had to be attributed to the fact that they were trying to get a Negro into office.

There were many factors controlling the runoff. Many Negroes who were not knowledgeable were told by their employers and they were told by other Negroes who were probably being paid by the opposition, "Now you voted for Mrs. Range last Tuesday, your vote will count. It's not necessary to go back."

This is where we have a terrible lack of voter education. Many people did not know. They accepted the fact that they voted for me once and their vote would count in the second election. As a result, there were fewer Negroes voting in the runoff than there were voting in the primary. I believe that as long as we have runoffs with Negroes and whites running, that the Negro's best bet is to do all he can to get in the primary. When it comes down to a situation where there is white and black, we still have not come far enough to vote on the principle of the man or woman who is running.

The first general advice I would give is that I feel that people should not run for office simply because they have the desire to run. I think that when one runs for office, he must prepare himself, even though I cannot say this was true in my case. But I had in my favor many, many years of civic contributions. I was well known in the community in that I had worked very strenuously in Parent-Teacher Association work, and I had been a public speaker in the city of Miami for a number of years. I had participated in many, many interracial boards.

We simply cannot get up and run because we want to run. Once we start this and do it on two or three occasions, then we become perennial runners where everyone sees our name on the ballot but they pay absolutely no attention to us.

The next thing is that after we have prepared ourselves, then we need to have good organization. You simply cannot run for office and win with an out-of-pocket campaign, with nobody actually being behind you, with nobody being able to identify you with a specific group who is actually promoting you.

We have to expose ourselves to the white community; and when we go into the white community, we must not be afraid to point out the inequities that have existed through the year, as well as when we go into the Negro community. I think that people, no matter how it might appear on the surface, appreciate the truth.

When we go into a campaign, we should go in with the true facts. We should know the existing issues and know what is important. We should be able to answer general questions about the office for which we are running. In our first campaign, there were some issues that I knew absolutely nothing about. But after I was asked the questions on one occasion, I looked into these matters and was able to come up with an answer. This is very important.

## Clarence Lee Townes Jr.

*Clarence Lee Townes Jr., now special assistant to the chairman of the Republican National Committee, was defeated in 1965 in his race for the Virginia House of Representatives. Formerly a training director of a Negro insurance company, he was born in Richmond in 1928 and was graduated from Virginia Union University in 1950.*



Thirty-five per cent of the population in the area was black. Approximately 30 per cent of the voters were black, but the black voters voted the highest percentage. The voting percentage is higher than the actual registration percentage. The total vote was in the neighborhood of 35,000.

I was running on an eight-man Republican slate against an eight-man Democratic slate. We were not running as individuals. There was the

phenomenon of a write-in candidate who actually won and eliminated Dr. Ferguson Reid, a Negro, from victory in that particular election.

I ran as part of a growing process in the party. Beginning back in 1961, the Crusade for Voters, which is a predominantly Negro voting registration and voter delivery organization with which I was associated, had supported in many elections Republicans, not so much out of philosophy but out of the ability to use the black vote as the balance of power. We were voting against the entrenched Byrd organization in the state and in the district. In '62, the Negro vote was delivered, approximately 87 per cent of it, to a Republican candidate for Congress against the Democratic incumbent. With this vote, the Republican candidate failed to win but almost upset the incumbent, losing by some 300 votes. In '63, the Negro vote assisted the Republican Party in electing for the first time in the history of the Third District area the first two Republicans to the lower house.

It was a growing thing; and because of it, the Republican Party began to cut Negroes legitimately into the party apparatus and at the committee level. I had gone through the ranks with the support and blessings of the Crusade for Voters to the position of vice chairman of the city and vice chairman of the district to vice chairman of the state party and an alternate delegate to the 1964 convention. We had an unwritten commitment from them that they would include a Negro on the ticket and fully support him for the General Assembly.

Of course the '64 thing came along and just completely distorted the relationship. I was the only one identified with the black community in a political sense and a voter registration sense still identified with the Republican Party, and simply carried out what had been a commitment by the party made back in '64. This was done with, of course, the blessings of the black community.

We had a strange thing to happen in Virginia in 1965. Dr. Ferguson Reid ran in the Democratic primary. At first he lost, supposedly, and in the official canvass the ballots were lost and the courts ruled that he had to be the number-eight man on the ballot. They put Reid back on the ballot by court order. The assumption was that there was hanky-panky going on because the Republicans, with Clarence Townes legitimately on the ticket, would attract this 30 per cent of the total vote, the black vote, and thereby elect a majority of Republicans from this district to the lower house.

The campaign got into a lot of emotions, with Reid on the ballot; it put us in the position of running against each other when that was not the case. It put the Negro community in the position of choosing between two slates—the Republican slate, that they had looked with favor upon earlier, running against the Democratic slate with another popular Negro on it. It split the Negro vote up, it split up emotions among Negroes. And in the end, what happened was that white folks had the most miraculous write-in in the last ten days that elected a white man instead of either one of us.

We spent about \$30,000, the Republican Party did, and everything was

spent equally. We got the total support of Republicans, black and white, in the district I ran in. We ran as a team, a group, everything equal. We campaigned wherever the entire slate campaigned; I campaigned in some very hostile areas, just as they did when they came into my area. They had to answer some very forthright questions from the black community. We had the entire Republican precinct organization, about 300 Negroes, working in the campaign for the total slate. Each billboard had all eight candidates on it, all the literature had all eight; there was nothing separate. We used handouts, flyers. All television time was equal, all radio time was equal. This was also a state race, a race for the governor's mansion, and the gubernatorial candidate was included in some of the television time also.

If I had to do it all over again, I think there's one mistake that I made, a mistake in loyalty to this team idea of ours. When the predominantly Negro voter group in town decided that it would support the Democratic slate, I condemned them. It did do some damage to the Negro community at that time. I wouldn't do that again, because unity in the community is more important than my idea of whether or not their action was hypocritical. It cost me as an individual about 2,000 black votes on election day.

The campaign made the Democratic Party in the state and district get busy trying to mend some fences in the black community. It pushed the governor to the position where Virginia began to take a more progressive attitude on many things. For the first time, in my memory, in Virginia race was not a factor, openly, in a campaign. The great thing that came out of this was to focus the attention of both parties on legitimately seeking the Negro vote.

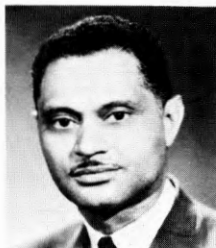
We should produce black candidates who really have something to offer in suggesting ideas and programs to the total electorate. We have reached a point in our communities in the South where black candidates have to legitimately represent and articulate the aims of the black community. If they fail to do this, they fail to be of service to the total community by honestly attempting to seek office. I don't think we should disillusion the black community by running poorly financed and poorly organized campaigns that fail to produce the thrust needed to elect a black candidate.

Where there may be more than one black candidate running, whether they are running with a party or independently, we owe it to the black community to have a sense of unity among the black candidates. They ought not to let whites force them into the position of running against each other. When election day is over with whites, they don't fall out. We can't afford the luxury of having antagonism among black political figures of various shades and thus splitting the black community.



## Horace T. Ward

*Atlanta attorney Horace T. Ward defeated white opponents in a predominantly white district in the 1964 primary and general election to become Georgia's second Negro state senator in modern times. He was born in LaGrange, Ga., in 1927.*



In the 39th state senatorial district at the time that I first ran—in 1964—we knew that the white registration was larger than the Negro registration. The white voting strength was 12,500 and the Negro voting strength was 9,500. The population in the district in 1964 was about 55 per cent white and 45 per cent Negro. In the primary, the incumbent Democratic senator was white and the Republican candidate was white.

I had decided some time before then that I was going to get into politics. I thought I could render a service, and I thought I had some of the necessary training and also the willingness to do something for the people. I felt like if you're going to have anything to say about how the government's going to be run, you have to be on the inside.

I had really decided on that job two years before I ran, but it was a matter of trying to decide what was the proper time to do it. So I waited until 1964 when I thought there was a better chance of going in.

I raised my campaign money by personal contacts. I picked out a list of people around the community and sent them letters. Some responded. I talked to some ministers. I had some neighborhood teas or receptions, and we raised a small amount of money that way. It took somewhere in the neighborhood of \$5,000, and I recall borrowing about \$1,500 dollars during the campaign. The greater amount of the money that was raised for campaign funds came from Negroes. Some came from whites, principally from labor unions.

One white minister got together a letter of his own which he sent to about 100 people telling them that he knew me and that I would be a worthwhile addition to the Georgia Legislature. Some other white people in the community gave me some mailing materials. Many white people told me, "I am going to ask my friends to vote for you, but I'm not going to make any public display of support."

I organized a campaign committee, consisting of names that had come to me of people who had worked in civic organizations and voter registration drives and other political groups. I picked them out all over the district—got some in each of the precincts, principally Negro areas. I organized them into a committee, not a hard-and-fast organization. I would call them together now and then for advice and for them to help me get out my material and to help me contact other people.

I did hire a campaign manager. I don't think there's any substitute for having a centralized office, because you can't make all your appointments—you can't even keep up with them. During the month before the primary

and the month before the general election, we hired a secretary, we opened up the office, we had a telephone.

Of course, I campaigned on the basis of trying to reach as many people as I could in the community. I wouldn't know how many churches I went to. I knew the people, I went to their meetings, their churches, both Sunday meetings and other meetings. I got to know the ministers, as many as I could. I feel like I reached more organized people through the churches than I did through organizations. I got to know all of the heads of the housing project tenant associations.

I had a little advantage on some of the candidates in view of the fact that I had some foundation in the community, having been a civil rights lawyer.

We didn't do any radio ads—we didn't have that kind of money. We didn't do any advertising in the general newspapers. We ran one or two ads in *The Atlanta World*, and we ran some ads in *The Atlanta Inquirer*. Those we had to pay for. But I did do some extensive printing. I got some printing through the civil rights groups; some were lenient with the price and some printing was free. I printed up brochures; I printed up cards, placards and posters.

Prior to getting into politics, I had made some long-time associations with the organized Negro political groups. I had gotten into the Atlanta Negro Voters League; and although I wasn't a power in it, I knew what was going on. And then I'd gotten into the Fulton County Democratic Club, another Negro group, and most of the organized Negro groups. Then, prior to my election, I had gotten into the Democratic Party. I was the first ward leader out here for the Democratic Party.

I was operating with the Negro Democrats before they were officially accepted by the Democrats in Georgia. You know, Negroes weren't officially in the Democratic Party until the early sixties. I joined the Young Democrats in order to extend myself a little beyond the Negro community; then I joined the Democratic Party.

Now, my thought about it was this: that a Negro candidate would have to do two or three things. First, he would have to have a foundation of strength in his own community; and I thought you'd do that by service in the community and by identifying with the people in the community and by having a working relationship with the organizations in the community. That's your real foundation if you're going to be a success in politics. Negroes especially, because you've got to come first from your own community; and if you're not accepted there, I don't think you're going to make it in the other community.

After you get established in the Negro community, you have to follow a procedure of what I call establishing a beachhead in the white community. That is, if you're running for an office which is larger than a Negro constituency, you can impress the white community by showing them that we've got enough intelligence or know-how to do the job.

I won my first election by about 10,000 votes, and my opponent got about 6,000 votes. I got 90 per cent of the Negro vote and one-third of the white vote.

I approached the people wherever I could find them, in night clubs and lodge halls, in churches and PTA's and tenants' associations and on the corners. I visited all the areas of the district that I could. I did have some whites invite me to their houses where they would have a small group of people. I didn't see my opponent too much in the campaign.

I answered all the questionnaires that you get from people like the League of Women Voters and the Voters Guild, and I went to all of their forums. My position was in the meetings that I could do the job better than my opponent.

In the general election, I got to know my Republican opponent very well. He sought the Negro and the white vote; he had paid Negro workers, I'm told. He apparently was well financed—he had spot announcements on Negro radio stations. He had at least one mailing to all of the more than 20,000 voters in this district. I appeared on many programs with him.

I don't know where our techniques differed. I ran the same kind of campaign, a sort of direct and positive campaign, in which I tried to meet as many people as I could. I felt if I could get to the voters personally, they would give me a fair shake, would get to know me, and get to know about my qualifications.

I noticed in both campaigns there was an effort to identify me in the white community. I suppose they wanted the white voters to know I was a Negro. I thought they knew it, but they wanted them to be sure. They printed up a little statement on a sheet of paper, put each man's picture on the top, put his education and affiliations, and didn't say if he was Negro or white; but the voters would know, because of the fact that I was an officer in the Atlanta Negro Voters League and a NAACP lawyer.

I was called by some young white folks in the district out there. They called and said, "Horace, we got a letter in the mail today. It had your picture and your opponent's picture on it. It didn't do you any harm. It showed who you were and what your qualifications were. I think that maybe that's going to show that you are better qualified than your opponent."

Well, the immediate effect of the campaign was that it was kind of a unifying factor. At that time we had only had one man elected to state political office, elected in '62. My election was thought of by many in the community as a second step in the political process. It must have had a unifying effect, because without a great amount of money and so forth, I was able to get at least 90 per cent of the Negro vote in the general election. There were other factors—the President was running and things like that. At the same time, I think it helped to stimulate interest in politics in this area, and it added to the fact that the Negro people thought they were getting a larger voice in government by having another representative.

Generally, I would ask prospective candidates to seek to understand politics and the way it works and to seek to know something about the job they're trying to get and to realize that getting elected to political office is a kind of complicated and sophisticated process. It's true that some people might have gotten elected to office without the greatest amount of effort, but that's not the way it works. I would have them know that this is not

something you do just because you want to do it.

To know something about politics, you've got to know something about people. A man doesn't get elected to office just because he's out there. It requires some technique, it requires some know-how, it requires some ability. Not to say he's got to be a Ph.D. or anything like that, but he's got to have some ability with people, he's got to be able to reach them, and to persuade them and to mix with them.

Of course, it's going to require some money, and that's one of the hard things about it, especially in the Negro community; because Negroes haven't been used to paying for politics. They've been used to white politicians who generally have the money when they come to the Negro community, but they must be told that when a man runs for a job that pays \$4,200 a year and sometimes spends more than that to get elected, there must be something else to it. If they want good candidates, then the people will have to support them.

Basically this is a business unto itself. It's not just a part-time occupation. Some of the jobs might be part-time. Generally, know what the job is all about, know that politics is a hard kind of business and know that it's basically dealing with people. They (candidates) need to also know that you don't go in it to get wealthy. You might go broke before you get in.

## Q. V. Williamson



*Q. V. Williamson is a member of the Atlanta Board of Aldermen. A real estate broker and businessman, Mr. Williamson was born in Atlanta in 1920 and educated there. A Republican, he ran twice for alderman in Atlanta's city-wide non-partisan election and was elected in September, 1965. His candidacy was by far the most expensive and most professional of those chosen for this survey.*

I ran first in 1961. The Atlanta Negro Voters League had agreed to back Mr. A. T. Walden. At the last minute, he got sick and withdrew from the race; and they asked me to run—which was a mighty short time, you know, to get ready or to organize a campaign in 5½ weeks before the primaries. This was a real disadvantage that I had at that time.

There were two other Negroes running, but the Voters League was not backing them. So there were three of us running at the time, for three different seats. I decided to run after the League came to me and said that Mr. Walden was not going to run. You see, they had a strategy meeting and decided that they shouldn't run but one Negro at this time, because that's all we could get elected. Then in the strategy meeting, they decided who had the greatest possibility to win, and they ranked them. Walden ranked first, and they had me ranked second and they had J. C. Daugherty ranked third.

In the first election I got support from Negroes as well as from the

whites. But I was so short in notice getting into the race, I did not have time to organize and build up real support in the Negro community or the white community. In the first campaign, I got financial support from the Negro community and the white community. But, in the first campaign I would say that 80 per cent of the support came from the Negro community and 20 per cent came from the white community. In the first race I got 39,000 votes, and my opponent got 41,000.

The next time I ran in 1965, I had time to really organize a political campaign, to set up an office, and to get a staff and some volunteers. I started a good three months before the election because this was a city-wide campaign. And I got a good organization in the white community. As a result, I was successful on the second go-round.

We had to campaign over the whole city, and we did hardly any "knocking on doors." But we had organizations in practically every precinct. Of our campaign budget, 60 per cent of it was spent on newspaper, radio and television advertising because of its being a city-wide campaign. I had a public relations firm in both campaigns to handle that part of the campaign professionally.

I had the same opponent both times. He was white. He had less money, less workers in both races.

In the first campaign in '61, the Negro constituents were confused because they thought all the Negroes were running against each other, and it was hard to straighten that confusion out. But in the '65 campaign, I think we had less confusion in this area because of the experience of the '61 campaign; for it was realized after the earlier election was over that the Negroes weren't running against each other.

Well, in the second campaign, I was the leader with some 29,000 votes. The incumbent, who ran second, only had 17,000; and the third man in the race, who was white also, had 15,000 votes. In the runoff, it was a landslide for me. In the runoff, we didn't have as many people voting as we did in the primary. I got some 30,000 votes to my opponent's 15,000. I made the same speech in both Negro and white communities and distributed the same kind of literature.

I don't know of anything I would do differently. It's hard to say, of all the things you do in a campaign, which was good or which was bad when you were successful. So I don't know that I would do it any differently because I know all the things that we did, put together, meant success.

I don't think I could have been elected had I not been a Republican, because I couldn't have gotten the amount of white votes, mostly from the North side, which is where most white Republicans live. It has been demonstrated in Atlanta that white Democrats will not vote for a Negro, regardless of what party he belongs to. But the white Republicans will vote for anybody running in a campaign with a Republican tag on him if he's white, blue, red or yellow.

Of course, my advice would only be advantageous to those who would run in a city-wide election; because I know here in Atlanta the elected



officials who get elected out of a district don't use the same technique I used. In a city where white people are about 60 per cent of the registered voters and the Negroes are only 40 per cent of the registered voters—which means that Negroes can't elect anybody city-wide by themselves—you've got to have a combination of Negro and white votes in order to be elected.

All cities have a politics peculiar to themselves. But I can tell you this: My analysis of the political situation in Atlanta is that there have always been three huge groups of voters in Atlanta, and the combination of any two of them means election. One huge group is the segregationists, the other huge group is the Negro, and the third huge group is the people that the power structure influences in the white community. And these are usually your "liberals."

Unfortunately, in Atlanta, the Negro group has always had to align with the power structure. Some of us refer to it as the "unholy alliance." But the Negro group is not able to ally with the white segregationists because their views are too diverse, so this was the only other group they could ally with. And in my election, what I did was put the power structure with the Negro group.

I was able to get the endorsement of the daily newspapers. This is important. Most politicians tell you that it is equivalent to 10,000 votes, so I would advise everybody who is running for city-wide races, if they can, to get the daily papers' endorsement.

My public relations firm designed all ads. In my first race, the public relations firm designed some ads, and every profession was represented in this ad by a hat. The blue-collar worker was represented, the white-collar worker was represented and the professionals were represented by hats. The ad indicated that I was for everybody. This was their technique that they came up with, it wasn't mine. Usually if you run in a city-wide race, you certainly need a public relations firm. Not only did they take care of my ads in the newspaper, radio and television, they took spot polls to tell me which parts of the city I needed to go into in person and which parts of the city we needed to put more placards in. This was a great help. This you only get when you buy professional help.

I sat down with my public relations agent and he worked out the platform with me, as to the things we ought to put in our platform and the things we ought to talk about in the city election. The city government, you know is the government closest to the people. It provides more services for the people and the people expect more services from it. In our platform, all we talked about was improving these city services, getting better garbage collection, keeping the streets clean, getting better lighting in some of the poor areas, and making improvements that the city could make for the people.

This was our whole talk: that I was better prepared and better qualified to do these things than the two people I was running against.



## Thomas Edward Wrenn

*Thomas Edward Wrenn was defeated in his race for the Birmingham, Ala., city council in November, 1967, in a non-partisan municipal election. Born in Sumter County, Ala., in 1932, Mr. Wrenn was graduated from Parker High School in Birmingham and received training as a dental technician. In 1968 Wrenn was an unsuccessful National Democratic Party of Alabama (NDPA) candidate for Congress.*



We have something like more than one-third of the voters. In other words, we have about 47,000 registered Negroes within the city limits and about 71,000 whites.

I was the only Negro in the race out of 25 running for city council. I decided to run about two or three weeks before the election. I had gotten some inside dope on a conspiracy by the white power structure not to have any Negro in the race. That's how I got in.

I had to borrow the qualifying fee.

Some Negroes said that if I got in the race, I couldn't get the support of the white power structure or the newspapers; but we never had their support. They said that if I got in the race, the incumbent mayor would surely lose, just because I was in the race.

We had a campaign against police brutality and various other activities, and people knew me in the city. I had been lambasting the administration. I set out to sweep city hall, to get the five council seats and the mayor. I campaigned on the idea of putting new faces in city hall.

My money came from Negroes, from little people on the street, from anywhere. The thing is, no one put up any money to back me. The whole campaign cost some \$900. I had one television spot and one radio spot, and that was in the runoff. The local affiliate of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference was my headquarters.

In terms of organizing, I had people; but I didn't have the money. The people were the determining factor. As a lot of people said, "He's not the only Negro who ever ran," but now some say, "He's the only Negro who ever ran who raises the issues that affect our lives."

I knew that I had to win without a runoff, because in a runoff the white power structure will double-team you. In the primary, you had, in all of the primarily Negro boxes, not one box that voted more than 50 per cent. So it was the apathy of the Negro people themselves that didn't turn out the vote, but I did get in the runoff.

We had some so-called bourgeois Negroes betting that I wouldn't even get in the runoff. A lot of people were betting I would make a lot of money. After I made the runoff, two or three middle-class Negroes did give a contribution. But not \$50 or \$100. I went in debt about \$200.

If I had won, I would have been the only and first Negro to hold public office in Birmingham. What happens, in a city election here in Birmingham, you have to run at large. You have five seats open and you must vote for five councilmen. If you vote for just one, your ballot is void. The campaign

was as the Negro press carried it: "Wrenn and four others." You vote for five and one mayor.

I was trying to get Negroes to understand the strategy of the whole thing, that we should put up three Negroes to run. But they were waiting for white folks to tell them who to run. I said, I don't care who they are, but let's get three to run, because when you vote for five, you're going to vote for me. That puts the white power over here; and if we can use our votes to vote for three and two others, we can bargain with the power structure. If you can't deliver, you can't get service. We had the balance of power. We still have it.

What the white folks are trying to do now is bring in Homewood, which is 90 per cent white. They want to bring in Center Point. They tried to do this before the election, and they still want to do it now. We're in a bargaining position now.

During this thing, there were more Negroes threatening my life than white folks.

I'm strictly a non-party man. I don't think that Negroes at this stage can align themselves with either the Republican or Democratic party, but whatever party offers the most for us. In my kind of politics, if you've got two rascals in and two rascals out running against them, then put out those two rascals that are in and teach them a lesson.

I went door to door, house to house. It was done mostly with regular mass meetings, meetings in different areas, different blocks and groups, up and down the alleys, going to people, directly to the people. I used a bicycle to drive around. I out-pollled the incumbent mayor; I beat him by five votes. They had a million dollars backing him, and I didn't have a dime. I ran the strongest race ever run by a Negro in this particular state. I didn't have anybody paid, but I had about 100 volunteers. You had all these movement people, all the civic leagues. I could have won, even in the runoff. But we were going so fast, we couldn't educate the Negroes about the opposition.

But you have to start at least six months before the election. I only decided to run about three weeks before the election. I would do it a whole lot differently. I would start earlier and set it up so well and have it so organized that every hamlet and village would be touched daily. I won't reveal how I'd do it; because if I reveal that, there's no telling what would happen.

We were able to raise the issues of open ditches and unpaved streets, and they're still talking about it now. If I hadn't gotten in the race, these issues never would have been raised. People like Emory O. Jackson, editor of *The Birmingham World*, will tell you, "He didn't win the seat, but he really won because his platform is the one they're arguing over right now in city hall." The campaign had a heck of an effect on the city. It changed the thinking of city hall.

It did it because we elected those cats. This is one time the Negro can say that he was the dominant factor on that new administration.



# Summary

Two conclusions stand out after reading Julian Bond's interviews with recent black candidates in the South.

The first is that virtually every black candidate who runs in the South is, in a very real sense, an "activist." Almost to a man, the black candidate is seeking office with the hope of improving the lot of black people in his community, in the region, and in the nation. Most—if not all—say this with deep sincerity. At least some of these are bitterly disappointed later when they find, as they often do, that there are severe limitations on what a single officeholder can do, particularly a black officeholder in a roomful of white officeholders.

The second conclusion is that black people campaign for office in the South pretty much the way that white people campaign. There is, often, one important difference. Black people don't have the sort of money that white people have to spend on politics. Therefore, black candidates tend to have very small campaign budgets. It's amazing how well some black candidates fare with almost nothing to spend.

The nineteen candidates interviewed in this booklet offer what seems to me a good overview of how black candidates in the South conduct their campaigns. They also offer sound, down-to-earth advice on how to handle typical situations and problems.

Of course, what works for one candidate will not necessarily work for another. There are marked differences, in much of the South, between campaigns in rural areas and urban areas. Tactics may differ in large campaigns and small campaigns. Tactics may differ according to the Negro-white registration breakdown. Each candidate and potential candidate using this booklet will have to decide which suggestions to use and which to avoid. Each will have to chart his own course in the light of local conditions, selecting the approach which seems best for his own situation.

Perhaps the suggestions in this booklet can best be summarized under

four headings: I, Pre-Campaign Planning; II, The Campaign Itself (research, finance, organization, techniques, and special problems); III, The Election Itself; and IV, Post-Election Analysis.

## **I. Pre-Campaign Planning**

The first decision to be made is, of course, whether the time is ripe for a black candidate to run. What is the Negro registration? Can black voters be expected to turn out in large enough numbers? Will they stick together or split? Are white votes needed? If so, can enough white votes be counted on? Does the white electorate seem ready to vote for a black candidate?

It may be found that the first need is a registration drive in the black community. It is recognized, of course, that some black candidates run despite the registration odds in order to get important issues aired. And sometimes a black campaign can be a means of encouraging blacks to register.

Next a decision must be made on when and how to run. The candidate could enter a party primary, in which case the choice would have to be made between Democratic and Republican primaries. Or the candidate might prefer to run in the general election as an independent. Advantages and disadvantages of party labels have been discussed in many of the interviews in this booklet.

Several candidates interviewed by Mr. Bond made the point that preparation for a political race might begin months, even years, before the actual decision to run is made. Some background of involvement in the community is important—indeed, almost essential. It helps to have been active in church, civic, school or party affairs. It helps to have demonstrated some concern about the problems of the community and the problems of black people. These are steps toward making one known to the community, and—as any politician would say—being known to the voters is the most important part of any campaign.

Several of the interviewed candidates mentioned the importance of getting an early start. Also mentioned were the handicaps shouldered by getting started too late—although a late start sometimes is deliberately chosen as a matter of campaign strategy.

An early start means first contacting people in the community—grass-roots and leadership—to see how much support could be expected. It might mean getting commitments from political leaders, newspapers and others before these sources of support get committed to other candidates. In many communities in the South black leaders hold meetings, both formal and informal, to select black candidates so that candidates will not cancel each other out by seeking the same office.

And now a personality note suggested by the interviews conducted by Mr. Bond: Politics is not a game for the thin-skinned. It is a rough, demanding undertaking. For black candidates in the South, it might mean unbelievable pressures and temptations. It might mean threats, both economic and physical. Therefore black candidates must expect to make

sacrifices in terms of both time and money. Although it doesn't cost a lot of money for black candidates to run in many cases in the South, it helps to have economic security in order to withstand economic threats and pressures. One must have the time for campaigning and one must be ready to devote long, hard hours to campaigning. Victory doesn't come easy.

## **II. The Campaign Itself**

### **A. Research**

Once the decision has been made to run for a certain office, the next step is find out everything there is to know about that office. This means, in a word, research.

What are the duties of the office? How much is paid in salary and/or fees? What has the incumbent done or failed to do? What are the issues facing the community? What, if elected, would you do about them?

One after the other, the candidates interviewed in this booklet stressed the need to be well informed. Often this means burning the midnight oil and doing one's homework. It means talking to people about issues during the day and going home to read the background material at night. It means researching the answers. It is humiliating to make a public appearance in the course of a campaign and to be found uninformed on an important issue. This is the height of embarrassment for any candidate, black or white.

To be sure, information about local offices and important issues traditionally has been denied to Negroes in the South. Sometimes it is hard to find out what one needs to know. This means that black candidates must dig and work all the harder to get the information they need.

Once the facts have been determined, the candidate develops campaign issues and a platform. These might include the need for trade schools, a food program, a fairer tax rate, fairer law enforcement, etc—depending, of course, upon the area and upon the office being sought. It is wise to be frank and truthful about issues. It is unwise to overreach and make unrealistic promises, for these have a way of coming back to haunt all but the luckiest politicians.

In short: Know the issues, know the facts, offer some answers, and present them truthfully and honestly.

### **B. Finance**

It costs a lot of money to run for some offices, and it costs very little to run for others. So the amount of money needed depends on the job being sought. In any case, an early note of caution should be sounded: If campaign funds are going to be required, make sure they are in sight before the campaign begins. A little money can go a long way in some circumstances. But on the other hand, a poorly financed and poorly



organized campaign might brew a bittercup of disappointment for both the candidate and his supporters.

Money is a major problem for many black candidates in the South. Some have to borrow money even to pay a qualifying fee, and thus are forced to enter the campaign late whether they want to or not. Some are forced to seek minor offices because they don't have the money for high qualifying fees and expensive campaigns. Often, because of their color, black candidates are shut off from the business and industrial sources of campaign funds that are routinely available to their white counterparts. Thus, many black candidates are forced to fall back on small contributions raised in the black community (and, to be sure, this has its healthy aspects). Some black candidates are surprised and delighted to find that they can run on a shoestring and get elected, at little or no personal cost.

Nevertheless, certain sources of funds are available to black candidates. Candidates in rural areas find rallies, barbecues, church meetings and the like useful for raising campaign funds. In urban areas, it might be teas and receptions. Labor unions often assist black candidates in cities. Sympathetic whites are another possible source. Interested whites in other communities have been known to send contributions to Negro candidates about whom they have heard. Then there are certain donations that can be in the form of services: the use of an automobile or gasoline, the use of office space, telephones, posters, printing, etc. Finally, in some areas, especially in the urban centers, the same sources of campaign money that are open to whites are open to blacks.

Another note of caution about finances: Be careful where the money comes from, particularly if the amount is large. Nothing can subject politicians to more pressure than taking large campaign contributions that might have strings attached. No politician should accept any donation that might keep him from carrying out his program if elected. Some states have laws limiting the sources and amounts of campaign contributions. Try to find out all you can about whether there are such laws covering the office you are seeking.

Where Negro candidates are running as a group, or "slate," it is common to pool both income and outgo for the campaign. In this way, the cost of organizing and running a campaign is shared, as is the money-raising.

## C. Organization

The size of a campaign organization depends, of course, on the office being sought. Some campaigns involve dozens and even hundreds of people. Others are one-man affairs, in which the candidate himself does all of his campaigning. Often the size of a campaign organization will depend on the number of people in the community willing to help.

If there is to be a campaign organization, the first step is the selection of a campaign manager. To a certain degree, the candidate himself always manages his own campaign. But if the campaign is large—say city-wide

or county-wide—it helps to have a campaign manager. The manager might be paid or he might be volunteer (usually it's the latter), depending on the money available and the amount of work he is expected to do. In large campaigns, there are many details and many routine assignments that can be left to a campaign manager. In very large campaigns the candidate who tries to be his own campaign manager and handle all the details is a little like the patient who tries to be his own doctor or the defendant who tries to be his own lawyer.

If the campaign is a large one, a paid secretary to answer telephones and make appointments also can be a big help. The candidate in a major campaign might even hire a small office staff, including a public relations specialist. Beyond that point, however, the help is generally volunteer. In a small campaign, the entire organization usually is made up of volunteers.

The next step is the selection of a campaign headquarters. In smaller efforts, of course, the candidate's home or office might be the campaign headquarters. For larger races, it is useful to have an office or building, with a telephone or telephones if possible, in which the work of the campaign can be organized and carried out. Such headquarters also provide a place where campaign material and equipment can be stored and where the candidate and his various committees can meet.

Depending on the size of the effort, the candidate and his campaign manager might appoint a number of committees. Some candidates like to have an advisory committee with which they can meet to plan strategy, make decisions and decide what to do and say. This committee usually is made up of a few old friends and trusted advisors who know the area and its politics well.

Sometimes candidates in urban areas like to organize by streets and blocks with a captain for each area. Sometimes these block workers are organized into committees and are given kits of campaign material to distribute. Other duties, such as knocking on doors and seeking out unregistered voters, can be assigned to these block workers.

Other committees can be formed for such purposes as telephoning, forming car pools, sending out mailings, arranging rallies, putting up posters, and so on. Committees also can be formed for such things as doing research and writing platforms, if these jobs are not handled by the advisory committee described above.

Volunteer committees can do a lot to make the candidate's job easier, just as can a campaign manager and a campaign staff. Committees also are a good means of getting more people involved in the campaign and committed to it. But the candidate must not take it for granted that every committee will function effectively and get the job done. It is essential to check behind committees frequently to make sure that they are carrying out their assigned tasks.

More and more candidates are learning, by the way, that young people with an interest in politics are extremely valuable campaign workers. Young people can bring vigor and enthusiasm to a campaign, and those who are especially devoted will put in long and hard hours of work. Schools and colleges are excellent sources of campaign volunteers.

## D. Techniques

Techniques of campaigning will vary, depending upon the candidate and the area in which he is running. Most candidates nowadays are stressing the personal approach—door-knocking, hand-shaking and person-to-person campaigning in the streets, in the fields, and at the crossroads. Most urban candidates now are talking about reaching all types of voters, including people in bar rooms, pool halls and other places previously passed up by vote-seekers. Many rural candidates stress the need to attend church meetings, revivals, suppers and the like, and to approach pastors for support and assistance. Some candidates, urban and rural, have short talks they are prepared to make to groups of voters, small and large, if the occasion presents itself as the candidate “makes his rounds.”

Other fertile places for campaigning include lodge halls, union halls, community centers, shopping centers, and neighborhood or “country” stores. Coffees and teas, whether arranged by the participants or by the candidate, are a good means of meeting small groups of voters in an informal home setting. Most candidates try to visit around among civic clubs and other organizations, and many try to get opportunities to speak to these groups. Some seek formal endorsements from civic clubs, labor organizations and the like.

Under normal circumstances, the candidate should try to be as cheerful and as polite as possible in his contacts with voters. He should not get offended if he encounters groups or individuals who disagree with him. However, he should be pleasantly firm in his convictions. A candidate who shifts with each and every political wind soon loses respect—and votes.

Public relations and advertising are important parts of any campaign, large or small. Some of the larger campaigns have hired public relations advisers, public relations firms, or both. These public relations workers write and distribute press releases, plan and place advertising, and assist the candidate in dealing with the media. They might also advise the candidate about getting editorial endorsements.

The value of an editorial endorsement varies, depending on local conditions and circumstances. There are times when a newspaper endorsement is extremely valuable. Understandably in many cases, you may feel that the local editor is totally against you. Nevertheless, there is no harm in requesting an endorsement, and it doesn't cost anything to ask for it. Regardless of whom they endorse editorially, the press is supposed to be fair and impartial in its news coverage of campaigns and elections, and candidates are entitled to demand this fair play in the news.

Commonly used campaign materials include the following: posters, billboards, buttons, bumper stickers, cards, flyers, pamphlets, leaflets, brochures and book matches. Other forms of advertising include newspapers, television and radio. For reaching black voters, radio stations broadcasting to Negro audiences are particularly effective. Some communities allow the use of front yards for displaying billboards and posters during political campaigns. Other devices are loudspeakers, soundtrucks, and signs displayed on cars used for campaigning.

Some candidates and groups of candidates print sample ballots, or "tickets," showing the voter how to mark his name on election day. As explained previously, candidates running as a team, or "slate," can share the cost of advertising and publicity, just as they share other costs.

It is important to know that there are state and local laws governing the distribution and use of various campaign devices, especially on election day. For example, there are regulations in some places on passing out cards and other materials near the polls and there are regulations in some places about loudspeakers and sound trucks. The candidate should try to find out as much as possible about these regulations before making his decisions (within the budget available) about what to use.

Careful decisions must be made about advertising and buying campaign materials. These are expensive items and might well be beyond the means of a budget for a small campaign. Black candidates might find themselves heavily out-spent by their white opponents. As already mentioned, this simply means that the black candidate has to work harder to make his campaign dollar go further. Many do.

## E. Special Problems

While most of their problems are standard for all politicians, many Negro candidates in the South face the additional problem of dealing with the white majority. Of course, quite a few black politicians in the South represent predominantly black or all-black districts and thus do not face the problem of seeking white votes. On the other hand, some Negro candidates—including several interviewed for this booklet—face the necessity of getting white votes to win.

Getting white votes isn't easy, but most black candidates running in areas with white voters indicate that they make the effort. There is *some* evidence that whites, especially in urban areas, are willing to vote for black candidates on the grounds that Negroes are entitled to representation. Moreover, some whites are willing to vote for attractive black candidates just to "prove" to themselves that they aren't as prejudiced as they thought they were. Always, of course, there is the hope that whites will vote for blacks on the simple basis of qualifications. In any case, black candidates who have white voters in their district quite often recommend that a dignified effort be made to win these white votes, or at least some of them.

Some black candidates are able to recruit white campaign workers. Students, young people and the academic community seem especially willing to campaign for black candidates. These white supporters can be put to effective use in knocking on doors in white sections, in campaigning downtown and in shopping centers, and in holding coffees, teas, rallies and the like in white neighborhoods. A few black candidates have been able to get large display advertisements signed by prominent local whites for use in local newspapers.

Sometimes white candidates are able to use racism to defeat black candidates. On other occasions, however, racist approaches backfire, benefiting the black candidate. In some areas, especially rural areas,

Negro candidates have an advance party that goes ahead of them to make sure that areas to be visited are safe for campaigning.

One after the other, candidates interviewed by Mr. Bond stressed that the black vote should not be taken for granted. They stressed that a thorough job of campaigning should be done, with grassroots voters as well as with the leadership element. Several noted that civil rights groups can help in mobilizing the black vote.

Since Negroes in the South largely are new to the political process, some are easily misled by white employers and others about the mechanics of voting. Negro candidates must be constantly on guard to dispel rumors and deliberate spreadings of misinformation that can blunt the impact of Negro votes.

### **III. The Election Itself**

A whole campaign—three months, six months, a year or more of planning and work—can go down the drain with a poor performance on election day itself. The voters must turn out. Beyond that, the candidate must have the best possible safeguards for seeing that every ballot is fairly counted. Unless these two election-day steps are taken, all can be lost.

Voter turnouts are a special problem for black voters and candidates in the South. Southern black people, in general, do not have the sort of financial resources for get-out-the-vote activities that whites have. As a rule, Negroes do not have the money for expensive telephone pools, transportation pools, baby-sitters, etc. The result, often, is low voter turnouts in the black precincts.

Nevertheless, by making heavy use of volunteers and donated services and equipment, black politicians can do a better job of getting out the vote on election day. A lot depends, of course, on the size of the campaign and the resources available.

On election day in many parts of the country, candidates use what is known as a "check-off" system. In some form or another, it can be used in practically any get-out-the-vote effort:

The first step is to obtain a list of registered voters—either a complete list or a list for the wards or precincts upon which the campaign is concentrating. Sometimes this voters list is officially available. Sometimes it must be obtained through a house-to-house canvass, or through some other unofficial means. Sometimes it must be purchased from local registrars, and sometimes it can be obtained without charge. In any event, a voters list of some sort—and as complete as need be—is an important tool in contacting voters and getting them to the polls on election day.

It is useful to have some sort of campaign headquarters—a central point of contact—in full operation on election day. The headquarters should have one or several telephones and the number or numbers should be well advertised and publicized prior to election day. Operating out of



this headquarters are the various election-day committees—telephoners, baby-sitters, drivers, poll watchers, poll checkers, and others. Voters should be able to call this headquarters number if they need rides to the polls, if they need babysitters, or if they have information about election irregularities, etc. Someone should be on duty at the headquarters to answer each call and see that something is done about it. If the caller needs a ride to the polls, the information should be relayed to the transportation committee. If a babysitter is needed, the caller should be told how this service is to be furnished. If an election irregularity is reported, it should be referred to someone at election headquarters (a lawyer, if one is available) who knows election laws and rules.

The voters list should be organized so that parts of it can be carried to each voting place. Then one, two or (if possible) three poll workers should be stationed at each voting place. They should have pencils, note paper and the voting list for that voting place. Then the poll workers check off each voter who comes in to vote. They should stand as close to the voting place as allowed. They should know the voters of the community (young people who have lived in the area all of their lives are good for this task). They should arrive before the polls open and stay until they are relieved. Arrangements should be made for having a sandwich or light lunch that can be eaten at or near the voting place.

Election headquarters can remain in touch with the poll workers by having them report in regularly by telephone, or by having someone from headquarters going from polling place to polling place by automobile. Regular checks should be made during the day on how many people have voted at each polling place. These checks can provide election headquarters with information about how many people are voting, and how many are white and how many Negro.

Late in the day, usually about mid-afternoon, the list of those who have voted is taken to election headquarters or some other designated place. If possible, it is a good idea to have a telephone number written down in advance for each voter. (Some election workers like to use small index cards, with a card made out in advance about each voter, giving name, address, telephone number, etc. Then, on election day, these cards can be distributed among a number of telephoners for purposes of contacting them on election day.) If a voter who is believed to be friendly to the candidate has not been to the polls by mid-afternoon, the telephone committee gives that voter a call. If the voter needs transportation or a baby-sitter, these services are offered.

Cars can be sent out into the neighborhoods to seek out voters who do not have telephones. Sound-trucks, where they are permitted, can be sent into neighborhoods where turnouts are running particularly low to urge the voters out. A special effort could be made to meet mill shifts as they get off to remind the workers to vote. (Someone at election headquarters should be familiar, by the way, with local laws allowing workers time off for voting. Many states require employers to give employees enough time off, with pay, to cast a ballot.)

Telephoners should be brief and courteous. They should remember



that their job is to contact as many friendly voters as possible before the polls close. While the voter is on the phone, double-check and verify his address if he asks for transportation. This will prevent the sending of badly needed automobiles and drivers in search of wrong addresses.

Depending upon the size of the campaign, there may be a campaign headquarters—with telephoners, drivers, and all the rest—in every precinct. Or there may be just one such location. In any event, get busy before election day to make sure there will be plenty of space for everybody to work efficiently. Some candidates like to have a large blackboard upon which such things as voter turnouts, by precinct, can be posted periodically during the day. As mentioned previously, candidates running as a team can share in the headquarters and get-out-the-vote effort.

A final, but extremely important, election-day unit is the poll watchers. These must be carefully selected and carefully briefed prior to the election. Their task is to see that nothing illegal or irregular goes unnoticed or unchallenged. This involves seeing that registered voters are not denied the right to vote, and that unregistered voters are not allowed to vote. It involves seeing that voters are treated properly and are given proper instructions, and that voters asking for help are given adequate help. It involves watching the clerks and managers to see that they are conducting the election legally.

The poll watcher should arrive at the election place before the polls open and stay until all the votes are counted. He should be prepared to stay all day, or until relieved by a fellow poll watcher. He should bring along an adequate supply of pencils and note paper in order to take down, carefully and in detail, any irregularities or suspected irregularities. If serious and repeated irregularities seem to be occurring, he immediately notifies campaign headquarters or some appropriate authority.

The poll watcher's duties are somewhat different from those of the poll workers or "checkers." The latter simply seek to check off voters, by name, as they arrive at the polls. The poll watcher, however, concentrates on looking for irregularities and possible fraud.

State laws vary as to what poll watchers can do—how close they can stand, how they can challenge ballots, etc. For this reason, it is most important that poll watchers be carefully and fully briefed and that they have a good knowledge of election laws. For black candidates, by the way, it is just as important—sometimes more important—to have poll watchers at white precincts as it is to have them at black precincts.

## **IV. Post-Election Analysis**

Now the voting is over and the ballots are counted. But win or lose, one major step remains: post-election analysis.

The tired candidate may want a few days of well deserved rest, but usually there is no time to waste before the day comes to plan the next election.

As soon as precinct-by-precinct returns are in, take a good, hard look. Where was the turnout large and where was it small? Where was the

vote most favorable and where was it least favorable? What went wrong in the low-vote areas? Was too much time spent in one area and not enough in another? Did part of the campaign organization fall short? If so, why? Were the right issues emphasized? Were the right people contacted? Were the right methods and techniques used? Was the planning inadequate? Would a better registration drive have helped? Was the advertising and publicity appropriate? How did the results compare with previous election results? What trends are apparent?

This is the sort of solid information that the candidate can use as a foundation for future campaigns. The candidate who merely *guesses* what went wrong leaves himself open to repeating the same mistakes.

As several of the candidates interviewed by Mr. Bond indicated, some Negro candidates in the South have been remarkably successful even with limited political know-how. As more knowledge, skill, and experience is gained, even larger victories can be won in the future.

MARVIN WALL  
Director of Research  
Voter Education Project

**MAY 1969**

