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Article I, Section 3
Walter Mondale and the Seats of Power
The 1964, 1984 and 2004 Democratic National Conventions: A Civil Rights Evolution
A Museum Exhibit – Final Report

Working with our team of four students and two museum curators our exhibit, Article I, Section III Walter Mondale and the Seats of Power opened on December 12. The main opportunity of the exhibit was turning our archival research and emerging themes on Mondale's career and political achievements into a meaningful and interesting display for the public. Communicating a coherent message through historic documents, photos and artifacts was our most difficult challenge since each student's research focused on a different aspect of Mondale's career. Our projects range in scope from domestic issues such as civil rights to international policies concerning the Super Power dilemma in relation with South Africa. Over a period of six weeks our team met to refine our research and display ideas to publicly capture Mondale's work through words, photos and artifacts.

The main argument of Article I, Section III centers on Mondale's strong moral convictions guiding his success in relation to his public and personal struggle to articulate these beliefs through his policies and politics. Accountability, integrity, equality and inclusion are all part of this theme. In debating how to best illustrate this argument the team emerged with the concept to display the three significant seats of power for Mondale including Elmore, his birthplace; the 1964 Atlantic City Democratic National Convention; and, the Vice Presidency.

This idea became the centerpiece of the exhibit by taking these three ideological seats of power and displaying them with three chairs. The chairs are on a platform surrounded by three types of walls to demonstrate the consequences of Mondale's experiences with the vulnerability, pain and competing demands of being an influential politician. One wall is concrete with an actual piece of the Berlin wall wedged in an open space to represent the difficulty of foreign relations during the Carter-Mondale era. Another side has jail bars to emulate the civil rights struggles. The third side is a picket fence playing on the idealism of Americans for the perfect domestic life while in reality families are changing as more women are work full time. Mondale's risk to nominate Geraldine Ferrarro as Vice President in 1984 is symbolized by the picket fence being in disrepair and that American life was changing.

My part of the exhibit focuses on Mondale's extraordinary influence on civil rights for the Democratic Party and the United States from 1964 to 2004. I researched photos, documents and materials to demonstrate Mondale's personal commitment to equality, inclusion, basic human rights and evidence of its impact and results on institutional change.

During the 1964 Democratic National Convention (DNC) Mondale played a pivotal role in negotiations during a deeply divisive seating dispute between two Mississippi delegations. The all-white Mississippi delegation refused to let any of the mostly African American group representing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) be seated. Enormous tensions surfaced around personalities, traditions of white male privilege, pressure to change and the politics of the Johnson presidency and the nomination of a Vice President.

Crafting a compromise, Mondale suggested official seating for the white delegation with two at-large seats for the MFDP group. Not everyone was happy with the outcome of this negotiation, especially the MFDP, but it avoided a public, televised dispute at the DNC. Mondale promised to work with the MFDP to permanently change the rules governing Mississippi's delegate selection, and to provide for an inclusive and democratic process.

This compromise positioned Hubert Humphrey as the Vice Presidential nominee on the ticket with President Lyndon Johnson. In subsequent years Mondale's efforts substantially opened the door for many affirmative action reforms in the Democratic Party including opportunities for African Americans, women, Latinos, Asian-Americans and gays. Ultimately power shifted away from big labor groups and all white, male convention delegations to reflect the growing diversity of the American population.

Gathering documents, photos and artifacts to illustrate Mondale's influence on the 1964 DNC was interesting. Using the key argument framework of strong moral convictions and Mondale's public and personal struggle to articulate these beliefs is carried throughout this part of the exhibit. Primary sources include but are not limited to:

- Photos of Mondale, Hubert Humphrey, Aaron Henry and Fannie Lou Haimer
- Delegate badge from 1964 DNC
- Ticket for the 1964 DNC
- Variety of photos and artifacts

Twenty years later, as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, Mondale chose Geraldine Ferraro as his vice presidential running mate. The principles he brought to the 1964

convention, the values of equality and inclusion, influenced his decision to broaden the discussion of civil rights and equality for women.

Selecting Ferraro energized the Democratic Party and the convention. One strength of Ferraro was that her nomination united DNC delegates which avoided serious internal party conflict. While Mondale received a bump in the polls after the DNC, Congresswoman Ferraro's luster wore off rather quickly. A scandal shook her campaign with allegations that her husband was in trouble financially and that he had connections to organized crime. While she did a masterful job of handling the press during this difficult time, it still cast a shadow of her nomination and damaged the overall campaign. The Mondale-Ferraro ticket was branded by the Republicans as "Tax and Spend Liberals" and they ultimately they lost the election. Despite these difficulties Mondale will be remembered for nominating the first female vice-presidential candidate of a major political party.

Mondale's nomination of Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 as his running mate and his role in the 1964 DNC were driven by his moral and legal convictions. His efforts supported the implications for expanding participation in the Democratic Party and American political life.

Primary sources include but are not limited to:

- Mondale-Ferraro 1984 photos including 1984 DNC, ERA Button wearing Mr. and Mrs. Mondale
- Campaign memorabilia including buttons
- Poster of Geraldine Ferraro portrayed as the Statue of Liberty
- Other related artifacts

In 2004 when Mondale chaired Minnesota delegation to the DNC in Boston his values and beliefs about civil rights came full circle. In the forty years since the struggles for racial equality at the 1964 DNC the Democratic Party had moved significantly towards inclusion as demonstrated by the photos of Mondale with Minnesota delegates who came from across the spectrum of American culture including women, Latinos, Hmong and gays and lesbians. One of the political signs for Barack Obama, an African American Illinois Senator also demonstrates how far the party has come.

Primary sources include but are not limited to:

- Political signs and buttons from the 2004 Convention
- Delegate badges
- 2004 Convention large photo, several smaller photos
- Photo of Mondale waiting to announce the delegate count for Minnesota
- Official delegate materials from the DNC

During one class visit Vice President Mondale shared his speech *Atlantic City Revisited: The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the 1964 Democratic National Convention*. (Atlantic City) He described the “elimination of official racial discrimination” to be “the most profound change in America in my lifetime.”

The argument of my work suggests that Mondale made a significant contributions to that civil rights movement; that his involvement in the 1964 DNC and its racial divide forced the Democratic party to expand its policies of inclusion, that Mondale’s choice of a woman as his running mate in 1984 challenged the national civil rights discussion to around gender in politics;

that the 2004 DNC embodied the substantial progress on civil rights as demonstrated by the photos and signs from the event; and finally that those events represented significant risk for Mr. Mondale.

I expect the exhibit viewers to learn about Mondale's role in the evolution of civil rights in America and to understand the emotion and risks behind the policies and politics he supported. Viewers at the opening event on December 12 were particularly struck with the 1984 photos of Mondale with Ferraro. Several viewers shared with me how meaningful her nomination was to them personally and how it demonstrated that Mondale was a visionary and ahead of his time. Other comments included that the 2004 display captured the emotion of the DNC in particular with the floor photo of Mondale, Congresswoman McCollum and the diverse Minnesota delegation. For the 1964 display viewers commented how painful it was to see the struggle of that time period. Another take away for viewers is that the flow of the exhibit chronologically demonstrates the aging of Mondale and the rise, peak and ebb of his remarkable career.

From this experience I learned a variety of key lessons including:

1. Throughout the 40-year period of Mondale's life from 1964-2004 he had a significant impact on shaping the civil rights movement in the Democratic Party and the United States.
2. Mondale continually adhered to a set of principles and values that served him well in his career but that also put him at considerable risk at times.

3. Mondale was a visionary leader who was ahead of his time with civil rights, particularly with the nomination of Geraldine Ferraro as Vice President.
4. Research work for a museum exhibit is about identifying themes and transforming them into an attractive display which takes a different set of skills than the traditional researching and writing a paper.
5. Researching and sifting through the archival research is slow and time consuming often taking several hours to access the unique photos or document for the Article I, Section 3 exhibit.
6. There is a vast difference in researching a topic for a paper compared to selecting a topic for a museum exhibit because of the need for ideas to be attractively displayed. A better approach might have been looking first at what archival material is available per topic and developing exhibit themes based on availability.
7. Students were not completely grounded in archival research or organizing museum exhibits which required the museum curators to spend an enormous amount of time assisting students to transform their ideas into the display.
8. As a student taking a risk on the museum exhibit was worthwhile and an excellent learning opportunity.

References

Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965 (Washington University Libraries Film and Media Archive, 2005).

Gillon, S.M. (1992) *The Democrats Dilemma Walter F. Mondale and the Liberal Legacy*. New York, NY Columbia University Press

Goldman, P.L. (1985) *The Quest for the Presidency*. Minnesota Historical Society
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Greider, W. (1984) "Give 'Em Hell Fritz!". Minnesota Historical Society
Call # E840.8.M66 G73

Mondale, W.F. (2000) *Atlantic City Revisited*. Minneapolis, Minnesota

Stafford, R. (1984) *A Minnesota Look at the 1984 Democratic National Convention*.
Minnesota Historical Society Call # JK2313 1984 .S72

Survey Gives Edge to Reagan-Bush Ticket (1984, July 15) *Newsweek*

Congressional Quarterly Reports

Minnesota Historical Society Archives

1. Minnesota State Delegate List for 1964 Convention
Location: 147.H.13.10 (F)
Note: This is faded so might be difficult to display. It has many famous Minnesota names including Mondale, Rolvaag, Freeman and Humphrey.
2. Letter from Gene Howard of Tulsa Oklahoma about the Oklahoma delegation and the Vice Presidential Vote
Location: 147.H.13.10 (F)
Note: Good copy. Outline a poll of the delegation and VP preferences
3. 1964 Campaign Handbook for Liberal Legislators
Location: 147.H.13.10 (F)
Note: Contains many votes and strategies
4. 1964 DFL Campaign Handbook
Location: 147.H.13.10 (F)
Note: Talks about DFL Platform
5. Mondale Inventory, October 6, 2006
Location: Box No. 16

Note: Excellent color photos of 1984 campaign

6. Mondale Inventory, October 6, 2006

Location: Box 17

Banner Made by American University students

7. Mondale Inventory, October 6, 2006

Location: From HHH Exhibit

Note: Fifteen color 35mm transparencies at 1984 DNC, (photographer Bruce Hoertel)

8. Mondale Inventory, October 6, 2006

Location: From HHH Exhibit

Note: Framed photo of Mondale, his wife and another woman wearing ERA buttons

9. Mondale/Ferraro Bumper Sticker

Location: MHS Museum Object

Call #: 1988.33.789

10. DNC National Convention Ticket, 1964

Location: MHS

Call #: 1992.297.9

11. DNC Delegate Badge

Location: MHS

Call #: 1992.297.2

12. Bumper Sticker

Location: MHS

Call #: 1992.297.13

13. Robert Barrie Papers

Location: Collection of Humphrey Forum, University of Minnesota

Note: Comprehensive collection relating to the 1964 DNC

14. Martin McNamara Papers

Location: Collection of Humphrey Forum, University of Minnesota

Note: Documents relating to the organization of the Democratic Party and its presidential campaigns from 1960 to 1972.

15. Humphrey Forum Collections

Note: Photographs, recordings, documentary and manuscript materials

Potential Items for Exhibit – Several Displayed

1964

1. Convention Delegate List
2. Okalahoma Delegation Letter
3. Campaign Manuals – Liberal and DFL
4. Chair from the Atlantic City Convention
5. Photos of the MFD delegation
6. MFD Ballot, includes Humphrey-Johnson
7. Photos of MFD Meetings
8. Photos on the DNC Floor
9. Initial objects such as the roll call from the 1964 DNC
10. Potential objects such as a Chair from the DNC location in Atlantic City
11. Variety of other sources listed in the reference section of the paper
12. *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years 1954-1965* (Washington University Libraries Film and Media Archive, 2005).

1984

1. Photos of Mondale/Ferraro
2. Campaign Mementoes from 1984 Convention
3. Chair from Philadelphia Convention
4. Letters from Minnesota
5. Mondale-Ferraro 1984 photos
6. Including 1984 DNC, ERA Button wearing Mondale and Joan
7. Mondale-Ferraro Political Cartoons
8. Commentary on Ferraro Selection by well known women
9. Campaign memorabilia such as buttons, stickers, etc...
10. Newsweek Color Photos
11. 1984 Banner Made by American University students
12. Goldman, P.L. (1985) *The Quest for the Presidency*. Minnesota Historical Society
Call # E879.G64
13. Greider, W. (1984) "*Give 'Em Hell Fritz!*". Minnesota Historical Society
Call # E840.8.M66 G73

2004

1. Political Signs from the 2004 DNC
2. Photos from the floor of the DNC including Mondale and Congresswoman Betty McCollum waiting to announce the Minnesota delegate count
3. Maps, materials from the DNC
4. *Homegrown Democrat*, Garrison Keillor, guest delegate
5. Delegate badges
6. Political buttons, t-shirt and lanyard
7. Large rectangular photo of entire 50 state delegation

This paper was written for a seminar with Vice President Mondale during the Fall 2006 at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute.