

In 1970, four racially moderate Democrats won governors seats in the American South -- Dale Bumpers in Arkansas, Reubin Askew in Florida, John West in South Carolina, and Jimmy Carter in Georgia. In *Mighty Peculiar Elections*, Randy Sanders explores these campaigns and shows that while each reflected aspects of its states unique history and political idiosyncrasies, taken together, they signaled changes in attitudes and the politics of race in the South as well as the nation as a whole. Most southerners by 1970 had come to realize the futility of overt opposition to federal civil rights policies and no longer wanted to hear political candidates singing the refrains of white supremacy. Bumpers won Arkansas Democratic primary over former Governor Orval Faubus, who had symbolized southern intransigence since 1957, when he ordered the state militia to prevent school integration at Central High School in Little Rock. Askew defeated Floridas Republican incumbent governor, Claude Kirk, who seized a school district during the campaign in order to thwart a court-ordered school desegregation plan. Similarly, West ran against Republican Albert Watson, who spewed fiery anti-integration rhetoric, and Carter succeeded Lester Maddox, who had established and maintained his hard-line segregationist reputation by autographing ax handles, mementos of the weapon he used years earlier to prevent blacks from entering his restaurant. None of the victors in 1970 talked much about civil rights during their campaigns; they all downplayed, evaded, or finessed racial issues when those topics arose. Sanders describes how the successful candidates carefully shaped their campaigns, rejecting the rhetoric of resistance without uttering strong words in favor of desegregation. A shared campaign strategy of new populism emerged among these candidates -- a strategy that promoted the interests of common folk, but relied primarily on image and style rather than issues to attract support. The candidates also perceived the diminishing power of party loyalty, political machines, and power brokers that controlled large groups of voters, and began to appeal directly to the electorate through television, employing effective strategies that emphasized their best qualities. The cool images of reasoned calm played well on television and prevailed over the hot pictures of frenzied defiance. Using archival materials, media records, personal papers, and interviews, Sanders shows that although these elections did not mark a total transformation of southern politics, they did suggest a subtle shift in the balance of power away from those who continued to roar the rhetoric of racism and resistance towards those who espoused a more moderate position. By focusing on one moment in a period of great political change, *Mighty Peculiar Elections* shines a spotlight on the evolving racial attitudes of the New South.

Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D. Cota, Websters American English Dictionary/Thesaurus, Diplomatic Handbook, The Realism Manifesto: A Vision to Reclaim the American Dream, You Can Teach Someone to Read; A How-To Book for Friends, Parents and Teachers, Practical Exam Preparation Guide of Clinical Skills for Athletic Training, An historical, political, and moral essay on Revolutions, ancient and modern.,

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