

Remembering Barry Goldwater

Rising from city councilor in Phoenix, Arizona he became a U.S. senator and the 1964 nominee of the Republican Party for President of the United States. And he did so while running against the flood tide of liberalism that had swept the nation. At age 89, Barry Goldwater died on May 29th at home in his beloved Arizona.

Goldwater won his Senate seat in 1952 by defeating Democrat Ernest McFarland, then the upper chamber's Majority Leader. During the 1950s, Goldwater attracted the attention of hard-core conservatives for numerous principled and outspoken stands. Goldwater was one of only 22 senators who stood by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, and he earned the enmity of Establishment Republicans by describing an Eisenhower budget as "a dime-store version of the New Deal."

So greatly did Goldwater appeal to conservatives that they begged him to run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1960, a move the Senator personally squelched. When the Republicans met that year to nominate Richard Nixon, they learned of the Nixon-Nelson Rockefeller rewrite of the Republican platform. Goldwater told the press he was "sick over it," that Nixon had moved "far to the left," and that it constituted a "surrender" to the liberals within the party. His stock among conservatives grew larger.

Goldwater's personal manifesto, *Conscience of a Conservative*, appeared in 1960. In it, he attacked taxation and spending, called for a return to constitutional restraints on government, and urged a war of attrition against "the communist empire." Four million copies were sold and the Goldwater bandwagon grew sufficiently to carry him to the Republican nomination in 1964.

President Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 had elevated Lyndon Johnson to the White House. Already known for ruthless politics, Johnson orchestrated one of the dirtiest presidential campaigns in U.S. history in 1964. A Johnson television

ad showed a little girl picking a daisy followed by a nuclear mushroom cloud, followed by an urging to "Vote for Johnson" instead of the untrustworthy Goldwater.

Goldwater's vote against the 1964 Civil Rights bill on constitutional grounds gave enemies a further opportunity to characterize him as a "racist," another totally unfair epithet. As its leader in the 1940s,



Barry Goldwater: 1909-1998

he had integrated the Arizona Air National Guard, even before President Truman integrated all of the nation's military services. Never a racist, he was a supporter of the NAACP long before gaining national attention.

In his acceptance speech for the Republican nomination, Goldwater thundered his now notorious line (a paraphrase of a line from Cicero), "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice.... Moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue." His liberal opponents picked this phrase to use against him in the campaign, and on election day, he won only six states and commented that he knew his chance for victory had all but vanished when JFK was murdered: "Americans weren't ready for a third President in 14 months." Frustrated by all the nastiness thrown at him, he later stated, "If I hadn't known Goldwater, I'd have voted against him myself."

The power of the liberal media showed itself in numerous ways during the 1964 campaign. Goldwater was maligned for his eminently defensible "extremism" statement while maligners completely ignored a remarkably candid call for socialist tyranny issued by Lyndon Johnson. In a January 15, 1964 speech at the White House, Johnson sounded like a resurrected Karl Marx when he proclaimed: "We are going to try to take all of the money that we think is unnecessarily being spent and take it from the 'haves' and give it to the 'have nots' that need it so much."

Johnson's 1964 victory was a landslide. But Goldwater's effort spawned a movement that continues to impact America's politics. In contrast, Alf Landon's 1936 run for the White House won only two states and Walter Mondale won only his home state of Minnesota in 1984. Neither of these men left any legacy whatsoever.

Goldwater's try for President cost him his Senate seat, 1964 being a re-election year for him. But he managed to return to the Senate in 1968 for three more terms. In his later years, he remained predictably outspoken. For example, in his 1979 book *Why Not Victory?* he condemned the Trilateral Commission as "a skillful, coordinated effort to seize control [leading to] the creation of a worldwide economic power superior to the political governments of the nation states...."

As the years piled up for the Arizona icon, his libertarian streak showed more prominently. He unfortunately added a call for homosexuals in the military to his longstanding support for abortion. He then astounded followers by backing victorious Democrat Karan English against a conservative Republican in a 1992 congressional race. One former admirer commented, "I was a Barry Goldwater conservative. I still am, and he's not."

But Goldwater will nonetheless be remembered as a conservative trailblazer, a remarkably friendly American who always let everyone know exactly where he stood. ■