

# Washington & Lee's

1976

Mock

Democratic

Convention



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## Greetings . . .

Highly regarded throughout the nation for its accuracy and realism, the Washington and Lee Mock Convention will once again in May of 1976 try to predict the presidential nominee of the party out of power. Regarded by *Time* as the "biggest and boomingest" of all such conventions, and by *Newsweek* as "the most realistic," the W & L Convention stands alone among other affairs of a comparable nature. Its record — 10 right out of 15 attempts — has gained high reputation in knowledgeable circles; the last convention was reported in such renowned newspapers as *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, and *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.

The politicians themselves likewise found it worthwhile to participate in the convention. Their campaign offices have in the past donated funds and made available their political expertise to student "floor managers."

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the Convention is not simply its reputation for accuracy however, but rather its ability to duplicate the processes of the actual National Convention. To be sure, diligent, factual research is undertaken years in advance and constantly revised up until literally the moment before the balloting begins. But never is spontaneity sacrificed. Never does the atmosphere which is so endemic to these peculiar events fade. The end result has always been a valuable insight into a unique political institution. Last minute calls to state officials, bargaining between delegates, the pervasive influences of floor managers, thorough knowledge of election laws and primary results — all are factors crucial to the operations of the National Convention and hence to the Mock Convention as well.



Beginning on Friday afternoon with the traditional parade through the streets of Lexington, continuing that night with the platform session, and ending Saturday with the keynote address and actual selection of the nominee, the "delegates" will participate in what promises to be one of the most memorable occurrences of their college career.

We, the chairmen of the 1976 Mock Convention, enthusiastically look forward to the role we will play in the months ahead. The committee has planned this brochure to introduce you to W & L's quadrennial phenomenon and we wholeheartedly invite you to participate. There will be no lack of tasks to perform, not only during the Convention, but especially in the year or two prior to May of 1976.

Anticipating the hectic, busy months ahead, we extend an advance thank you to everyone who takes an interest in the Convention.

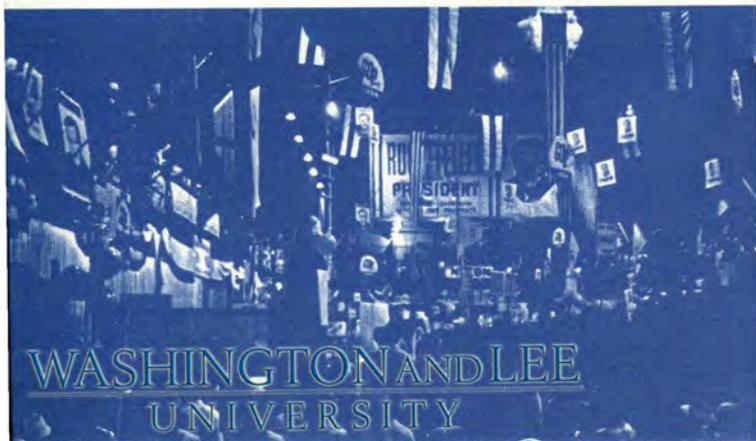
Sincerely,

KEN RUSCIO  
 REED MORGAN

LIBRARY OF  
 WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY  
 LEXINGTON, VA. 24450

*A difference of opinion . . .*

*. . . is what makes horse races — Mark Twain*



WASHINGTON AND LEE  
 UNIVERSITY

## PART I

### Sixty-Eight Years of Authenticity

Washington and Lee's Mock Convention, a unique educational experience, has become the nation's most widely noted collegiate political event — primarily because of the continuing emphasis which students have placed on its accuracy and realism. Students have conducted 15 convention, and in 10 of them have accurately anticipated the eventual nominee of the party out of power in that year. The authenticity and attention to detail shown by the Washington and Lee Mock Convention always attract the interest of national politicians and the media.

Washington and Lee's first great Mock Convention triumph came in 1924, when students solved an apparent stalemate in the Democratic party by nominating John W. Davis. That summer in New York, when the real convention deadlocked between McAdoo and Smith, the Democrats nominated Davis as a compromise candidate on the 103rd ballot.

Between 1948 and 1968, no Mock Convention was wrong. Eisenhower, Stevenson, Kennedy, Goldwater and Nixon all received the Washington and Lee nomination — months before receiving their party's, but just as surely.

In 1972, for the first time in 20 years, the Mock Convention missed the mark. For the first time ever, Washington and Lee picked the wrong Democrat, missing McGovern by three votes on the third ballot and drafting Kennedy on the seventh. And for 1976, Washington and Lee students are already at work on the task of predicting history again.

The Mock Convention is an effort of students themselves. It touches every part of the University and extends beyond it. Faculty members in the humanities and social sciences, in the arts, in journalism, in law and in every other field will counsel students throughout the year of preparation where

*Steering Committee meetings began in September, 1973.*



*Distinguished Keynoter for 1972,  
Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter.*

they can furnish expert advice and opinion. The University makes its facilities wholly available to students in staging the Mock Convention. It remains for Washington and Lee students themselves to organize and coordinate the elements involved in holding a successful, accurate Mock Convention.

Students organize state delegations for political research — but the effort does not stop with political work. Students must arrange the Mock Convention's financing. Part they contribute themselves; part is contributed by alumni, parents, state political organizations, and foundations interested in collegiate leadership education.

Washington and Lee students receive many other kinds of support from national political professionals — because of the enthusiasm the Mock Convention is able to create through its genuinely educational character. Its accuracy in technique and in results has given the Washington and Lee Mock Convention a pre-eminent national reputation. Although it is neither the largest nor the oldest, it is the most accurate and the most authentic — and therefore the most respected.

*Washington and Lee's Mock Convention is not a popularity poll. It does not seek to reflect students' personal choices. Rather it reflects, as far as is humanly possible, the way the various real state delegations will vote on the first ballot at the real national convention. On subsequent ballots it attempts to anticipate shifts in delegation commitments, as the give-and-take of national politics shapes the final outcome.*

## PART II

### Three Years of Preparation

Intensive work toward 1976 has been underway at Washington and Lee since last spring, when Mock Convention co-chairmen Ken Ruscio and Reed Morgan began financing efforts and speaker selection. The Convention staff and delegation chairmen have also been named and their work is underway.



1964 W & L keynoter  
Dr. Walter Judd  
served as keynoter for  
the actual Republican  
Convention in 1960.

The greatest responsibility lies with the state delegation chairman and research director. Diligent effort by each is crucial, particularly in light of changes in methods of delegate selection since 1970. They must establish close contact with state party leaders and with those men and women who are likely to become delegates. The Washington and Lee Mock Convention is scheduled two months prior to the actual convention in Miami and before primaries in California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Michigan; attention to real party officials therefore becomes essential.

A model national platform, drafted after realistic committee hearings, will be accepted at the Mock Convention by a prominent Democrat on behalf of the national party.



Harry Truman, "Mr. Democrat," gave the delegates a rousing welcome in 1960.

On May 7, 1976, the sixteenth Washington and Lee Mock Convention will take place in Doremus Gymnasium-Convention Hall. After the traditional festive parade through Lexington, student delegates will hear the keynote address by a prominent Democratic figure. That night, students will nominate Presidential candidates, and balloting begins the following morning. Once a nominee has been selected by the Mock Convention, a delegation will call on him personally — and Washington and Lee will then await the outcome of the actual Democratic Convention next July.

The Washington and Lee Mock Convention will in 1976 again play a role of major importance on the national political scene — the direct result of its accuracy and realism. Its pragmatic orientation will offer every student participant a priceless insight into this characteristic American institution, in a way that is unique in American education.

Citizen Nixon spoke on the W&L campus three months before receiving the nomination in 1968.





A Democratic parade for a Democratic convention.

## PART III

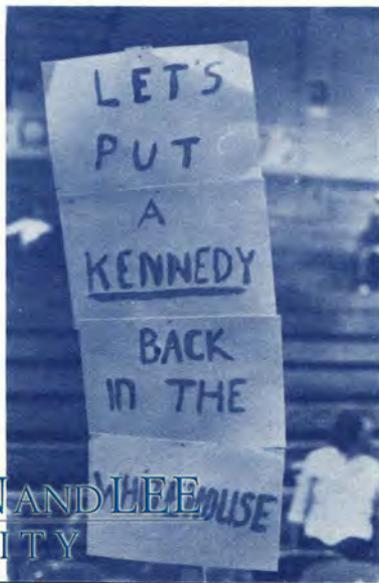
### A Question of Values

*What happens to the country, to the world, depends on what we do with what others have left us.*

—ROBERT F. KENNEDY

It may be true that the national nominating convention is an anachronism. Americans have disparaged the length, cost and dysfunction of the entire nominating process, and they have focused their attention on the conventions — logically enough, for these are central to the process. Television reveals only their dull formalities; often they serve only to ratify choices made elsewhere. National nominating conventions are not the best way, many critics argue, to select the man who will lead the nation for four years.

For that reason alone, it might seem pointless to simulate a national convention. Washington and Lee has been doing precisely this, every four years, for more than six decades; but the fact that it has become a great tradition at our University is hardly justification for continuing it in 1976.



And when it was all over

WASHINGTON AND LEE  
UNIVERSITY



*The gavel sounds . . . Three years of preparation goes to the line.*

Washington and Lee has been doing many things differently from year to year, reflecting — as it should — the constantly changing character of its student body. Traditions endure only as long as they offer meaning to each current University generation.

The Mock Convention *can* do this in 1976.

The Mock Convention remains a valid, worthwhile undertaking for the Washington and Lee student because the national convention, whatever its faults and excesses, is still a characteristic American institution. *No matter how we regard our national institutions, we remain ignorant of them at our peril.* One University community working alone cannot, of course, re-structure American politics — but its members, working together, can learn about the nominating process in a manner that will permit them intelligently to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the national convention. Only in this way can the individual student acquire the information and the perspective to judge whether or not the process serves the search for good national leadership. If he decides that it does not, then he may seek and apply remedies based on his own examination. If he decides that it does, then he has learned for himself how — and why. "Working within the system" can be appealing, after all, only to one who *understands* the system.



## Sixty-eight Years of Authenticity

- 1908 — RIGHT with William Jennings Bryan
- 1912 — WRONG with Judson Harmon  
(Wilson, a U.Va. man, got the nomination).
- 1916 — RIGHT with Charles Evans Hughes
- 1920 — No Convention
- 1924 — RIGHT with John W. Davis
- 1928 — RIGHT with Al Smith
- 1932 — RIGHT with F.D.R.
- 1936 — WRONG with Arthur Vandenburg  
(Landon got the nomination).
- 1940 — WRONG with Charles L. McNary  
(Wilkie got the nomination, and lost).
- 1944 — No Convention
- 1948 — WRONG with Arthur Vandenburg  
(Dewey got the nomination, he lost, too).
- 1952 — RIGHT with Dwight Eisenhower
- 1956 — RIGHT with Stevenson
- 1960 — RIGHT with Kennedy
- 1964 — RIGHT with Goldwater
- 1968 — RIGHT with Nixon
- 1972 — WRONG with Kennedy  
(McGovern got the nomination).
- 1976 — ? ? ? ? ?

*William Wheatly '08,  
founder of the  
Washington & Lee  
Mock Convention.*

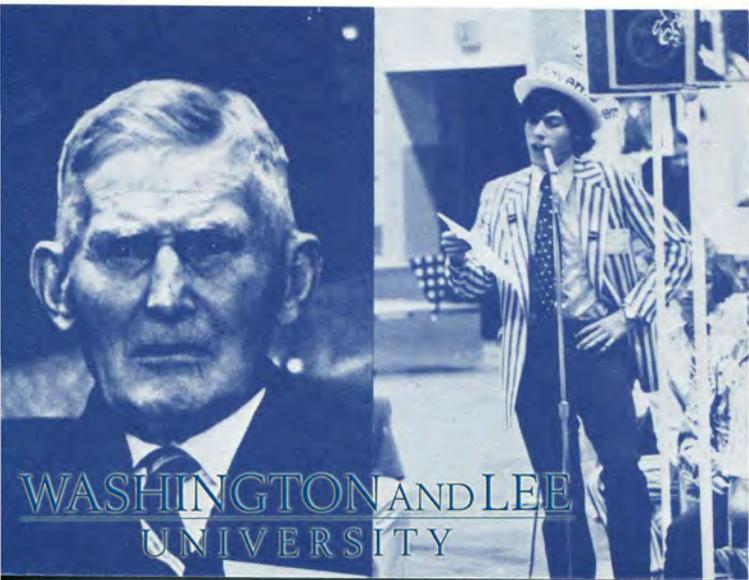
*W&L '74 — McGovern  
floor manager and  
perpetrator of a  
proud tradition.*



## About W & L . . .

*History* — Founded in 1749, Washington and Lee is the sixth oldest school of higher education in the United States. It derives its name from two great benefactors, George Washington, who endowed it with \$50,000, and Robert E. Lee, who served as its president from 1865-70 and greatly expanded its curriculum. Privately endowed, it is free of any control by church or state. The president is Robert E. R. Huntley.

*Offerings* — Washington and Lee has an enrollment of approximately 1,640 in its three main divisions: the College (of arts and sciences), the School of Commerce, Economics, and Politics, and the School of Law. Students work toward degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or Juris Doctor of Law.



*For Further Information  
Write:*

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1976 Mock Democratic National Convention  
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Lexington, Va. 24450

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