

Democrats' 'Lefty Driesell' strategy

D.G. MARTIN



What does the Democratic presidential primary race have to do with Davidson College basketball in the Lefty Driesell era of the 1960's?

You may have to read this column all the way through to get the answer.

But here is a big clue, just in case you do not have time to read to the end.

It has to do with "rebuilding the team."

Lots of old-line Democrats are worried about Howard Dean as their presidential nominee. He is new to the national scene, untested, and so anti-mainstream that they believe he will lose big-time in next year's general election. They worry that he might take down lots of other Democratic candidates with him.

Even though none of the mainstream candidates—

Kerry, Lieberman, Gephardt, or Edwards—has caught fire as Dean has, they would prefer to stick with what they know. If there has to be an outsider, they would rather it be Wesley Clark, whose army service gives him a free pass into the "mainstream."

They are looking for the best chance to win next year, and for all the excitement Dean is generating among Democrats, they think he will turn off the uncommitted middle-of-the-road voters who are the key to beating George W. Bush in the general election next year.

Naturally, they do not understand why the ultimate establishment Democrat, Al Gore, endorsed Dean.

Maybe Gore was thinking like Lefty Driesell back in

the early 1960s when his Davidson varsity basketball team opened the season with six straight losses. At the same time, Davidson's star-filled freshman team, including Fred Hetzel, Don Davidson, and Barry Teague, was on a winning streak and filling up Johnston Gymnasium whenever they played.

Lefty decided to give up on the slim chance that the varsity could have a successful season and decided to concentrate on building for the next year and the future. He pared down both teams to eight players each and combined the practices so he could work with the players who would be the next year's starters.

Some Democrats are coming to the same conclusion that Lefty did in 1961. "Let's work for the future and build the party - even if it means losing in the short run," they say.

They cite Barry Goldwater's campaign of 1964, which lost a landslide election to Lyndon Johnson.

In that losing election, Goldwater inspired thousands of young people and brought them into active politics. Their energy, organizing ability and commitment helped bring about a more moderate candidate's, namely Richard Nixon's, victory in 1968. These Goldwater recruits still form a solid core of strength for the Republican Party 40 years later.

These Democrats also mention George McGovern's campaign of 1972, which led to a disastrous defeat in the presidential election. But an enthusiastic core of newcomers to politics was drawn into that campaign. In 1976 these newcomers helped bring about a more moderate candidate's, namely Jimmy Carter's, victory. Many of these McGovern recruits remain solid rocks of Democratic Party strength even today.

So, these "Lefty Driesell" Democrats are thinking that a Howard Dean campaign, even a losing one, will draw to their party the same kind

of long-term strength that Goldwater's and McGovern's campaigns built for their parties.

Maybe this is what Al Gore was thinking about, hoping that Howard Dean's recruiting efforts will give Democrats the new strength and enthusiasm that can help a more moderate Democratic candidate win in 2008.

Someone, for instance, like Al Gore.

There is a footnote to Lefty Driesell's Davidson story. As soon as Lefty pared down the Davidson varsity and combined its practices with the freshman team, the varsity started winning. Before the season was over the varsity team established a new Davidson record by winning 12 straight games.

Lefty's strategy of building for the future worked. The future just came earlier than he expected.

Maybe the Democrats could be just so fortunate.

D.G. MARTIN hosts UNC-TV's *North Carolina Bookwatch*, which airs Sundays at 5 p.m.

RON WALTERS



Larger issues after Saddam's capture

Catching the brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein in Iraq is portrayed by the Bush administration as a big deal right.

And that's not surprising because it fits with the changing rationale for why Bush went into Iraq. Initially, it was the urgent need to find and neutralize weapons of mass destruction. Later, it was that Saddam Hussein had committed monstrous crimes for which he deserved to be removed. While it easy to agree with Bush about Saddam Hussein, it is also important to note that this is all beside the point.

While it could be a short-term victory for Bush, it also has the potential to change the tenor of the elections here. With the backdrop of Saddam's capture, there are heightened demonstrations and violence throughout Iraq, an indication that the militant opposition is attempting to send a signal that they still intend to resist American occupation. American troops were fired on and pro-Saddam demonstrations were held in a wave of anti Americanism that is not being widely reported and acknowledged in the U.S.

A more troubling possibility is that if Saddam wasn't in charge of the Iraqi resistance, it means there will be ongoing attacks on American troops and that, unfortunately, more of our boys will die in a needless sacrifice. This is almost guaranteed because of the embarrassment and shame felt by some Sunnis at the treatment of Saddam Hussein, who was in many quarters reviled because of his opposition to the United States.

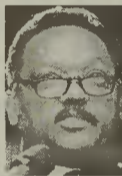
Almost unnoticed the middle of this, the leader of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai barely escaped assassination from a bomb, the day after Saddam Hussein was found. He was traveling over a bridge that his security detail normally used when he left the seat of government. Despite the fact that they will have to be more careful, there will be repeated attempts on his life and the life of the premier of Pakistan and perhaps even Turkey as well. In any of these three countries, if the resistance succeeds in changing the government support of the United States, the new dispensation could provide a real basis of support outside of Iraq, for the resistance activities in that country to continue.

Then, if the transition from the United States occupation of Iraq to a moderate Iraqi Governing Council fails and a militant Shiite government is established in its place, the U.S. stands to loose control of the situation on the ground and an Iranian-like situation could develop. In this case, the oil resources of the U.S. would certainly not be in the hands of Bush cronies and the long-term management of these resources not at all assuredly favorable to the U.S. As such, I can envision people raising the question: What was gained by the invasion?

RON WALTERS is director of the African American Leadership Institute and professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland-College Park.

Racial battleground, economic common ground

JESSE JACKSON



On Nov. 5 at Stratford High School, the largest school in Berkeley County, S.C., police launched a raid with their guns drawn.

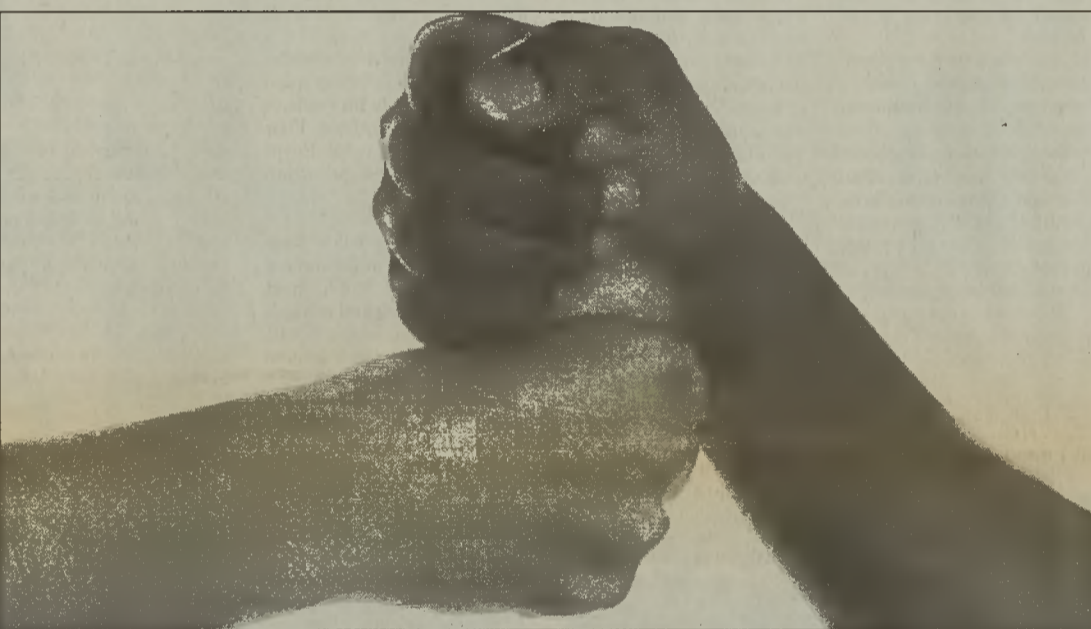
They handcuffed a dozen or more of some 100 students while unleashing dogs to sniff the students' backpacks.

They found no drugs; they made no arrests. Parents across the city were, not surprisingly, outraged and terrified for their children. On Nov. 7, the North Charleston police shot and killed Ashberry Wylder.

Wylder, a mentally ill man, was arrested for stealing sliced hand from a local store. He swung a knife at the policeman who arrested him. He was then shot to death, with witnesses saying that the final shot came after he was handcuffed.

We will march again in Charleston, a moral witness, calling on the officials of the school, the city and the state to act to remedy a pattern of excessive police violence against African-Americans. Police need better training and better pay. Action is needed to stop the violence.

These outrages that feed racial fears distract us from finding the economic common ground so vital to the New South. In the New South, we have learned to play ball together and to fight wars together. In the football stands, we cheer for teams based on their color of their jerseys, not the color of their skins. In the wars, we march together under one flag.



Yet, too often racial fears can still be used to frustrate the ability of working and poor people to find economic common ground. In South Carolina, one in eight people have no health insurance (and one out of every four goes without insurance at some point in the year). In South Carolina, more than 60,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the last three years, and now Georgetown Steel is closing. The textile jobs are going to China. Unemployment hit a nine-year high this summer. Wages are down; benefits are down.

In South Carolina, the budget crisis is forcing cuts in police and schools and vital services.

The economy of the New South was a direct product of the Civil Rights Movement. For decades, segregation not only locked out blacks, it helped impoverish the South. When you focus on keeping someone down in a

ditch, you have to stay down there with him. It was only after Dr. King and the end of segregation that the New South was possible. German investors built auto plants; northern capital invested in high tech work. Textiles were modernized.

But the limits of that change are apparent. South Carolina has too many workers who work for low wages, with no benefits, and no security. Its "right-to-work" laws frustrate the ability of workers to organize. Economic inequality grows worse, even as good jobs head abroad.

South Carolina, like much of the South, is still dominated by racial politics. The Republican Party built itself as the party of white sanctuary, playing the race card, embracing the Confederate flag, offering protection against pushy minorities.

But working families in South Carolina - white, black and Latino - don't

need protection from each other. They need to come together to gain protection from the special interests that benefit from their divisions. They need to elect representatives who will demand fair taxes, so that vital services aren't cut so that millionaires can get tax breaks.

They need representatives who will end the tax dodges and incentives that encourage companies to take jobs from here and more them abroad. They need representatives who will change the trade policies that are draining good jobs from this country. They need greater investment in education for their children, in health care for their families, in clean air and clean water for their health.

Racial fears still exist. The recent actions of the police only feed them. The marches for dignity will be met with hostility. So the challenge for the New South is

whether we can find economic common ground, even as we still struggle against racial fears and for racial justice.

The great battles over segregation were almost 40 years ago. Across the South, we've learned to work together, to play ball together, to fight together. We go to separate churches for the most part, but we are more religious, more conservative in moral values than the secular North. But now, for the vast majority of the South, the challenge is whether we can register together, vote together, and act together to empower workers across lines of race.

The result of that historic struggle will surely define the future of the New South, and of the nation.

Greenville, S.C., native and N.C. A&T State University alumnus JESSE L. JACKSON Sr. is founder and president of the Chicago-based Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

