

1986 Senate race much quieter than Hunt/Helms race

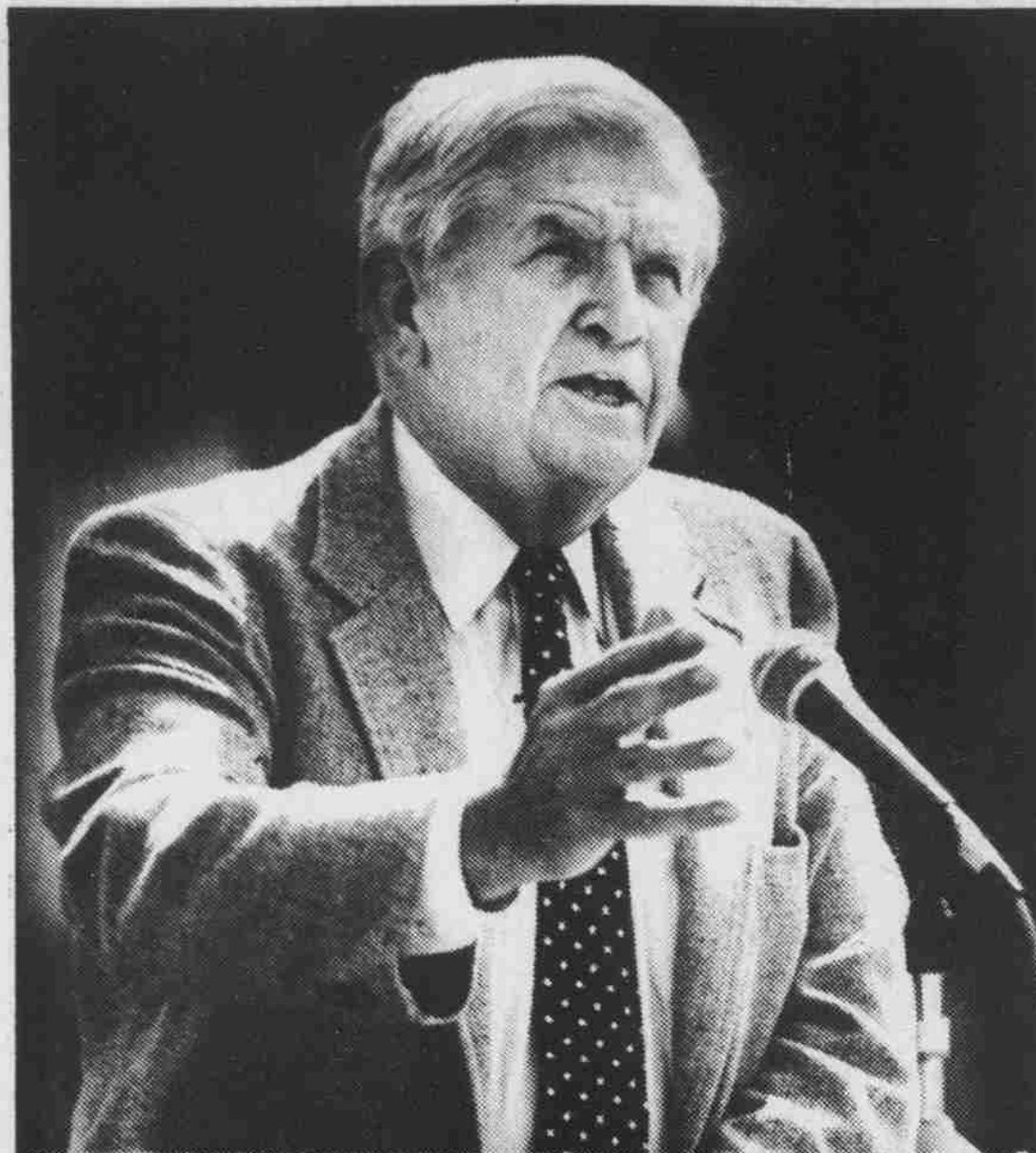
Two years ago at this time, North Carolinians witnessed and participated in a classic ideological battle between the Democratic and Republican parties. Everybody remembers how former Gov. Jim Hunt and Sen. Jesse Helms made "negative campaigning" a new catch phrase in the state's political circles. Millions were spent by both sides on television commercials — Helms portrayed Hunt as a "Mondale Liberal," linking him to higher taxes; Hunt, in turn, linked Helms to the death squads of El Salvadoran President Robert D'Aubisson, treating the N.C. public to scenes of corpses supposedly delivered to their state by the squads. It was the most expensive U.S. Senate race in history.

Some of the pageantry even found its way to the cocoon known as the UNC campus. Tables were set up in the Pit for both candidates; students wore Hunt/Helms T-shirts and buttons; fliers were shoved under dorm doors. The presence of a landmark political event was definitely felt.

There's a race this year that means just as much to North Carolinians as the Hunt/Helms spectacle, yet has received comparatively little attention. James T. Broyhill and former Gov. Terry Sanford are vying for the seat held by Sen. John East, who committed suicide last month in his Greenville, N.C., home. Broyhill was appointed by Gov. James G. Martin to replace East in the interim period before the election, the usual practice in such cases. With the former 12-term congressman from Lenoir tucked away in Washington, Sanford has been leading a surprisingly quiet campaign. His strategies consist of visiting the 100 counties of the state to meet voters of all political orientations. Although Broyhill launched a series of four television commercials over the summer, Sanford did not counteract with his own series as Hunt would have done. The airwaves were peaceful this summer.

Sanford, former Duke University president, said last year he would not run for Senate, then changed his mind and drummed up a campaign. He emerged as the leader in an interestingly crowded field of 10 Democrats to win the May 8 primary easily. "It became apparent that I would serve a good purpose," he said at a recent news conference. "There wasn't really anybody who could draw the party back together as I thought I could."

Since then, political analysts have brought up several strikes against Sanford. First, his age was a big factor; they worried that an individual in his 70s would be too old to



TERRY SANFORD

FOR U.S. SENATE

Terry Sanford

hold political office. Another strike is his lack of finances. Under a quirk in election laws, unusually high campaign contributions are allowed, and Sanford refused to accept the higher amounts. As of June 30, Sanford had raised \$1.4 million; Broyhill had \$2.19 million. It falls in the traditional pattern of Democrats having less money than Republicans.

The candidate's hope to rebuild the state's floundering Democratic Party has been blasted as well. The

party has not produced a win in the last three Senate elections and Sanford has been pursuing the mass roots-type of Democratic organization that has put past candidates in office. "We're organizing at a local level, which hasn't been done a while," Samuel H. Poole, Sanford's campaign manager, told the Raleigh News and Observer. "It gives, we think, a very broad base. We hope, a very deep one."

Most recently, it has been that Broyhill's Senate appointment

Jill Gerber
State/Nat'l Editor

ould give him an irreversible advantage over Sanford, who firmly agreed. "He got his picture in the papers more than I did," Sanford said. "But the campaign is the same campaign. He's still in Congress, so has not changed things much."

Regardless of the prophets' predictions, Sanford is thought to be head in the race, and his quiet approach is given the credit. But the Sanfordites are gearing up for an involved media campaign to begin after Labor Day, according to R. Harrison Hickman, Sanford's pollster. It should be interesting to see if the ads will attack his opponent or take a direct stand on nuclear power, an issue he has avoided since May 29. He then made a statement of support of Chatham County commissioners who dissented from a Shearon Harris evacuation plan. Broyhill has been a strong supporter of nuclear power from the onset.

The future status of the state's Democratic Party hinges a great deal on this election. A victory could mean a complete turnaround in the effects of the Reagan machine that helped sweep Martin and Helms into office on the conservative ticket. Most recently, Broyhill supporters brought up the left-to-right political labels again by writing a letter to Sanford addressed, "Dear fellow conservative." The Democrat responded that he was not a conservative, playing into the hands of the Broyhill camp. It all smells strongly of the tactics of two years ago. Maybe the serenity will be broken very soon.

Jill Gerber is a junior journalism major from Charlotte.



Jim Broyhill

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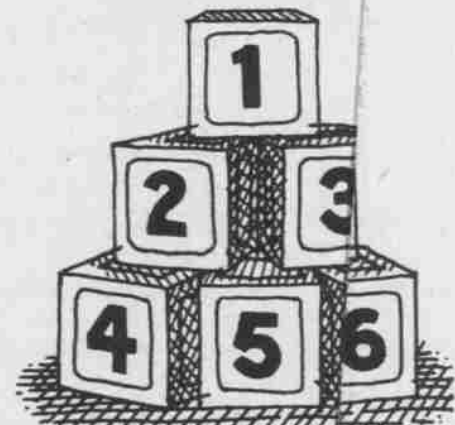
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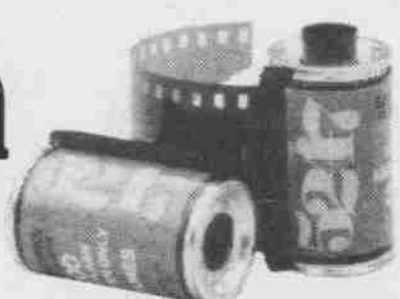
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