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WILLIAM WARREN SCRANTON



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IT WAS CERTAINLY NOT INEVITABLE that Bill Scranton would turn to politics. He never avowedly sought office. The office sought him—or rather his party leaders often turned to him—and his sense of noblesse oblige usually overrode any initial reluctance to seek public office. Upon returning from military service in World War II, he earned a law degree from Yale and returned to Scranton, Pennsylvania, eventually to work on behalf of local non-profit organizations attempting to attract businesses to the region (given the declining economy of northeastern Pennsylvania). In 1959, he became a special assistant to Secretary of State Christian Herter during the final years of the Eisenhower administration.

Back in Scranton, following his federal service, Scranton reluctantly accepted repeated offers by local Republican leaders to run for Congress in 1960, but once in the race, his hesitation about being a candidate disappeared. He and his wife, Mary, campaigned vigorously, going door to door and ultimately carrying the district by 17,000 votes over the incumbent, while John F. Kennedy was easily sweeping the district by 30,000 votes. His race for governor in 1962 followed a similar pattern. He was approached by party leaders, with the strong support of former President Dwight Eisenhower and U.S. Senator Hugh Scott, to run when a bitter split between two factions within the Republican Party made it difficult to reach a consensus over the party's nominee.

That caution and reluctance to seek higher political office may explain, in part, Scranton's late bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1964.

On a rainy day in February 1962, a cortege of black Cadillacs purred up the driveway of Delaware County GOP boss John McClure's Chester mansion. They carried the Commonwealth's Republican power brokers, including State Party Chairman George Bloom; Dauphin County's Harvey Taylor; Lancaster County boss Graybill Diehm; Cambria County boss Andrew Gleason; Philadelphia's Billy Meehan; Bucks County boss Fred Ziegler; C. Gilbert Hazlett of Chester County; PMA President James Malone; and Sun Oil lobbyist Harry Davis. All were desperate to sort out the GOP nominations for governor and U.S. Senator.

At the time, Democrats held both offices, as well as a statewide registration advantage. David Lawrence, party leader and governor, had kept Republicans out of the governor's mansion for 8 years—the longest GOP drought in state history—and factional fighting within the state organization threatened to keep the opposition in power. Superior Court Judge Robert E. Woodside headed one Republican faction, U.S. Senator Hugh Scott the other. Scott was unalterably opposed to Woodside's gubernatorial candidacy and was threatening to declare for the office himself if a compromise candidate could not be found. A host

of lesser candidates, including Congressman James E. Van Zandt, Montgomery County Commissioner Elkins Wetherill, and U.S. Attorney Walter Alessandroni, suited neither Scott nor Woodside. As the primary campaign season approached, it appeared that a bitter Scott-Woodside battle would split the party and allow Philadelphia's Richardson Dilworth to take his program of liberal reform state wide.

The negotiations continued in absolute secrecy for nearly a week while reporters set up camp in McClure's kitchen, awaiting word of a decision. On 2 March, the bosses announced the results of their deliberations. First-term congressman and political centrist William Warren Scranton was the compromise choice for governor. Not one of the party chieftains was willing to elaborate on the details of the negotiations. Whatever threats, pleas, promises, or commitments were made remained behind closed doors. They were confident, however, that the voters would elect a Republican governor in the fall. That confidence proved to be justified as Scranton polled 55% of the vote to Dilworth's 44%.

No sooner was Scranton elected than the speculation began among journalists and Republican insiders that a future presidential candidate had been elected as well. But the new governor immediately focused on his aggressive legislative agenda. He managed to get the state legislature to pass a sales-tax hike to end a fiscal crisis and a package of progressive legislation that included additional strip mine regulations, expanded civil service legislation, increased spending on education, and additional civil service protection for state employees.

The clear frontrunner for the Republican nomination in 1964 was Senator Barry Goldwater. As President Lyndon Johnson moved the country to the left, Republicans veered rightward with an energized conservative base and the likely nomination of Goldwater. His view of smaller government and a tougher stance on communism was applauded by conservatives, and they were determined to end the nomination of a succession of moderate Republican presidential candidates that preceded Goldwater.

The moderate wing of the party was not prepared to hand over the nomination to Goldwater. But the logical choice, Richard Nixon, decided to not run, and other moderates failed to derail Goldwater's inexorable march to the nomination.

Scranton remained neutral throughout the early stages of the process; he did not campaign for any candidate and did not pursue his own candidacy, including as a favorite son. But as the nomination campaigning moved into spring, he came under increasing pressure to become a candidate, especially when moderates Nelson Rockefeller and George Romney failed to stop the Goldwater juggernaut.

On April 9, he announced that although officially he was not a

candidate, he would permit his name to be used as a favorite son. Despite Scranton's position, his top staffers disobeyed his orders and organized a write-in campaign for the Pennsylvania primary on 28 April. Scranton won 220,000 votes, 58% of the total. Henry Cabot Lodge was second with 21%, Richard Nixon managed 10%, and Nelson Rockefeller received just 2%.

His vacillation over whether to declare an active candidacy ended on June 13 when Scranton told the Maryland State Republican Convention meeting in Baltimore that he would seek the Republican nomination. But why so late in the primary season would Scranton enter into what was seemingly a lost cause? First, Republican office holders had been complaining to him that they may face certain defeat with Goldwater at the head of the ticket. Second, he was concerned about Goldwater's opposition to the federal government's poverty programs. Third, Scranton was appalled that the Arizona senator had cast a vote to invoke cloture when the civil rights bill came to the Senate floor—in effect voting against the bill.

There was a final consideration involving the nation's most important Republican, former President Dwight Eisenhower. Ike got involved in the nomination contest when he called Scranton for a meeting at his Gettysburg home several days after Goldwater's California primary victory on June 2. The get-together produced some confusion. The governor believed that Ike wanted an open convention and encouraged Scranton to run against Goldwater. But in a phone conversation several days later, Eisenhower told Scranton he thought a Goldwater nomination was a foregone conclusion, and a challenge would rent the party apart.

To be sure, the delegate count was locked up by Scranton's mid-June announcement. Of the 1,300 total delegates, Goldwater had locked up 600; Ike's assessment was accurate. Still, the mathematics of the challenge did not daunt the Pennsylvania governor—he began a 25-state, 32-day, \$1-million campaign to win the votes of Republicans. A last effort to drum up support for the governor with a national writing and telegram campaign on his behalf failed, although some half a million replied. Still, there was little that Scranton could do to halt Goldwater's momentum.

Although resigned to defeat, the Pennsylvania delegation to the convention was not disheartened on its arrival for the opening of the San Francisco convention in July. Senator Hugh Scott was Scranton's floor manager, and he worked relentlessly to reverse the inevitable. The governor, keeping with precedent, did not attend the convention sessions but maintained a hectic schedule visiting the various state delegations. Rumors abounded that Ike had urged him to accept a vice

presidential nomination and that he was interested in the second spot on the ticket. Both claims Scranton vigorously denied.

With defeat inevitable, Scranton, a bit desperate, began to attack Goldwater's Senate record, something he had not done previously. He went after the senator for his civil rights record and his idea to sell off the Tennessee Valley Authority. But he was even more vocal in his criticism of Goldwater's support for permitting military commanders to use tactical nuclear weapons.

The first ballot count in the Cow Palace took a scant 30 minutes to complete, resulting in a resounding 883 to 214 Goldwater victory. The governor at least had the satisfaction of receiving the overwhelming votes of his own state delegation, 60 to 4. He also took the stage pledging his support for the ticket—a pledge he honored despite serious reservations that a Goldwater candidacy would damage other Republican candidates running in 1964.

Scranton proved prescient. The Goldwater candidacy damaged Republican candidates in the state and the nation. In Pennsylvania, they lost two statewide offices, two judgeships, two congressional seats, and control of the state House. Johnson carried the state with 65% of the vote. Nationally, he won 61% of the vote and 486 electoral votes, carrying 44 states. The Democrats increased their majorities in the House and Senate.

For Scranton, the year proved personally and politically disheartening. He decided that he would not seek elected office again, and despite efforts by many Republicans leaders to change his mind, he honored his own pledge.

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