



Photo by Mark Pynes

Former Pres. Gerald Ford came to Eugene last week to snipe at Democrats and support University economics professor Ross Anthony in his bid for the Fourth District congressional seat.

Ford reinforces Anthony effort

By Cort Fernald
Of the Emerald

The summer's political cease-fire ended abruptly last week when the Republicans brought one of their biggest guns, former Pres. Gerald Ford, to Eugene.

Ford came to rally political and financial support for Republican congressional candidate Ross Anthony. Anthony has drawn a tough battle in the Fourth District against four-term Democrat Jim Weaver.

Nearly 300 faithful GOP troops turned out in their parade best at the Eugene Hilton, paying as much as \$50 for a scanty lunch of seafood salad. State officials, including Treasurer Clay Myers, Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer, Eugene Rep. Larry Campbell and other GOP brass turned out to help raise \$12,000 to \$14,000 for Anthony's campaign while listening to the candidate and their former commander-in-chief Ford.

Much emphasis was put on the fact Anthony teaches economics at the University, and the troops responded with dutiful laughter when it was said "economics is a field his opponent chooses to ignore."

The applause was courteous — no more, no less. Anthony took the applause and praise shyly.

He appeared tentative as he rose from the dais and took the podium after being introduced as the candidate who would take to congress a new note of confidence and dignity.

Anthony's remarks were brief. He only sniped at the Democrats, leaving the broadsides for the former commander-in-chief.

"On the farms, on the docks and in the mills, I have watched this campaign rocket forward," Anthony said.

"Let them (the voters) have a real choice," Anthony concluded to the party faithful.

The audience rose en masse to give Ford an ovation. He politely motioned for them to be seated and smoothly launched into his speech.

It was a speech so at ease it couldn't fail. He started off in a jocular mode, ticking off in 4/4 time

Bob Hope one-liners about his own notorious golf game. Hope calls Ford "a hit man for the PGA," and says Ford plays so badly he "lost 2 balls in the ball washer." The GOP troops spooned this up as eagerly as they had the strawberry dessert.

"This is the first day I will be actively campaigning for 20 or 30 Republicans who can defeat incumbent Democrats," he said, adding that he would be returning to Oregon to campaign for Gov. Vic Atiyeh.

Ford set about fortifying his position before opening up on the Democrats.

"We (the country) are on the right track to a healthy economy and maintenance of peace in the world," he said, referring to Pres. Ronald Reagan's administration. But, he added, the Democrats control the legislative process. Reagan needs more Republicans in the House and Senate to provide additional support for his policies of peace and prosperity at home, Ford said.

Ford admitted he never met Anthony before that day. However, he said he was impressed with Anthony's "outstanding academic, educational background" and his "training as an economist."

"With all your assets, including your wife Kathy," Ford said, "you're going to win."

And then the salvos against the Democrats commenced.

Ford called Weaver ineffective, saying the Fourth District deserved better representation. To underscore this, Ford charged the Democrats left a "mess" — a "serious economic crisis" for Reagan when he took "the reins of government." Ford traced responsibility for the rise in unemployment, inflation and the prime interest rate to Pres. Carter.

The Carter administration and the Democrat-dominated Congress "blew it," Ford said.

Ending on a note of partisan optimism, Ford said that candidates like Anthony and other Republicans would turn it around if GOP troops "march shoulder to shoulder."

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