



## Reagan and Mondale collide in first debate

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale collided over economics, leadership and the politics of religion in their first campaign debate Sunday night, with the president ridiculing Mondale's deficit reduction plan and the aggressive challenger charging that Reagan's budget estimates have been "billions and billions of dollars off."

Mondale, far behind in the polls and hoping to rebound, unveiled an aggressive debating style from the start.

"I respect the president and I respect the presidency and I think he knows that," Mondale said of Reagan as he discussed the president's claim that the budget can be balanced without a tax hike. But he added that deficit estimates from the administration have been off "by billions and billions of dollars." Mondale belittled Reagan's responses about how his administration has shepherded the economy and domestic programs.

"I guess I'm reminded a little bit of what Will Rogers once said about Hoover," Mondale said. "He said, 'It's not what he doesn't know that bothers me, it's what he knows for sure but just ain't so.'"

Reagan went into the debate a solid favorite in the polls, and he struck a presidential pose.

He told the television audience estimated at 100 million viewers that he had instructed his advisers to "never" raise political ramifications of issues when they discuss them with him in the Oval Office.

The two men clashed over the role of religion and politics.

The president responded to a question of how often he attended church by saying he has been a regular worshiper all his life. Now that he is president, he

said, he does not go often because of security concerns for others.

He did not answer the question about why he did not bring a minister into the White House, as then-President Nixon did.

Mondale attacked the Republicans and conservative religious groups for their involvement in issues such as a proposal for a school prayer amendment to the Constitution. He said the Republican platform calls for a "religious test" for Supreme Court justices and referred to the Rev. Jerry Falwell's statement that this rule will give the New Right two justices.

But Reagan said he had appointed only one justice so far in his first term — and used the opportunity to appoint Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman ever named to the highest court.

The candidates clashed on Social Security, with Reagan vowing that while "a president should never say never... I will never stand for a reduction of the Social Security benefits for the people that are now getting them."

Mondale, who has charged that Reagan favors just such cuts, said that after the 1980 election, with just such a promise on the record, Reagan proposed cuts of 25 percent in some Social Security programs. Mondale said that while spending cuts are needed, "I'm not going to cut it out of Social Security and Medicare and student assistance and things people need."

Both men were applauded for their pledge on Social Security, just as they drew a standing ovation when they entered the Kentucky Center for the Arts for their 90-minute televised debate, their first of the campaign.

Mondale, asked about leadership, rebuked Reagan over the terrorist attack on the U.S. embassy in Beirut.

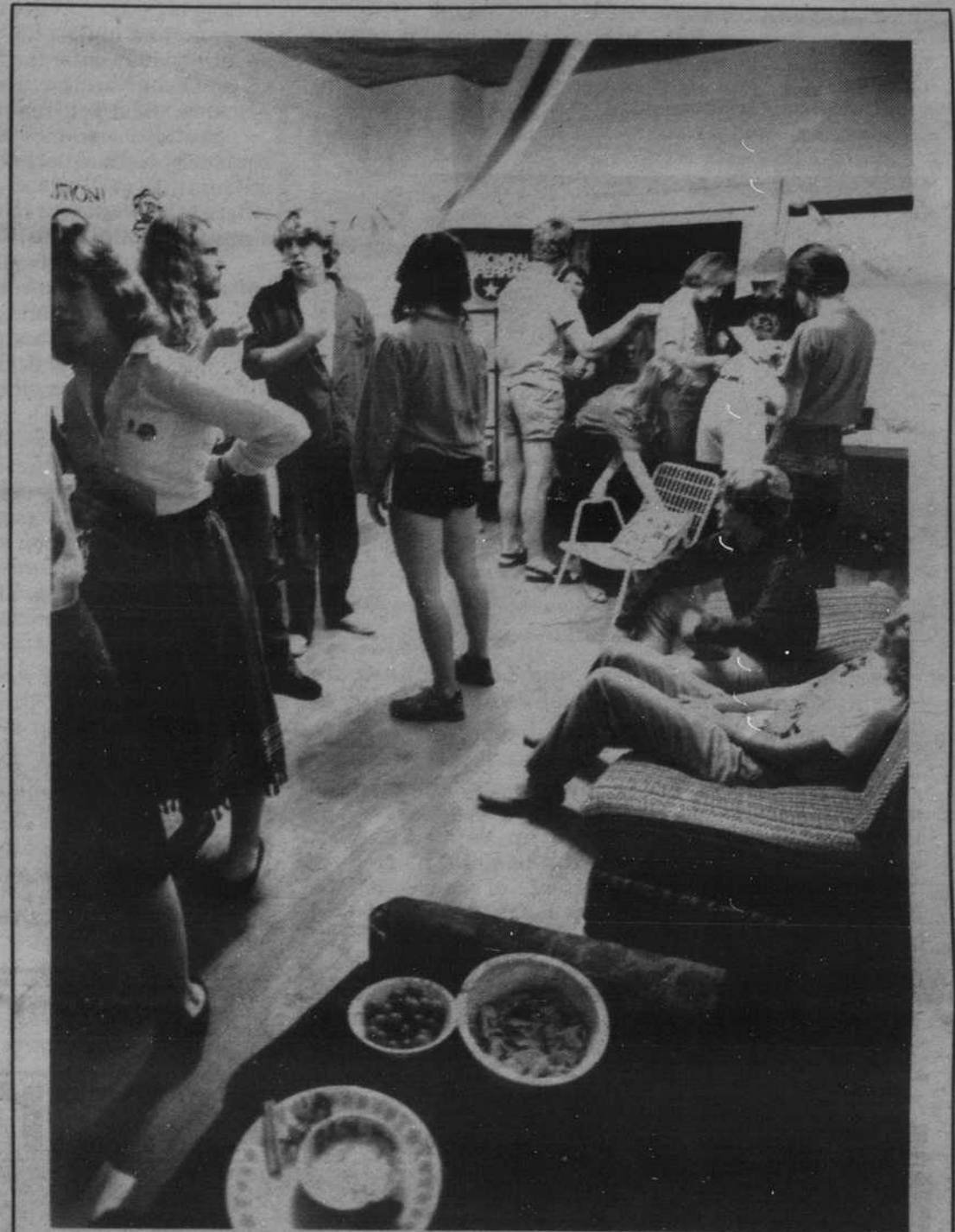


Photo by Ross Martin

More than 50 people attended the "America for Mondale-Ferraro Party" during Sunday night's debate. This was one of 20,000 such parties throughout the nation authorized and paid for by the Democratic National Committee.

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## Classes halt for autumn Convocation

University students may find themselves in a no class situation today if they plan to attend afternoon lectures.

Because of convocation at 1:30 p.m., all classes from 1:00 p.m. to 5:20 p.m. are canceled.

The campus community is invited to hear Joseph Sax, professor of law at the University of Michigan, speak on "Reviving the Law of the Good Old Days" at 1:30 in McArthur Court. Eight seminars dealing with legal and environmental subjects will be held in Gilbert Hall following the ceremony.

Convocation is the annual event that marks the opening of the new academic year.

On Tuesday, though, it will be business as usual with classes back in full swing.

## Professors grade presidential debate

By Paul Ertelt  
Of the Emerald

The format of Sunday's confrontation between Pres. Ronald Reagan and his Democratic challenger Walter Mondale was not actually a debate, says speech Prof. Charley Leistner, but it "worked out very well."

Leistner and Paul Holbo, vice-provost and history professor, commented on the debate in telephone interviews Sunday night.

During the debate held in Louisville, Ky., the candidates responded to questions from Fred Barnes of the Baltimore Sun, James Wieghart of Scripps-Howard News Service and Diane Sawyer of CBS. Barbara Walters of ABC moderated the debate.

Both professors admitted they spoke from a partisan perspective. Holbo supports Reagan, and Leistner supports Mondale.

Holbo doubts whether the debate will have much of an effect on the outcome of this election, while Leistner said it may help Mondale some, if not dramatically.

"Usually, the challenger has the most to gain (from a debate)," Holbo said. "It puts him up there on the same level as the incumbent."

Reagan had everything to lose and nothing to gain," he added. "For Mondale, the reverse is true."

Mondale used that advantage as much as possible, showing poise, style, and aggressiveness, Leistner said.

"Mondale demonstrated quite clearly there is no weakness in his candidacy or in him as a candidate that anyone should worry about," Leistner said.

"I was pleased with Mondale's final statement," he said. "He did make the point that we either are or aren't a selfish nation."

But Leistner also saw some weak points in Mondale's performance. Mondale should have better clarified the difference between having personal religious beliefs and allowing those beliefs to affect presidential politics, he said.

"I wasn't pleased that he didn't talk more about civil rights, the attempt to kill the voting rights act and the women's rights question," he added.

Mondale's strongest point was his attack on the federal deficit, Holbo said. But Reagan gained points when he talked about interest rates, employment figures and the rate of inflation, he said. Holbo expressed his reservations

about having televised presidential debates.

"In 1976, Pres. Ford slipped about Poland and that might have cost him the election," Holbo said. "I don't want to see an election turn on a little slip."

In the 1960 presidential campaign between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon, the debates also had a major impact, Holbo said.

Many observers believe that Nixon's appearance, looking like he had not shaved, put him at a disadvantage in the televised debate. Polls at the time show those who watched the debate on television thought Kennedy the winner, while those who listened to it on the radio favored Nixon.

"This time it won't be crucial, because no one blundered," Holbo said.

One benefit of the debates is they give a summary of the candidates' positions for those who have not been following the race, Holbo said, but neither candidate "said anything he hasn't said a dozen times before."

Both professors agreed that the reporters questioning the candidates did a good job.

"The questions were not soft and they did get to follow up on them," Leistner said.