

# Thornton Campaigns in County Despite Day-Long Downpour

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Candidates for political office naturally prefer sunshine weather to do their campaigning. In during fair weather, people are on the streets, and a candidate can, in the space of a few short blocks, shake a satisfying number of hands and pass out his cards to every voter he meets.

But, like the proverbial postman, when the weather turns bad, neither rain nor hail nor dark of night can deter an office seeker from making his scheduled rounds. So when Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton, Democratic candidate for governor, arrived in Medford a week ago last Tuesday for a day of campaigning in the valley—and found it pouring down rain—he had no choice but to go ahead and do the best he could.

His spirits, as well as his wide-brimmed hat and raincoat, seemed a little dampened when he came into the newsroom about 9:45 a.m. to pick me up. He had attended a candidates fair in Grants Pass the previous night, and the turnout had been disappointing.

### Takes It Philosophically

"It just served to point out one thing," he said. "The political candidate these days must go to the voters. The era of the big meeting, the old-time political rally, is a thing of the past."

"The change has created a real handicap for Democrats though," he observed, "because in general, can't afford to utilize the mass media for their campaign the way the Republicans can."

But he brightened shortly. He turned to his Medford campaign manager, Mrs. Elizabeth Poston, and Charles Crary, Democratic candidate for the legislature, who were to travel with him during the day, and told them that he had a "good day" in Douglas county over the week end.

### Visit Lumber Mills

"I visited some lumber mills, had luncheon in Drain, made a radio-television appearance, and had a press conference with some newsmen. My people there did a real good job for me," he said.

### We Arrived at the Labor Temple on South Grape St.

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**GREETs WORKERS**—During his day of campaigning in Jackson county Tuesday, Oct. 9, Attorney General Robert Y. Thornton, right, spotted three men working on the remodeling of Landis Photo Studio and Severson's Candy store at the corner of Main and Grape sts. Thornton is seen here shaking hands with Bob Chriss while Oscar Privette, far left, and Louise Haussler look on. Standing between Chriss and Thornton is Alexander Diepenbrack, who was talking to the three workmen when the attorney general walked up.

about 10 o'clock, and Thornton walked through all the offices upstairs, introducing himself, shaking hands and passing out his cards. The people seemed glad to see him, and he stopped and chatted briefly with several of them.

The next stop was Bear Creek Orchards on South Pacific highway. Shortly after we arrived there about 10:20 o'clock, a firm executive came out to the lobby where we were waiting and greeted Thornton.

"You've come at an unfortunate time," he said. "This rain has stopped most of our packing work. We just had a small crew come in this morning, and I think they've probably finished by now."

### Tour Main Building

But he hastened to assure Thornton he would be happy to have him tour the main business building to familiarize himself with the operation of the organization.

Thornton agreed, and Harry Jewett, department manager for Harry and David's took over and guided us through the sprawling offices of the multi-million dollar business.

It was an interesting excursion, and the attorney general was obviously impressed with what he saw. But all the employees were so busy, there seemed little opportunity for

the candidate to meet many of the workers, other than three or four supervisors. The half hour spent there, at least from the point of view of an office seeker who is admittedly running behind his opponent, was not time well spent.

### Wanted To Return

The tour was cut short, though Thornton told Jewett he wanted to return later in the day and finish it if he could. The attorney general brought the subject up again in the afternoon, but by then it was too late and he wasn't able to go back.

We drove back to downtown Medford to visit Thornton's old law office.

On the way, I noticed him yawn a couple of times and I asked him if he were tired. If the strain of the campaign were telling on him.

"Oh, no," he said, "this is my fourth state-wide campaign, and I am used to it. But I've been having trouble getting enough sleep lately. I go right to sleep the minute I get in bed, but for the last few mornings, I've been getting up at 5 a.m. I'm just sleepy."

### Avoiding Label

He and Crary and Mrs. Poston began to talk about how the Republicans in this campaign "are trying to avoid the GOP label." Thornton said that when Senator Goldwater and former Vice President Richard Nixon visited in Oregon recently, Gov. Hatfield avoided having his picture taken with them.

"But when Secretary of Agriculture Freeman and Secretary of Labor Goldberg came to Oregon, you notice the governor had his picture taken with them," Thornton smiled.

Thornton said he had needed Hatfield one time because the word "Republican" was missing from some of his

a good line, even when he was wrong.

It was close to noon when we got back to the car to drive out to the Medco mills by the Big Y Junction. The rain hadn't let up a drop.

### Getting Into Politics

I asked him how he had happened to get into politics. "Oh, I've always been interested in politics," he said, "but when I was first starting out, I worked mostly for other people. I joined the young Democrats the year I practiced here in Medford. When I moved to Tillamook, the county organization needed a chairman, and I got the job. I've been at it ever since."

At Medco we obtained a visitor's pass and set out across the yard without a guide to find some employees. After a fruitless search through one building (it was lunch time), we were finally directed to a "smoke house," where the men eat their lunches during bad weather.

### Introduces Himself

There were about 16 men ranged around tables in the building when we found it. Thornton went up to them, introduced himself and handed them his cards.

"Hello," he said. "I'm Attorney General Thornton. I'm running for governor and I'd appreciate your vote."

From there we went over to the plywood mill, but the employees there were working at such a pace, with the precision timing required of such an operation, that the candidate was reluctant to disturb them. We climbed up on the catwalk that runs the length of the building and walked through the plant.

At 12:45 we arrived at the Union club, a downtown restaurant, for lunch. About a half dozen party leaders met him there to talk with him and pay their respects. He had fried oysters.

At exactly 2 o'clock, the four of us left for Ashland to visit Southern Oregon college, where a student press conference had been arranged for him.

### Campaign Rumors

The subject of campaign rumors came up during the conversation on the way over, and Thornton recounted a number of them that had happened to him.

He recalled that one time a rumor began circulating that he was a Catholic, a politically risky religious affiliation to have in Protestant Oregon.

"I've always tried to keep religion out of politics," he said, "but I've never made any secret of the fact that I'm a long-time Episcopalian."

At SOC Thornton was met in Churchill hall by Dr. A. Fellers, director of student affairs, who introduced him to a group of Young Republicans. The youngsters were delighted that they had scored a coup on the campus Young Democrats, who were waiting in the Britt Student center to meet him.

### Holds Press Conference

After going down the hall briefly to greet Mrs. Mabel Winslow, SOC registrar, Thornton went over to the student union to hold the press conference in the offices of "The Siskiyou," the school newspaper. En route, he made connections with Dave Elliot, president of the young Democrats, who greeted him familiarly.

Thornton excused himself briefly to make a long-distance telephone call to check in with his office in Salem. Then he returned to the Siskiyou office, where, for the next half hour, he stood leaning against the door frame, fielding questions tossed at him by the student leaders.

The youngsters were sharp and rather well informed, though the questions tended toward the seasoned chest-

### Successful Stop

The visit to the bank turned out to be one of the most successful stops of the day, at least in terms of meeting potential voters.

It was 11:25 when we walked in Thornton met and shook hands with several bank executives. After a moment, one of them volunteered to show him around so he could meet employees.

He listened carefully during each introduction, and always managed to greet each person by his or her first name and to add some quip or comment to his salutation. He teased some of the girls he met about being "too young to vote for me." It was

nut variety, ones that have been asked over and over before. Thornton was able to use them as springboards, however, to develop some points that he wanted to make.

### Expand Promotion

He would "expand" the export promotion division to seek more foreign markets for Oregon products. He wouldn't "sacrifice our scenic advantages for the sake of obtaining smog-producing industries." He regarded our natural resources as "priceless." He would give "top priority to the Oregon way of living."

He felt there was "nothing sacred about either public or private power." He would have vetoed the Daylight Saving Time bill since it had previously been voted down four times by the people. He was opposed to a sales tax in Oregon because "it would operate most heavily on the low income earner." He would check the state's tax structure to determine if there were any bracket "not paying its fair share." He would plug whatever "loopholes" he found.

### Race May Be Close

Asked to evaluate his contest with Hatfield for the governorship, he said he felt "the race may be as close as the Gordon-Neuberger senatorial race in 1954." (Neuberger won in that election by about 2,600 votes when late returns from Multnomah county gradually overcame a downstate lead for Gordon.)

The affair was wound up about 3:20 with Thornton and the youngsters posing for pictures. As we left the campus, he turned to me and said, "That's one of the nicest receptions I've ever had at any college."

On the way back to Medford we stopped off for a few minutes in Phoenix so he could talk with Red Norton, owner of Norton's Lumber yard.

The day of campaigning was concluded with a visit to county Democratic headquarters to "greet the faithful," as he put it.

### Talks About Material

The rain seemed to have cleared the streets, and the place was deserted except for the receptionist, Mrs. Ira McDonald, who was nearing the end of her five-hour stint at the desk. They talked about campaign materials, and he noted that the supply of bumper stickers was getting low.

About 4:30 o'clock, he returned to his host's home to prepare for dinner with a few

friends at the Rogue Valley Country club at 6 o'clock.

Thornton seemed a little preoccupied that night at the Candidates Fair at Medford high school as he waited on the platform for his turn to speak. But when he rose to address the crowd, his speech was clear and articulate and

he delivered it with only a slight glance at his notes. He finished the five-minute talk on time.

Afterwards in the cafeteria, a number of people came up to his table to shake his hand and talk with him. He seemed in good spirits and relatively unafraid about 10

o'clock when I went up to him to say goodbye.

His day in Jackson county, the last one he planned on before the election, was almost over. But with Nov. 6 a few weeks away, he could look forward to more busy days and long nights before it was all over.

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