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Big Jim shakes up GOP

Thompson takes elephant by tail

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI
Illinois Gov. James (Big Jim) Thompson turned a crowd of staid, three-piece suited Oakland County Republicans into a chanting, cheering crowd full of optimism for the future of the Republican party in Michigan and across the nation.

Speaking before more than 150 Oakland Republicans Thursday at Clawson's Knights of Columbus Hall, Thompson preached reconciliation between extreme party factions and determination to win more local elections and grass roots support.

Thompson, billed as a "giant killer" and "an off-mentioned 1980 presidential hopeful," drew occasion applause, but got a thundering ovation as he brought his speech to a close.

"We must have a healthy diversity," he said. "There's room for everybody."

'We have to appeal to more people. And that doesn't mean 1,000 blacks and 1,000 hispanics and 1,000 women. In our party there is no room for tokenism.'

—Illinois Governor James Thompson

"We have to appeal to more people. And that doesn't mean we have to find 1,000 blacks and 1,000 hispanics and 1,000 women. In our party there is no room for tokenism," he said.

Instead, he advised the Republican party to be pragmatic. "A Republican who runs in Arizona has got different problems than a Republican who runs in New York, and we ought to face up to that and not be ashamed of it."

He continued, "If Bella Abzug (New York City Democrat and feminist) and George Wallace can agree on a common presidential candidate what do the Republicans have to fight about?"

HE FURTHER CHIDED his fellow Republicans for their "fascination" with the presidency.

"We live and die by the presidency," he said. "Granted, it's important. It's the most important office in the nation. But to say that a political party flowers when it wins the presidency and dies when it doesn't is nonsense. While we live and die by the presidency, they (the Democrats) pragmatically go on electing the Congress, the governors, the statehouses, the courthouses. That's the first thing we have to do."

He also accused the Democrats of stealing early Republican ideals.

"Look at the McKinley-Roosevelt campaign and find out what the Republican slogan was that year — employment for labor; a full dinner bucket, sound money and prosperity. Republicans were concerned with providing jobs so that people could support their families."

"That sounds like some recent Democratic principles," he said.

LARRY LITTMAN, of Troy, chairman of the Republican party's 15th Congressional district, introduced Thompson as "the shooting star of the Republican party," drawing chuckles from the crowd.

Thompson, while denying immediate hopes for the nation's highest office, was cast as presidential mettle soon after swamping the late-Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's hand-picked gubernatorial candidate in the 1976 election. He was one of only a dozen Republicans elected to governorships in the wake of Watergate.

"I'm just trying to do a good job as the governor of the State of Illinois," he said, adding that there were "no time tables."

Thompson took his state's top office after a brilliant career as United States attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. From 1971 to 1975 he indicted more than 350 public officials on corruption charges, many of them associated with the Daley Administration.

He won the convictions of appellate Judge Otto Kerner, a former two-term Illinois governor, and former Illinois Secretary of State Edward J. Barrett. He also won the conviction of Thomas Keene, called by some the most powerful member of the Chicago City Council.

Fuel bill aid extended

A federally-funded program to help senior citizens pay their heating bills has been expanded to include the blind and totally disabled.

At the same time, the deadline for applying for the heating assistance payments has been extended to Sept. 14.

"This program was enacted in recognition of the devastating impact heating cost increases have had on many families," said a spokesman for the state Department of Social Services.

"The program allows for paying up to \$250 in delinquent bills for qualifying families and individuals. Per-

sons who managed to keep up with their bills can receive a direct payment of \$50."

Applications for the assistance were mailed to many persons who qualify for the program. Others who did not receive applications, or who are unsure as to whether they qualify, can call (toll-free) 1-800-292-5930.

Assistance is available to individuals and families with limited incomes. Single persons making less than \$3,713 and couples with an income of less than \$4,913 qualify. Income ceilings increase with the size of a family.

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