

Mondale to Reagan: First see Wayne, Mich.



DAN DEAN/tat photographer

Candidate Walter Mondale kisses 6-month-old Amanda Wilcox, daughter of Corey Fisher of Wayne, at a forum in a high school in Wayne Monday.

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

His good friend U.S. Rep. William Ford assured Walter Mondale he'd like the city of Wayne.

"Frits, you come to my district. They'll love you. You won't be sorry," Ford told Mondale, who fondly calls him Billy.

Well, the Democratic presidential nominee was so impressed he recommends Wayne, an older, blue-collar industrial suburb, to his not-so-good friend President Ronald Reagan.

"I think if anyone wants to be president of the United States, he ought to come to Wayne Memorial High School," Mondale told a cheering crowd of about 1,800 during a Citizen's Forum in the school's Alumni Arena.

Noting that the gathering brought together the competing Wayne Memorial Zebras and the John Glenn Rockets, the former vice president played to the enthusiastic crowd. School bands played and cheerleaders jumped up and down as he saluted them.

"Anybody who can get the Zebras

and Rockets together in the same room ought to be president of the United States."

NO MATTER WHAT the Minnesotan said Monday, the point was that he was in western Wayne County and the president wasn't.

And his backers kept bringing that home to the soldly Democratic crowd. "He wants to hear what you have to say," Wayne County Clerk Jim Killeen said of Mondale, whom he has known since 1968.

Gov. James Blanchard, whom Mondale calls the "Sparky Anderson of governors," lauded the event as the "first time one of the candidates visits Michigan, speaks and also answers questions from the people."

"All right," shouted a supporter as the crowd cheered.

Blanchard said community members won't get to tell their concerns to the president.

"Ronald Reagan won't stand before an audience like this in Michigan or anywhere in America — even if he has Nancy around to cue him," said

Blanchard, introducing the Democratic presidential contender.

"The only candidate not afraid to face the people of Michigan — Walter Mondale."

SAVING HIM "grew up with working people just like you," Mondale charged the administration with ignoring the middle class.

"We've got a government of the rich and for the powerful," he said.

"That's why they're not answering any questions. Because if they did, you wouldn't vote for them."

"Mr. Reagan won't tell you nothing." Stressing his openness, Mondale said he seeks opportunities to talk with the man on the street.

"I meet with senior citizens and listen to their heartache," he said. "That's why he announced what he intends to

do with the national budget, he said.

"America also needs a president who leads — a president who tells you the truth before the election, not after."

TALKING TO THE heavily pro-union crowd, Mondale stressed his part in the Chrysler loan guarantees and concern about auto imports.

"I am a job Democrat. I believe in putting people to work."

Mondale also pledged not to raise taxes "one penny" for people making a \$25,000 or less. "They're having trouble enough."

While 20 people were lined up to ask questions, only a half dozen got there.

The queries ranged from abortion, education and the domestic content bill to "how to make technology work just for the rich but for all of us."

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