

Politicos' complaint: Media ignore issues

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Two women politicians this week set out to do what the national media candidates, major daily papers and TV networks haven't: talk issues. "It's very difficult to get attention to issues," Republican Loretta Ruppe told the Birmingham-Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce. "George Bush's speech that outlined economic issues wasn't reported at all. The first debate — everything was issues, but I didn't see one issue on the front page. It was on page

23," said Ruppe, director of the Peace Corps in the Reagan administration.

"Our culture has changed," agreed Democrat Nancy Austin Schwartz. "Since the mid-70s, single-issue and negative campaigns have been what wins."

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now County commissioner who is now Gov. Blanchard's deputy chief of staff and a member of the Democratic National Committee.

"THE QUIPS are recorded (by the media) as memorable events," complained a chamber member who set off the discussion.

Schwartz, who knows Massachusetts Gov. Dukakis through contacts at National Governors Association conferences, called him "cautious, calculating . . . very tight. He's interested in governing well but cheap."

"He is humorless — more New Englander than Greek. The man gets excitement out of government. He wants to make government work with the state of the art."

"He will fall back on pilot projects, demonstration grants, partnerships" to address housing, health care and environmental programs, Schwartz predicted.

Dukakis' reading of the federal budget is that "the range of policy changes will be limited" because of the shortage of discretionary money. "He will crack down on tax evaders," said Schwartz, quoting Dukakis

'Dukakis didn't do a negative campaign and lost 18 points (in the polls). He did a negative campaign, and it levelled off. It's a sad commentary.'

— Nancy Austin Schwartz
Blanchard aide

as saying \$35 billion could be found the first year, of the \$85 billion that cheaters are keeping out of the U.S. Treasury.

"A tax increase will be a last resort. He's unwilling to say it's never to be considered," Schwartz said, adding a Democratic administration would look at user fees and "sin" taxes.

RUPPE, WHO was a U.S. Senate prospect earlier this year and even a vice presidential possibility, said Bush as president would call "a global conference on the environment" and work with Canada on acid rain because such problems are worldwide.

Ruppe, who chaired Bush's 1980 campaign in Michigan, said his administration would attempt to make home care for the elderly more attractive by providing tax incentives to family members, allowing conversion of IRAs to pay for health care, and providing more research on strokes and Alzheimer's disease.

"He will shun Democratic programs with government bureaucracies," she said.

Ruppe repeated Bush's promise of "no new taxes."

Ruppe heads an agency of volunteers and is limited by law herself to no more than eight years at the Peace Corps helm. But she said the Bush administration has presented a program of "challenge grants for volunteerism. How many of you have heard about it? You heard the one-liner of the night."

THE ONLY debate over personalities came when a chamber member suggested Republican vice presidential nominee Dan Quayle was badly treated by Democratic rival Lloyd Bentsen's remark that "you're no Jack Kennedy."

"If you picked up a New York Times in 1959, you wouldn't see anything different about John F. Kennedy than you saw about Dan Quayle today," he said.

Schwartz said she was personally inspired by the three Kennedy brothers and felt Quayle didn't measure up to them on vision and outlook.

Bush's paper also called for revised ethics laws to halt "revolving door" abuses between the military and government.

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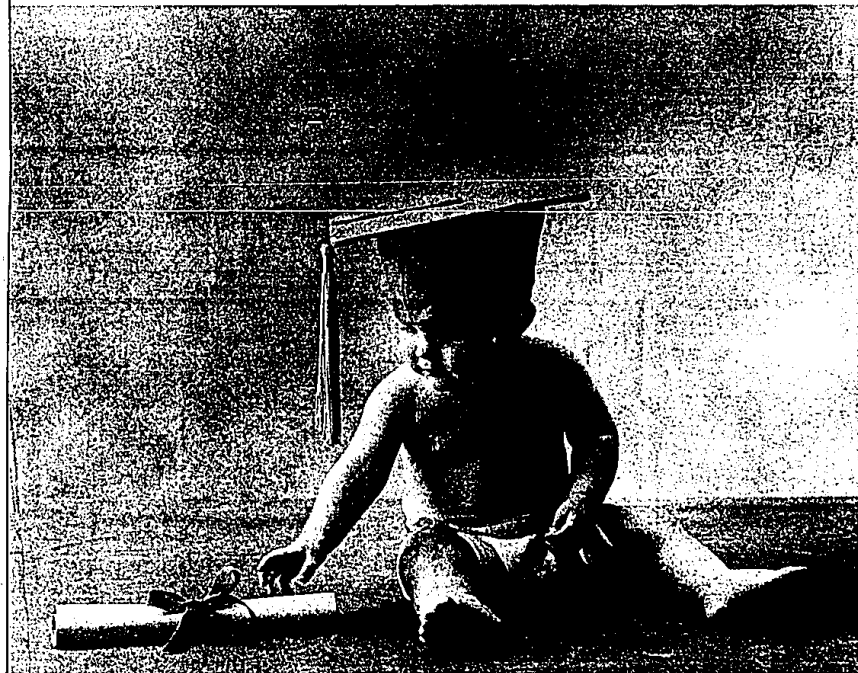
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