

HISTORY

Barry Treasured

Politics aside, most everyone respected the way in which Barry Goldwater would get to the point — even when it came to the presidential election.

“It’s a great country, where anybody can grow up to be president ... except me.”

— Barry Goldwater

WHEN IT CAME TO SPEAKING HIS MIND, Senator Barry Goldwater was a straight shooter — even when he was talking about himself. Clearly, the Arizona politician had a sense of humor about his unsuccessful run for the presidency in 1964.

This year marks the 44th anniversary of that campaign, which turned out to be the most lopsided presidential election in history. (President Lyndon B. Johnson garnered 61 percent of the popular vote.) Admittedly, Goldwater said he knew he couldn’t win. In fact, he claimed that running for president “was like trying to stand up in a hammock,” and recalled that when he was writing his acceptance speech for the Republican nomination, he turned to his staff and said, “We shouldn’t be writing this acceptance speech; we ought to be writing a speech telling them to go to hell and let’s go home.” Home, of course, was Arizona.

Goldwater was born in Phoenix on January 1, 1909, when Arizona was still a territory. He was the son of Baron and Josephine Goldwater, owners of a department store chain.

As a boy, Goldwater traveled the state with his mother and, along the way, developed a lifelong love affair with Arizona. His trips to the Hopi mesas and the Navajo Nation fostered his interest in Native American customs and art. Visits to Arizona’s border towns, mining communities and mountain regions gave him a learn-by-doing education. Good thing, too, because Goldwater was a less-than-stellar student.

After his freshman year in high school, his grades and con-

duct were so poor that his parents sent him to Staunton Military Academy in Virginia. After a shaky start, Goldwater found his comfort zone and became involved in campus activities, joining social clubs, becoming captain of the swim team, playing for the football team and earning an appointment to West Point. However, after his graduation in 1928, Goldwater decided to skip West Point and head home.

He attended the University of Arizona for a year and then worked in the family business. He learned to fly at the age of 21, and during World War II was assigned to the Ferry Command, which delivered supplies and aircraft to combat zones. After the war, he tried his hand at politics, beginning in Phoenix municipal government, and eventually beating incumbent Ernest McFarland in 1952 for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

As a five-term U.S. senator (1952-1964 and 1968-1986), Goldwater made his mark on the national political scene. And — in an era filled with rebellion — he became the voice of the modern conservative movement. He was an anachronism, however, described by Louis Menand in a 2001 *New Yorker* article as “a cowboy who rode in from the wrong decade.” Goldwater agreed.

While accepting his ’64 presidential defeat with trademark bluntness, Goldwater said, “When you’ve lost an election by that much, it isn’t a case of whether you made the wrong speech or wore the wrong tie, it was just the wrong time.”

— Sally Benford



50
years ago
in arizona highways

The names are familiar: Johnny Ringo, Doc Holliday, the Earps, the Clantons, Bat Masterson, Curly Bill Brocius, Buckskin Frank Leslie. In November 1958, our cover story profiled these gunslingers of the Old West, and featured the colorful illustrations of artist Lea Franklin McCarty. In addition, the issue included stories about the state’s last herd of wild horses and Arizona’s unique cloud patterns.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- On November 5, 1871, the Wickenburg-Ehrenberg stagecoach was ambushed and robbed. Six people were killed during what became known as the Wickenburg Massacre.
- On November 12, 1912, male citizens in Arizona went to the polls and voted 13,452 to 6,202 in favor of giving women the right to vote.
- On November 16, 1995, Grand Canyon National Park shut down for the first time in its history. It closed because of a federal budget deadlock between Congress and the White House. The park reopened on November 20.