

Faces and Memories From McGovern's Past Reappear in New Hampshire

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KEENE, N.H., Feb. 24 — Their beards are sometimes flecked with gray now, and their arms often hold small children. But their hearts have not lost the memory of a special moment in their lives, George McGovern's campaign for President in 1972, a campaign that was launched with a surprising second-place showing in the New Hampshire primary.

Twelve years later, the political landscape of this state is filled with people who got their start working for the former Senator from South Dakota. Some are working for him again.

Others have joined his rivals in Tuesday's primary, particularly the Presidential campaign of Senator Gary Hart, the Colorado Democrat who was Mr. McGovern's campaign manager in 1972. Many of them share, as a legacy from their common experience, a sense that politics does make a difference to individual lives, and one indi-

vidual can make a difference in politics.

"It was really the experience of a lifetime," recalled Dotie Lynch, who quit her job to work for Senator McGovern 12 years ago and is now Senator Hart's poll taker. "We lost so badly, but it was great fun. We were the baby boom generation who protested the war and turned out to be right. That experience gave us a great sense of efficacy and expanded our horizons. We developed confidence in our ability to handle responsibility and big jobs."

"So many of the campaign workers in all the campaigns came into politics in 1972 — it's incredible," said Mr. McGovern, as he drove through the radio-speckled hills of western New Hampshire on his way to deliver a speech here. "I'm highly cheered by that, even if only a fraction of them are in my campaign."

Some of the old McGovernites backed other candidates long before their old hero announced his decision to

run. Others doubt that he can win this time and place a top priority on defeating President Reagan.

"I was very happy McGovern got into the race, but I didn't think he had much of a chance," said Betty Essmual, who supported him as a college student in Boston and brought her infant son to hear him speak at Keene State College. "My quandary right now is whether I vote for who might win, or whether I vote for where my heart is."

The memories of 1972 are not all warm and cheerful. John R. Kroyer, a professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire, said of Mr. McGovern, "People see him nostalgically, but they also see him as a loser."

But the 1972 campaign also left a powerful and positive imprint on many supporters who felt they learned some important lessons, even in defeat. Joe Grandmaison, who organized New Hampshire for Mr. McGovern and is now a political consultant here, says he

has a "firm belief that by Election Day, a campaign takes on the personal characteristics of the candidate."

And what drew many McGovernites back to his cause this year were those personal characteristics. Marshall Gordon, campaign coordinator for the Keene area, emphasizes Mr. McGovern's "general integrity," while Barry Grimmins, a political satirist who sometimes appears at campaign rallies, admires the candidate's "guilt and common sense." Dot Baytoch, a school administrator, said after the Keene rally, "We've missed the idealism he stands for."

Love and Politics
Mindy and Ed Leek met 12 years ago at a McGovern headquarters in Chicago. Now they live in Oregon.

he is a state Representative and also a Democratic Party official, but they put their careers on hold, and moved their small child here, when Mr. McGovern asked them to work in New Hampshire.

"If I look back on my life, and could pick one experience to relive, it would be the '72 McGovern campaign, without a doubt," Mrs. Leek said as the telephones jangled in the Mastina storefront that serves as state headquarters. "I think being involved in that campaign made me realize that the system was accessible."

Mr. McGovern says this sense of excitement and achievement was bred by the singular nature of the 1972 campaign. "We came to prominence," he noted, "on the transcendent issue of the decade, the war in Vietnam. And we won over what was perceived as the established political structure. We built a new political process out of people who had never had political power."

Nancy Richards-Stower, who also met her husband on the campaign trail, remembers organizing antiwar rallies and feeling "scared and frustrated by the Richard Nixon of the world, who told us we were unpatriotic." It was

Mr. McGovern, she said, who made her feel good about herself.

"Here was this United States Senator saying, you kids are right," she said. "If the campaign left some workers disillusioned, it only encouraged the young woman, who is now head of New Hampshire's Human Rights Commission and state chairman of the McGovern campaign."

"It made me dig in my heels and sent me off to law school," said Mrs. Richards-Stower, who is now 33 years old. "I knew I was going to be involved in politics."

Today, as a practicing lawyer and practicing mother, Mrs. Richards-Stower feels even more strongly about political activism than she did as a student 12 years ago. "I want this country to be a positive experience for my son," she said, "and not something he has to fight against."

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