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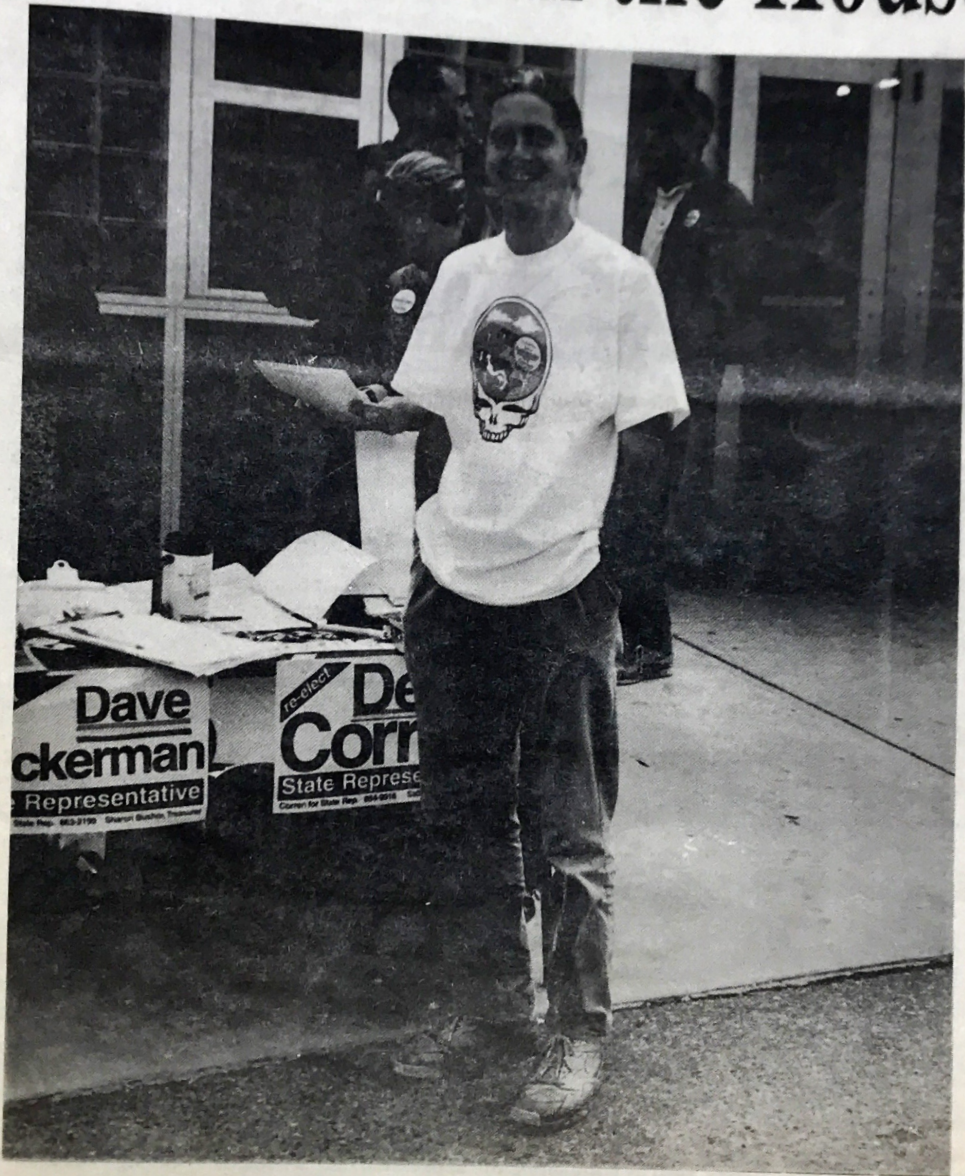
T H E V E R M O N T
CYNIC

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Is Zuckerman in the House?



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SHOOT LIFE

Zuckerman goes from house to House

LEE KOSTER

David Zuckerman is a part-time UVM student with a projected graduation date of December 1994. He is an Environmental Studies major with a Chemistry minor. He is running for the Vermont House of Representatives. His district includes the University of Vermont. Elections will be held on November 8th.

Cynic: Were you born in Vermont?

David Zuckerman: No, I was born in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Cynic: Are you a registered voter in Vermont?

Z: I have been voting here for years.

Cynic: When did you decide to run for the Vermont House?

Z: July of this year.

Cynic: So, it wasn't something you were thinking about all through college?

Z: I have been active in local politics, as well as active in issues, not only political issues but social awareness issues the whole time I've been here but I haven't particularly thought of running for this position until this summer.

Cynic: So, how did it come about?

Z: Well, I've known Dean Corren for a while because I've been active working for the Progressives, and I worked on Bernie Sanders re-election campaign two years ago. The position was open and the idea came to me that Dean Corren and I would be a good pair of Progressives running for the position. I've had to think about it quite a bit because it's a real commitment, and so, I thought about it for quite some time. I decided I was adequately prepared for it and that I could represent enough people and enough people's views that I should run.

Cynic: I don't think I really understand the whole Dean Corren and David Zuckerman team, are you guys running in wards that are right next to each other?

Z: No. There are two seats in this district. Generally there is one representative, give or take a few, for every 3,500 people. It happens that this district in Burlington is a two-seat district with 7,500 or 8,000 people. So, because there are two seats two people can run and be supportive of each other and get elected to those two seats.

Cynic: Are there going to be any primaries?

Z: If there were more than two candidates that were either Democrats and Republicans than there would be a primary in the district. There are two Democrats running and no Republicans running, so there are no primaries. Dean and I are running as independents, so we're not part of the primary system.

Cynic: So what will happen on November 8th is that the residents of Burlington will get a ballot with four names on it, the two Democrats and you and Dean Corren and they will check off two boxes?

Z: Actually, in Burlington there are ten and a half representatives, (one is partly in Burlington). The district we hope to represent is from Willard St. on the even side all the way from Riverside Ave. to Intervale Ave. and all the way down Prospect St. until including the Redstone apartments. Also, all the way to Speer St. on the South side. It covers all of the UVM students that live on-campus.

Cynic: Are you concentrating a lot of your efforts on UVM students?

Z: I want to represent the whole district and it happens that the district is about 50-60 percent students. But by no means does that mean I am only focusing on students. I have been knocking on doors in the district for the last number of nights. I am going to knock on every door, every door in the residence halls and every door on the streets, and I hope that I can represent folks from all different perspectives. Because of my activity in the Burlington community I have become quite aware of all the issues of the area in terms of property tax reform, health care and education, things that affect students some, but residents more. Environmental laws, and actually all laws affect all the residents, both students and residents. I am running to represent the people of the district.

Cynic: Can you think of specific things that you would do to help the college students in the area?

Z: In the past, I worked briefly with the off-campus student organization and I'd like to see that expanded and improved, and community

relations made better. That might not be something that people in the House deal with so much. But, as someone who is sort of in that transition period, I also feel that through my own actions I can represent and project some of the changes in student attitudes toward residents and resident attitudes toward students. I also, as Dean has done in the past, will regularly come to the Student Government Association and inform them of the state's funding for UVM or bike helmet laws and transportation issues that might affect students. The objective for me is that students and residents know about these things before they happen. That's actually one of my biggest problems with the system is that things seem to happen, and then we find out about it later when it's too late to get involved. I'd like to create as much of an information flow to folks in the district as I can.

Cynic: When did you meet Bernie Sanders?

Z: I met him the first time working on his campaign in the summer of '92. I don't know him personally all that well but I tend to agree with a lot of his politics. I am particularly excited about having an independent in Congress because it sort of expands the dominant thinking which is that there are only two parties. By having an independent in Congress, people start to realize that there doesn't have to be a two-party system. I'm not saying that everyone in those parties are bad or good, but I just think that there needs to be a wider spectrum of representation in our system.

Cynic: Are there any issues from which you differentiate yourself from Bernie Sanders?

Z: I don't know where he stands on every issue, so, I don't want to give a blanket yes or no. For example, the crime bill was a big issue

in Washington recently, and Bernie voted for it and the NRA [National Rifle Association] is really mad because there is a number of assault weapons in it [that were banned]. The crime bill also happens to have a number of death penalty provisions, and I am personally against the death penalty. Unless, I personally, or feel anybody else personally, really feels that they can push the button or inject something to kill someone. I find it hard to support the death penalty because I know that I couldn't do that. But, I also understand the perspective that he was coming from, there were a lot of good things in the crime bill. It was certainly better than what would have happened if Bush were still president because I think there was a lot of funding in there for prevention programs, more money in education of crime prevention.

I personally don't think any one bill will ever solve lots of problems because it is a big country issue, it's the families people grow up in or the non-families people grow up in, it is our media and how our media portrays what's going on in our society and whether it's all negative or the fact that there are a lot of positive things happening.

So, when Bernie votes for the crime bill it doesn't mean that he supports everything in it and that's the political process, I suppose. But I know he's very strong on environmental issues. I'd like to see him be even stronger on those, in terms of protecting ecological areas and large areas of wilderness because environmentalism is more than just what it is for humans and I think from a human perspective our economy relies on the environment as well. I personally appreciate the values of our environment and I would like to see more environmental protection. People should look at their own use problems such as how often they drive or how often they use a disposable cup. It's all about our personal habits. We can yell about saving the rainforests in Brazil but at the same time we're destroying our own base here.

Cynic: Can you think of specific legislation that you worked on or are planning on working on to help the environment?

Z: Well, one simple fundamental thing that I've thought about is that Vermont has a bottle bill but it doesn't cover all bottles. There are a lot of glass bottles that list a deposit for Maine and not one for Vermont. Why one bottle is redeemable in Vermont and another one isn't is mindboggling. In Burlington, we can recycle glass because we have the recycling program but a lot of Vermont doesn't have such a convenient recycling system. The money is an incentive to get people to reuse and recycle, so that's a very simple solution.

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Zuckerman speaks

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Cynic: Do you think that there is a dearth of high-quality, high wage jobs in Vermont or do you not think that it is a problem?

Z: First off, I think a high-wage job and a high-quality job can mean different things. There are fewer high wage jobs in Vermont but I also have come to Vermont for what Vermont is, and I think that people come to Vermont wanting the best of both worlds. We can only have that for so long, and then we will destroy the side of Vermont that is rare and is not found

in a lot of other places in terms of quality of life. While there are fewer IBM jobs or "high paying jobs" in the state, I don't think that we need to continue to expand in those areas

because I think quality of life is also significantly important and it's a separate issue from purely economic income. Something related to that would be the expense of health care and that is part of why everywhere the cost of living is so high is health care. An issue that I fundamentally agree with Dean Corren, and that he introduced, was the single-payer health care plan for Vermont. That would both save Vermonters' money and provide more health care.

Cynic: It now appears that universal health care coverage is no longer a possibility on the national scale. Regardless of what happens on the national scale, your goal is to have 100 percent of Vermonters be covered.

Z: Correct.

Cynic: What do you feel about

affirmative action?

Z: I am for affirmative action. The reason being is that we have had institutional racism for forever, and while we are still breaking through that at this point, people of color are still not given an equal opportunity in the workplace. Until the level of job placement has become parallel to the proportion of the number of people in our society. [Affirmative action would be stopped when say if blacks composed 25% of the population, they also got 25% of high wage jobs]. I don't feel that just

cans who see it that way and a lot who see it the other way. I can't speak for African-Americans and I don't think it's anybody's place to do that. But I know a lot of people who feel that the system is inherently unjust and until it becomes justified and corrected then actions need to be taken to correct that. In the long run, I would hope that there would never have to be affirmative action mandates but our society is unjust so it is necessary.

Cynic: Do you feel that people are sometimes overly cynical about

culed and verbally harassed by the Judiciary Board of the Senate is unbelievable to me and it is very sad that that is still the situation.

Cynic: I noticed that in your campaign literature you mention Dean Corren introducing a bill called the Equal Marital Rights Bill. What is that?

Z: Basically, people who live together in a homosexual relationship would get the same rights and benefits as heterosexual couples in terms of benefits for their partners.

Cynic: Were you ever a member of one of the major two parties?

Z: In Vermont you don't register as one. I did work on Bill Clinton's campaign a couple years ago and I felt he was the better of two options. I didn't think he was great, but I didn't think he was the better of two evils either. I think his position on a number of things has been compromised.

Cynic: What do you think of the job that Clinton is doing as president?

Z: I think he's doing a better job than Bush would have done. I've been disappointed on a number of things, on environmental issues, on human rights issues, on homosexuals in the military. He's just had to weaken on so many things and come more to the middle and that's where I've been disappointed.

Cynic: On those issues, do you think he got as much as he could, for example in homosexuals in the military there was some improvement and that he is sacrificing the perfect in pursuit of the good?

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What happened to Anita Hill was atrocious. That our society will not believe someone before they learn the issues and just the audacity of people not believing her and what happened with that whole situation is entirely ridiculous in my eyes

letting it go on as it has been is right for our society.

Cynic: So you think that women and minorities should get an advantage due to past discrimination?

Z: I don't feel currently that things are equitable at all, when you look at the pay of a woman versus a man in the same position the pay of the woman is still lower and that's not right. Until people in our society can look beyond sex or skin color or any of a number of things, then I don't think we can get rid of affirmative action.

Cynic: Don't you think that there is a negative aspect to giving preference to black people, for example, because it gives them the message that they are inferior and therefore they need help in order to compete with a white person for a job?

Z: There's a lot of African-American

complaints that minorities make such as some thought during the Anita Hill controversy?

Z: What happened to Anita Hill was atrocious. That our society will not believe someone before they learn the issues and just the audacity of people not believing her and what happened with that whole situation is entirely ridiculous in my eyes. She had nothing to gain from coming out with that information. She hasn't written a book about it as far as I know, she hasn't done a TV movie about it as far as I know and that is where our society is still behind. Because there are still honest people with quite a bit of integrity who come out with something like that in order to have the truth be known about someone who is going to be a justice on the highest body in the United States and that she was ridi-

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More Zuckerman

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Z: I think that's possibly how he sees it and I think that there's a side to that that might be credible but I'm tired of that. I'd really rather see someone go in there and say, not be so worried about four years down the line being re-elected just really go out there and work to educate the public and go all out for what they believe in and whatever they get done in those four years, they get done.

Cynic: Is that going to be your strategy if you get elected to the Vermont House, in terms of sticking to your guns and not doing so much compromising?

Z: Well, I'm going to say where I stand on issues and I'm going to work as hard as I can to get things moving in those directions. Obviously, there's going to be bills that are going to have the majority of what I want to see in them but there's always going to be something in them I'm not going to like because of the way that bills are done where you have an original bill and you have a million amendments. No, I'm not going to vote against every single bill that comes up because they're not perfect, but I will work to do what I say I'm working to do.

Cynic: In recent years certain members of the Democratic party, one example is Mike Dukakis, from your hometown, and Bill Clinton have been labeled or at least attempts have been made to label them as liberals. If the label liberal was attempted to be applied to you do you think you'd try to shun it or embrace it?

Z: The term liberal means so many things to different people, but in some ways I guess it does apply to

me, in many ways. I also think that the political spectrum, people say conservative is on the right and liberal is on the left, it actually goes around in a circle. You start becoming so far liberal or conservative in some ways that you cross over and then there's the Libertarians. In general, in today's picture of liberal, I probably am one. However, the policy of tax and spend has been associated with the word liberal, which is not always the case with liberals, then I'm not in that realm. For example on health care, I am for covering more people, which may be considered liberal, and yet it will cost less which isn't the general association of liberals. Yes, I'm liberal but I'm also very practical.

Cynic: If you were to pick a role model for yourself in politics, who would it be?

Z: I'd rather not pick a role model, not because I overly agree or disagree with the people out there but because as soon as you associate yourself with someone who has been in the public for as long as Bernie Jeffords, then you're taking a lot of baggage without people knowing either that person very well or me very well and a lot of the people that know me know that I put myself behind what I say, my heart's in it all the way, I'm going to bust chops and work really hard for this election and then when I'm elected, that won't slow down. I'm marvelled at Dean's energy level and a lot of people I know tend to wonder about my energy level. To have a role model, or to have an icon, isn't... I'm who I am and that's the bottom line, I guess.

Cynic: Can I ask you how old you are?

Z: I am 23.

Cynic: If you are successful in your race for the House, will you be it's youngest member?

Z: I don't think so, but I don't know. It happens that this race has four people in it and one of them is 21.

Cynic: Who are the four people running in this race?

Z: Marcy Kaplan and Sandy Baird are the two Democrats and Dean Corren and myself.

Cynic: Do you think that if you are elected that this will be a career move?

Z: I have no idea. For the last couple of years I've explored a number of different things, I've been managing a farm this summer and I will continue to do that. I'm interested in organic farming and I'm also interested in outdoor education and park management. I might get there [the House] and entirely hate it, you never know. I see many aspects of this political process which I already despise, but I also know a lot of issues which I'm concerned about and I'd like to see brought to the forefront. People of all ages have gotten so cynical about the political process and I'd like to bring some integrity back into it. Because while our political system has its problems it actually has more avenues for correction than most political processes around the world. In Vermont, it is unique because people can run and people can get to know those people individually because of the scale and that's what I cherish about this place.

Cynic: Do you think you would ever run for the United States Congress?

Z: I have no way of knowing.



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