

# JESSE JACKSON STIRRED CONVENTION AND NATION IN DRAMATIC SPEECH

After Rev. Jesse Jackson's Tuesday night speech before the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, he was hailed by many to be among the top five orators in the nation. He stirred a convention as well as a viewing and airing audience, beyond description. His political sermon moved the convention audience to tears.

He asked the audience to forgive him for any error of "temper, taste or tone" during his historic presidential campaign. "Be patient," he said,

"God has not finished with me yet."

Jackson's conciliatory, passionate—and at times humble—speech on the convention's second day came shortly after he lost three of four attempts to amend the party platform.

And it relieved party leaders who had feared Jackson's enthusiasm might end with his presidential campaign.

"Beautiful," said House Majority Leader James Wright, D-Texas. "I always thought Jesse Jackson had an enormous contribution to

make to our party and our country."

Jackson, who alienated Jewish Democrats with his Middle East views, said if "I caused anyone discomfort, created pain or revived someone's fears, that was not my truest self... please forgive me."

The first black to mount a major presidential campaign — claiming "our time has come" — Jackson spoke with relish about the prospect of his native South helping to defeat Reagan in November.

"I say to you this night that the soil is too rich and the people are too poor for Ronald Reagan to have the votes of the South," Jackson said.

"I am not a perfect servant, I am just a public servant struggling against the odds," Jackson said.

In the dramatic climax to his drive for respect, justice and the presidential nomination, Jackson asked convention delegates to support him on the first ballot "as a vote for a new direction for this party and this nation; a vote for conscience and conviction."

With the sparkling rhetoric that has become his trademark, Jackson brought the crowd to its feet frequently and was interrupted by applause 34 times.

"My constituency is the damned, disinherited, disrespected, despised. They are restless and seek relief. They've voted in record numbers. They have invested faith, hope, trust in us," the Baptist preacher declared. "The Democratic Party must send them a signal that we care."

But, he said, "I will be proud to support the nominee of this convention for the presidency of the United States."

While Jackson's conciliatory move to unit the party was welcomed, his plea for a symbolic first-ballot vote was a lingering threat to former Vice President Walter Mondale's claim on a first-ballot victory.

Throughout Tuesday, the Moscone Center was filled with rumors that black and Hispanic voters would desert Mondale on the first ballot, in dissatisfaction or in pride in Jackson's

candidacy. But there was no hard evidence of such a move.

He noted that 20 years ago civil rights activists Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Earl Chaney — two Jews and a black — died together in Mississippi.

"Twenty years later our communities, black and Jewish, are in anguish, anger and pain. Feelings have been hurt on both sides. There is a crisis in communications. Confusion is in the air.

"But we cannot afford to lose our way. We may agree to agree, or agree to disagree on issues, but we must bring back civility to the tensions. We are co-partners in a long and rich religious history — the Judeo-Christian traditions.

"Many blacks and Jews have shared a passion for social justice at home and peace abroad," he said. "We must seek a revival of the spirit, inspired by a new vision and new possibilities. We must return to higher ground."

Jackson denounced President Reagan's economic policies and said that the South, with a strong black vote, will be the key to driving Reagan from the White House in November.

"Mr. Reagan's economic program is a combination of cyanide and Kool-Aid, jellybeans and poison. It may taste good but the results are disastrous," he said in his prepared speech.

"Reaganomics is economic opium that is destroying us from within," he said.

Jackson capped his year-long drive for the presidency — the first serious campaign by a black for the highest office in the land — with his prime-time address to the convention.

At the end, as Whitney Phipps sang a closing hymn, virtually the entire hall joined hands with one another and swayed in time with the music.

## PROFILE: Rev. Jesse Jackson

Jesse L. Jackson is running for President of the United States. Jesse Jackson is not the first Black person to run for President. Shirley Chisholm, who used to be a Representative from Brooklyn, New York, tried to get the nomination in 1972. Frederick Douglass received one vote for President at the 1888 Republican National Convention.

Jesse Jackson was born on October 8, 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina. He was a good athlete in school. He won a football scholarship to the University of Illinois. But Jesse wasn't allowed to play the quarterback position at the University of Illinois. So, he changed to North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University the next year.

While Jesse was a student at North Carolina A&T he became involved in the civil rights movement. He was in charge of the student marches and sit-ins in downtown Greensboro. During this time Jackson met the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King started a program called Operation Breadbasket. Operation Breadbasket tried to get local businesses to hire more Black people. Jesse Jackson was chosen by Dr. King to be the director of Operation Breadbasket in Chicago.

After Dr. King was killed, Operation Breadbasket became a new organization. It was called Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity). Jesse Jackson was the president. He was the president of Operation PUSH for 12 years.

Jesse Jackson is a Baptist minister. He is the father of five children.

Jesse Jackson is a member of the Democratic Party. He calls his staff and the people that support him — the "Rainbow Coalition." The "Rainbow Coalition" is made up of people of all colors, men and women, young and old who want to have a voice in politics.



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