

George Parr Struggles On for Political High Marks

By RICK BROWN

A minor milestone in Texas history occurred this week. George Parr, the famous "Duke of Duval County," came one step closer to the end of his reign as unchallenged ruler of Duval County, Texas.

The Parr family has had a stranglehold on that area since 1911 when Archer Parr, Sr. took the side of the Mexican citizens in a gun battle on election day. Three Mexicans died. Parr and the Mexicans won. The Parr family has not lost the support of the Mexican-Americans since.

Duval County is one of those places where dead people vote and somehow candidates friendly to Parr always win, including the Parrs themselves when they are inclined to run. George Parr has been both county sheriff and a member of the Duval County School Board. Archer, his nephew, is county judge. Octavio Saenz, one of George's lieutenants, so to

speaking, is mayor of Benevides, one of the largest towns in the county. Diego Saenz, Octavio's brother and another Parr man, is one of the county officials in charge of administering county projects. And one more member of the Duval dynasty is Atlee Parr, George's brother. Atlee prefers quietly getting rich on his ranch to the public life of the rest of the Duval family, but never hesitates to throw his weight behind the family causes if and when it is needed.

All of which is not to say the Parr control has been bad for Duval county. One observer interviewed noted that Parr "... probably does a better job for the citizens than they could have done for themselves." Another former resident of Duval County remarked that "They have some of the finest schools around, especially for that part of Texas." Those schools may prove to be Parr's undoing.

Parr and two of his pawns, Brian Taylor and Eunice Powell, School Superintendents of San Diego and Freer, respectively, initiated a massive rebuilding program for Duval County schools and libraries in the late sixties. After the customary bidding an architect and contractor were selected. The federal government, which has been after Parr since the '30's thinks Parr may have received kickbacks in the contract awarding process. He has been indicted for income tax evasion. His nephew Archer and Octavio Saenz have both been charged with perjury in the testimonies given so far. George's trial date is set for Jan. 28.

George Parr is no stranger to indictments or trials. In fact he is no stranger to prison having spent 9 months in a fed. reformatory in 1936. (Truman gave him a full pardon a few years later.) One of Parr's toughest fights to maintain his "Dukedom" oc-

curred in the late forties. Texas Gov. Allan Shivers declared war on Parr, sending the Texas Rangers in to bring him out. Parr hired armed guards to protect him. When the Rangers arrived they were arrested by Duval County officials and charged with attempted murder. (They had a brief struggle with Parr before the county officials arrived.) Most locals supported Parr, as they always have. Some however, made the mistake of opposing the "Duke." W. H. Mason, a radio commentator, openly

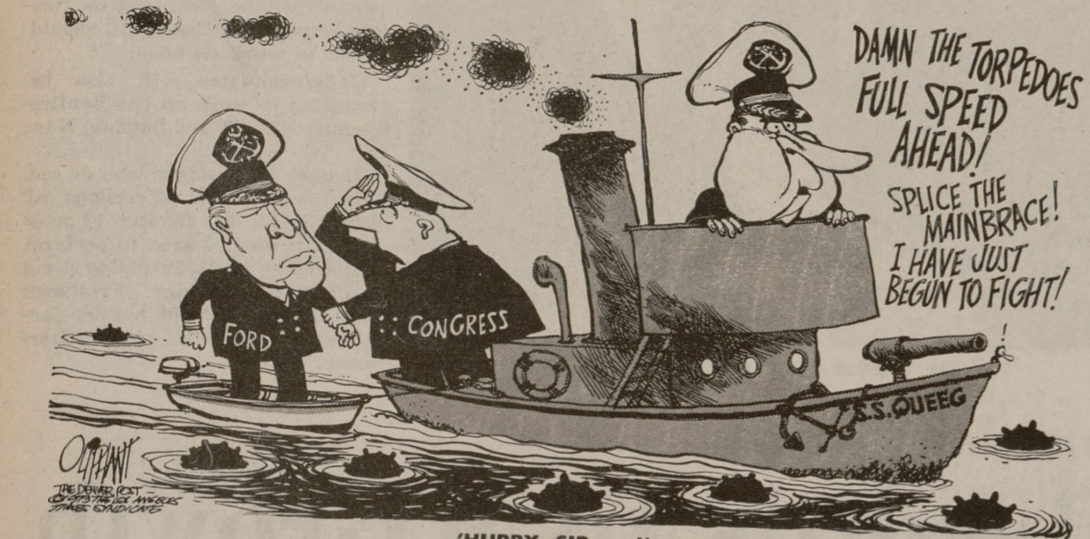
opposed Parr on the air. Shortly afterwards he was shot dead on the street by the deputy sheriff in Jim Wells County.

During Parr's fight with Shivers many observers predicted the end of the Parr dynasty. However one man said, "This is mesquite country. You know how hard it is to kill a mesquite tree; you can chop it, you can burn it, but the roots go way down deep and it'll keep coming up again." Gov. Shivers is gone and forgotten by all but the historians. The Parr dynasty lives on.

One story (unsubstantiated) told to me by a man well acquainted with Duval County politics links former President Johnson to Parr. It seems when Johnson was running for U.S. Senator against Coke Stevenson the race was pretty close. Things were looking dim and Johnson called up Parr. Parr assured him plenty of votes. Sure enough Johnson carried the county with a landslide and was elected senator. What is substantiated and documented is that when election officials looked into the returns from

Duval County all they found were ashes. The ballots were burned the day after the election. Later when Parr was fighting a tough legal battle with federal prosecutors it was alleged that in return for the election favor, LBJ used his pull to help George out of the fire.

Parr is now 72 years old. Once again he is fighting the government. Whether or not he once again triumphs he has left his mark permanently engraved upon the corridors of Texas political history.



Batt Commentary Vote 'No' Tuesday

Relieving students of their duties as senators within student government is many times a hard thing to do for University administrators and official student peers. But, when senators get placed on conduct or scholastic probation some action should be taken, but only when there is a fast and effective means of replacing them.

Tuesday the student body will be faced with three amendments to the Student Government Constitution and we urge voters not to approve any of these.

The first is a modification of an article concerning dismembership because of scholastic reasons. The added phrase states that senators in scholastic trouble "shall be removed from office immediately."

The second proposal makes provision for removing immediately senators on conduct probation. But the Student Senate has presented no means for a senator's constituency to have much input in refilling the position. Now, probationed senators aren't forced to leave immediately and informed continuity is possible.

Currently, Student Government President Randy Ross calls for applications for positions and nominates a replacement to the Senate after the Credentials Committee has reviewed applicants. The Senate then approves or disapproves Ross' selection.

The constituency involved never has a chance to voice approval or disapproval of a Ross nomination because the nomination and approval process is done in one night. No one but the Senate really knows what will happen before it happens.

We propose that the Senate draw up a plan that would allow students two weeks to review Ross' nominations and lodge complaints or approval in person at the following Senate meeting prior to a vote. Everyone, then, has an equal opportunity to participate in selection.

The third amendment would allow the Senate to "punish its members for disorderly behavior, and with the concurrence of 2/3 present and voting, expel a member." The proposal does not spell out what punishment will be nor does it define what disorderly conduct could be.

Had senators approved the writ of mandamus resolution which would have allowed Judicial Board review of a senator's actions, this unrealistic bill would have been unnecessary. The Senate needs to state specifically what limits the amendment will have. As the amendment now stands it is worthless.

This will be the last student election until the spring general elections. It would be a mistake for you to pass up this opportunity to show senators how you feel.

Editor:

Since when do Aggies honor students who call it quits and kill themselves? It said in the Battalion that James Scott had poisoned himself. Scott exemplifies that old Aggie determination and perseverance—right? It's people like him that helped make our state and nation work—right?

The world is full of mysteries—the 98 per cent honored a two per center Tuesday night. Yea Army.

Taylor Sealy

It has been University policy to honor every Aggie who dies while at school here with Silver Taps no matter what the circumstances were surrounding the death—Ed.

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Listen Up— Suicide Victim Was 'Two Per Center'

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slave who was considered by the Supreme Court as a non-citizen. Indeed one judge held that he was not even a person.

To help those girls who are carrying the priceless life of an unborn baby, I would like to give the telephone numbers of Birthright, Inc. in Houston, (713) 529-7273, in San Antonio, (512) 434-7288, and Father Charles Michalka in College Station, (713) 846-5717.

John R. Harris '48
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Editor:

Re: Gregory Sullivan on a U. S. Coup d'etat (Nov. 6).

While it is agreed that political corruption in developing countries pave the path for a military coup d'etat to eliminate labor involved in impeachment proceedings, it is difficult for one to understand how Mr. Sullivan can compare nations in Africa and South America with the United States. The development of democratic in-

stitutions in these areas is a relatively new occurrence.

By comparing the U. S. with the mentioned classes of developing countries Mr. Sullivan fails to remember his history, history that reminds us that the U. S. evolved from varying degrees of freedom and democratic government to its present democratic status. The development of American democracy does not begin with the creation of the Articles of Confederation but can be traced to the rich and colorful heritage of our English forefathers. Such events that marked the road to the freedom of man over government include the Magna Carta and the Glorious Revolution. It is doubtful that nations with a background of colonization by despotic kings can claim the same rich heritage in regards to the development of freedom as a government institution.

To advocate that conditions in other countries under the auspices of a military dictator enable a

student to understand the American political system or its alternatives fails to consider the tradition and heritage associated with the American system. While it is true that present political activities in the U. S. cannot be viewed with appropriation it is important for Americans to have faith that the system will survive its ordeals in an improved status as it has in the past.

E. R. Pearcy '76

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(Continued from page 1)

manent reminder of TAMU and Texas.

Friday morning at 10, he sat on a discussion panel with Olin E. Teague, chairman of U. S. House of Representatives' Science and Astronautics Committee; William Anders, commissioner of the Atomic Energy Commission; and John P. Newton, chairman of the Texas House's Interim Committee on the Energy Crisis.

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Want to know more? Stop by and see Lt. Marilyn Britten, WAC Selection Officer between 9 a. m. and 3 p. m. on Tuesday, November 13 at the Memorial Student Center. If you can't make it call her collect in Houston, (713-688-1328.)

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