

FIRST PRINCIPLES

FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS TO GUIDE POLITICS AND POLICY

MAKERS OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

NO. 11 | JULY 3, 2014

Barry M. Goldwater: The Most Consequential Loser in American Politics

Lee Edwards, PhD



On November 3, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson was re-elected by the largest popular vote margin in U.S. history, crushing his conservative opponent, Republican Barry Goldwater. Johnson received 61 percent of the vote, topping the previous record set by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and carried 44 states for a total of 486 electoral votes. The election also produced the biggest Democratic majority in the House of Representatives since 1936. *The New York Times* summed up that “Barry Goldwater not only lost the presidential election yesterday but the conservative cause as well.”¹ At the time, most political analysts agreed with these declarations.

Yet, just two years later, the GOP, led by Goldwater-inspired conservatives, made a remarkable comeback, gaining 47 seats in the House, four seats in the Senate, and eight governorships. Moreover, just 16 years after the Goldwater debacle, Republican Ronald Reagan, running as an unapologetic conservative, won the first of two landslide presidential elections. As columnist-commentator George Will put it, Barry Goldwater lost 44 states but won the future.²

Paradoxically, Goldwater’s monumental loss marked the beginning of a shift to the Right that would eventually end 50 years of liberal dominance in American politics. Goldwater shaped the Republican Party’s positions on limited government, welfare, and defense, which would carry the United States into the 21st century. Goldwater revived our constitutional heritage, placing it at the center of popular political discussion when the conservative cause seemed lost.

Who is this man who has been called the most consequential loser in modern presidential politics?

The Early Goldwater

On January 1, 1909, three years before the Arizona territory became the 48th state, Barry Morris Goldwater was born in his mother’s bedroom in central Phoenix. As the first child of Baron Goldwater, founder of the city’s largest department store, Barry was given the freedom and the means to do almost anything he wanted while growing up.

The young Barry was athletic, handsome, curious about things mechanical, but unconcerned with books. His Jewish father was indifferent to religion, but his mother Jo (“Mun”) was a devout Episcopalian who insisted that all her children (including Robert and Carolyn, who would follow Barry) attend Sunday school and church at Trinity Cathedral. Barry served as both altar boy and acolyte, although he was not a model of deportment, once firing a miniature cannon at the steeple of the Methodist church.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/MAPT-11>

The Heritage Foundation
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 546-4400 | heritage.org

Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

Barry M. Goldwater

Born

January 1, 1909, in Phoenix, Arizona, to Baron M. Goldwater (1866–1929) and Hattie Josephine (“Mun”) Williams (1875–1966).

Education

University of Arizona, Tucson (1928); withdrew from the University of Arizona to support the family after the death of his father in 1929.

Religion

Episcopalian.

Family

Married Margaret “Peggy” Johnson in September 1934. They had four children: Joanne (b. 1936); Barry Jr. (b. 1938), who would later serve in the U.S. Congress; Michael (b. 1940); and Margaret (b. 1944). Peggy passed away in 1985. Subsequently remarried to Susan Schaffer Wechsler in 1992.

Highlights

- Vice-Chairman, City Council of Phoenix, Arizona (1949–1953).
- U.S. Senator from Arizona (1953–1965).
- Author, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960), with L. Brent Bozell.
- Republican presidential nominee (1964).
- U.S. Senator from Arizona (1969–1986).
- Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence (1981–1985).
- Chairman, Committee on Armed Services (1985–1987).

Died

May 29, 1998, at his home in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

Notable Quote

“I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!” (Speech accepting the Republican nomination for President of the United States, July 16, 1964.)

In 1923, Barry entered Phoenix Union High School, where he was elected president of his freshman class and played on both the basketball and football teams. But Barry flunked two courses, which prompted the school principal to suggest that the young man would benefit from a change in school. Baron agreed and picked the Staunton Military Academy in Virginia, 3,000 miles away. Though Mun protested, Baron insisted that their pampered son needed a different kind of lesson—discipline.

By his own admission, Barry did not take readily to a military regimen. He repeated his freshman year but wound up president of his class and captain of the swimming team. In his senior year, he was named the best all-around cadet, despite his average grades. In the fall of 1928, he enrolled at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Once again, he was elected president of his freshman class. He made the football and basketball teams and pledged Sigma Chi fraternity.

Rejecting the seductive promises of the welfare state, Goldwater offered an alternative: limited constitutional government, individual freedom, and responsibility—ideas which at the time had a weak voice on the national stage.

But life changed abruptly when his father Baron died of a heart attack during his freshman year. After the funeral, the two Goldwater brothers got down to business—the family business. They decided that Robert would continue at the University of Illinois (and later Stanford University), while Barry would leave college and take his place at Goldwater's, the family store. He started at the bottom as a clerk in piece goods, earning \$15 a week.

In December 1930, he met and fell in love with Margaret “Peggy” Johnson of Muncie, Indiana. Peggy was in no hurry to settle down. Nearly four years later, a persistent Barry Goldwater finally persuaded Peggy to accept an engagement ring. Mar-

ried in September 1934, they would have four children over the next decade: Joanne in January 1936; Barry, Jr., in July 1938 (who would later serve in the U.S. Congress); Michael in March 1940; and Margaret in July 1944.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Goldwater, a reserve first lieutenant in the Army, had more than 200 hours of unofficial flying time in a trainer airplane. Because of his age (he was 32) and bad eyesight, he was not assigned to combat duty but was given a slot in the Air Transport Command. Promoted to captain, he was stationed in the China-Burma-India Theater, where he ferried aircraft over the Himalaya Mountains through some of the most treacherous weather and terrain in the world.

Budding Political Career

The war over and the family store firmly established and profitable, public questions rather than business occupied Goldwater. Knowing that a vision of the future must be rooted in the wisdom of the past, Goldwater read Edmund Burke, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and F. A. Hayek. These thinkers along with his love of the West and its staunch individualism molded Goldwater's political philosophy, which echoed a popular slogan of the American Revolution: “Live Free or Die.” Rejecting the seductive promises of the welfare state, Goldwater offered an alternative: limited constitutional government, individual freedom, and responsibility—ideas which at the time had a weak voice on the national stage.

In 1949, he decided to run as a reform candidate for the nonpartisan city council of Phoenix. On November 8, 1949, 40-year-old Goldwater led the field of 27 candidates and was elected to his first political office. The following month, he was elected vice chairman of the new city council, which set about cleaning up the city and straightening out its finances.

Even at the beginning of his career, Goldwater adhered to conservative principles such as balancing budgets and limiting government. In fact, so successful was the new council that speculation soon mounted about the political future of its charis-

-
1. Walter Lippmann, “The Mandate,” *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1964; Nelson W. Polsby and Aaron B. Wildavsky, “Presidential Elections: Strategies of American Electoral Politics,” 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), p. 208; James Reston, “Poor Strategy, Poor Content, Poor Delivery,” in *The Road to the White House: The Story of the 1964 Election*, ed. Harold Faber (New York: New York Times, 1965), p. 273.
 2. George F. Will, “The Cheerful Malcontent,” *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1998.
-

matic vice chairman. Although his uncle and father were both Democrats, Goldwater was a Republican because, he said, the Democrats “had ruled Arizona with an arrogance that offended me.”³ His Republicanism was further reinforced by Roosevelt’s progressive New Deal, which he said “gave the federal government the power to impose its will on private business.”⁴

When Republicans began looking for a candidate to run in 1952 against incumbent U.S. Senator Ernest McFarland, a widely respected Democrat, they turned to Goldwater. Deeply dissatisfied with the Truman Administration’s foreign and domestic policies, Goldwater had already been thinking about challenging McFarland. Asked by a friend why he thought he could win, he replied, “I think a guy running for office who says exactly what he really thinks would astound a hell of a lot of people around the country.”⁵ This kind of straight talk, for which he became famous, appealed to supporters throughout his career.

Goldwater became the political heir of the late Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio and the spokesman of a still-emerging national political movement destined to transform American politics.

Goldwater narrowly defeated McFarland by just 6,725 votes. He ran an aggressive, well-organized campaign, while McFarland tried to win from Washington. That year, Republican presidential candidate and war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower carried Arizona by 43,514 votes. Goldwater was quick to admit that he was “the greatest coattail rider in history.”⁶

During his first term in the Senate, the *Saturday Evening Post* described Goldwater as “aggressive, articulate, colorful,” and having “more lead-

ership potential” than any other Republican in the past decade.⁷ Goldwater became an outspoken critic of organized labor and its corrupt bosses like the Teamsters’ Jimmy Hoffa. He declared his opposition to the concentration of power in any hands, whether of government, business, or labor. He constantly defended the independent entrepreneur and the small businessman, warning that “any government big enough to give you everything you want is big enough to take away everything you have.”⁸ Goldwater was keeping his oath to “support and defend the Constitution.”⁹

The 1958 election was a mirror image of the 1952 contest with Goldwater the incumbent and Ernest McFarland the challenger. Goldwater carried 11 of 14 counties and won the popular vote by a decisive 56–44 margin. He was one of the few nationally known Republicans, along with Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, to win reelection. It was clear that these two victors and Vice President Richard Nixon would dominate 1960s Republican politics.

Clarence Manion, former dean of the Notre Dame Law School and moderator of a popular national weekly radio program, set about trying to nominate Goldwater as the Republican Party’s 1960 presidential candidate. He formed a Committee of One Hundred (prominent conservatives); reached out to party leaders, particularly in the South; and suggested that Goldwater publish a pamphlet about “Americanism” setting forth his conservative philosophy for a broad audience. The pamphlet would become the most widely read political manifesto of the 1960s: *The Conscience of a Conservative*, crafted with the help of Goldwater’s speechwriter, L. Brent Bozell, an influential conservative writer for *National Review*.

Before *Conscience*, Goldwater was an attractive, forthright, often controversial Senator from a small Western state. After it was published, Goldwater became the political heir of the late Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio, the hope of disgruntled Republi-

3. Dean Smith, *The Goldwaters of Arizona* (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1986), pp. 43–44.

4. Lee Edwards, *Goldwater: The Man Who Made a Revolution* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 1995), p. 33.

5. James M. Perry, *Barry Goldwater: A New Look at a Presidential Candidate* (Silver Spring, MD: National Observer, 1964), p. 44.

6. Edwin McDowell, *Barry Goldwater: Portrait of an Arizonan* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), p. 66; Smith, *The Goldwaters of Arizona*, p. 201.

7. Paul F. Healy, “The Glittering Mr. Goldwater,” *Saturday Evening Post*, June 7, 1958.

8. Edwards, *Goldwater*, p. 81.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

cans, an alternative for partyless independents, and the spokesman of a still-emerging national political movement destined to transform American politics.

The Conscience of a Conservative

In his manifesto, Goldwater declares that the trend in America against freedom and in favor of big government is “well along and gathering momentum.” For the conservative, he says, there is no difficulty in “identifying the day’s overriding political challenge: it is *to preserve and extend freedom*.”¹⁰ To this end, he sets forth a number of liberating reforms in domestic and foreign policy.

Goldwater had the wisdom to focus on total victory against Communism, an objective which succeeding conservatives, especially Ronald Reagan, would follow successfully.

First, Goldwater declares that welfare ought to be “a private concern ... promoted by individuals and families, by churches, private hospitals, religious service organizations, community charities.” Goldwater understood that dependence on government support would do irreparable harm to the American character. Similarly, he insists that doing something about the farm problem “means ... prompt and final termination of the farm subsidy program.” He endorses a flat tax, writing that “government has a right to claim an equal percentage of each man’s wealth, and no more.” Beneath these discrete issues is the desire to limit the federal role and strengthen the private sector.

In foreign policy, he proposes a seven-point program (excluding the use of nuclear weapons) to achieve victory in the Cold War, beginning with the objective of not merely fighting Communism, but winning the struggle. Goldwater had the wisdom to focus on total victory, an objective which succeeding conservatives, especially Ronald Reagan, would follow successfully.¹¹

Such forthright rhetoric inspired conservatives to buy 3.5 million copies of *Conscience* but did not affect the outcome of the 1960 Republican National Convention, which was controlled by Nixon forces. However, the Goldwater undercurrent was so strong that the Nixon people were forced to allow the Senator’s name to be placed in nomination, precipitating a tumultuous floor demonstration.

When Goldwater asked that his name be withdrawn from nomination, cries of “No!” rose from the floor. They reflected the memories of conservative defeats at previous conventions. Addressing the disgruntled delegates before him, Goldwater said:

This country, and its majesty, is too great for any man, be he conservative or liberal, to stay home and not work just because he doesn’t agree. Let’s grow up, Conservatives. We want to take this party back, and I think some day we can. Let’s get to work.¹²

When Nixon lost to John F. Kennedy by only 114,673 votes out of 68.3 million cast—just 0.17 percent of the popular vote—conservatives argued it was because he did not give the people a clear-cut philosophical choice. If he ever ran for President, Goldwater said privately, he would not make the same mistakes Nixon had made: He would offer a choice, not an echo.

Four years later, on a cool July evening in San Francisco, he stood before a packed hall of wildly cheering Republican delegates and accepted their nomination to run for President. It had not been a smooth path. Following President Kennedy’s assassination on November 22, 1963, Goldwater had decided not to run. He knew his chances were close to zero: The public wanted the new President to carry out the martyred President’s program. Nor did he relish running against Lyndon Johnson, well-known for his large bag of dirty political tricks.

However, importuned by conservatives, especially young conservatives, Goldwater changed his mind and declared his candidacy. He got off to a poor start. During the New Hampshire primary, which he was favored to win, Goldwater carelessly left the impres-

10. Barry M. Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (Shepherdsville, KY: Victor Publishing Co., 1960), p. 14. Emphasis in original.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

12. Barry M. Goldwater and Jack Casserly, *Goldwater* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), p. 119.

sion that he would do away with Social Security and use nuclear weapons against the Soviets. Following his defeat in New Hampshire, Goldwater admitted he had “goofed” and restructured his campaign organization. He learned to choose his words more carefully, defeated Rockefeller in the crucial California primary with the help of an unprecedented 50,000 volunteers, and arrived in San Francisco with 200 more delegates than the 655 needed to nominate. The Goldwater delegates were happy witnesses to a rebirth of conservatism in the Republican Party.

And it was led by a new kind of principled politician. Here was no me-too Republican but a conservative Republican who declared in his acceptance speech that Americans “must, and we shall, set the tide running again in the cause of freedom.” Freedom was his central theme, but it was a freedom “made orderly for this Nation by our Constitutional government.”

Here was no me-too Republican but a conservative Republican who declared in his acceptance speech that Americans “must, and we shall, set the tide running again in the cause of freedom.”

An acceptance speech is usually used to unite a party, but Goldwater could not forget the slurs and distortions that had been directed at him and his supporters by liberal Republicans. A grim-faced Goldwater said that what was needed was a “focused” Republicanism that rejected “unthinking and stupid labels.” The next lines are underlined in the original text: “I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice! And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!”¹³

Inside the convention hall, conservatives roared, reveling in the stinging rebuff of Nelson Rockefeller, William Scranton, George Romney, and the other liberals who had reviled them for so long. Richard Viguerie, the direct-mail fundraiser for a thousand

conservative causes, “loved” the line, but F. Clifton White, the seasoned campaign manager who had led the successful delegate hunt for Goldwater, wondered whether the convention realized it was “hailing disaster and defeat.”¹⁴

Regardless of the provocation, Goldwater’s words divided the Republican Party and gave the Democratic opposition a word—“extremism”—that they would affix to Goldwater and every other Republican candidate in the fall. Any chance of Goldwater winning the general election, already slim because of Kennedy’s assassination, was rendered nil.

Goldwater, however, was determined to run his campaign his way: to offer, as he put it, “a campaign of principles not personalities.” It was a radical plan, not calculated to win the votes of electoral blocs but to challenge the minds and hearts of voters and to produce a conservative wave in America. This proved impossible in 1964 when most of the country was enjoying economic good times and the Vietnam War was a minor conflict in a distant land.

History is filled with “what ifs,” but if Barry Goldwater had been elected President in 1964, we can be fairly certain of two things.

First, the country would not have embarked on the trillion-dollar experiment in welfarism known as the Great Society. Goldwater respected the Constitution and the American tradition of neighbor helping neighbor too much to initiate any such utopian venture.

Second, the Vietnam War would not have evolved into a ground war requiring half a million American troops. As a Major General in the Air Force reserve, he was familiar with Dwight D. Eisenhower’s and Douglas MacArthur’s blunt advice: Do not become embroiled in an Asian land war. Goldwater’s opposition to a ground war in Vietnam is central to understanding why he elicited such passionate support.

Passing the Torch

Goldwater was charismatic, unapologetically conservative, and unambiguously guided by principle. For him, principle, not power, was the core of politics. Such a personality proved successful in bringing the South and the West, and the young and the energetic, into the GOP and the conservative move-

13. Barry M. Goldwater, “Acceptance Address of Barry M. Goldwater,” *Official Proceedings of the 28th Republican National Convention* (San Francisco: Republican National Committee, 1964), pp. 416–418.

14. Edwards, *Goldwater*, pp. 273–274.

ment for the first time. He insisted that Americans did not have to live under Progressivism at home while being threatened by Communism abroad.

Among Goldwater's other lasting impacts on American politics was his approval of a nationally televised speech by a semiretired film and television star named Ronald Reagan. Delivered in the last week of the campaign, "A Time for Choosing" electrified conservatives who obtained film prints and ran it again and again on TV stations and in meeting halls across the country. Political analysts David Broder and Stephen Hess called the 30-minute talk "the most successful national political debut since William Jennings Bryan [and] the 1896 Democratic convention."¹⁵ California Republican leaders said they would not have approached Reagan the following year to run for governor if it had not been for "A Time for Choosing."

Not only Reagan, but thousands of young conservatives entered and stayed in politics because of Goldwater's political manifesto and run for the presidency. Many of them went on to sit in Congress, manage campaigns, head think tanks, edit magazines, host talk shows, and raise money for a panoply of causes.

Furthermore, in the fall of 1994, almost 30 years to the day after Goldwater was roundly defeated, a *USA Today*/CNN Gallup poll found that 64 percent of Americans agreed with the Contract with America, the keystone of a national campaign that enabled Republicans to capture the House of Representatives after four decades of Democratic control. The people wanted smaller government, lower taxes and spending, tougher anti-crime measures, and less Washington meddling in their lives.

Every one of these ideas was first proposed in 1964 by Goldwater, but the American people were not ready then to turn away from Progressive prescriptions. By 1994, when the failures of Progressivism were obvious to all, the people overwhelmingly voted Right.

Successes in the Senate

Though nationally reviled and rejected in 1964, Goldwater was easily reelected to the U.S. Senate in 1968 while the President who buried him in an

historic landslide dared not seek reelection. During his 30 years in the Senate (from 1952–1965 and then 1969–1986), Goldwater consistently voted to limit government, except when it came to the military, quoting the Constitution that the federal government was responsible for the "common defense" and insisting that peace was best kept through military strength.

In his last years in the Senate, which then had a Republican majority, Goldwater, as chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence and then chairman of the Armed Services Committee, accomplished his most effective and enduring work as a national legislator.

Not only Ronald Reagan, but thousands of young conservatives entered and stayed in politics because of Goldwater's political manifesto and run for the presidency.

In May 1986, by a vote of 95–0, the U.S. Senate approved the most sweeping reorganization of the military establishment in nearly four decades, the Goldwater–Nichols Act. Goldwater's legislation contained two major reforms: designating the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the President's "principal military adviser" and granting the seven combatant commanders responsible for military operations in geographic areas around the world "full operational command" over units assigned to them.¹⁶

The historic impact of the Goldwater–Nichols Act was validated by the success of the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Major General Gus Pagonis, chief of logistics for the ground forces during Operation Desert Shield, said that without the authority granted by the Goldwater reorganization he could not have moved "the unprecedented amount" of goods, food, medicine, fuel, and other material that made possible the decisive flanking ground attack of the Gulf War.¹⁷

15. Stephen Hess and David Broder, *The Republican Establishment: The Present and the Future of the GOP* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 253.

16. Edwards, *Goldwater*, p. 455.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 456.

Civil Rights and the Constitution

Throughout the 1964 campaign, Goldwater was unfairly attacked as a racist. He was called “a hopeless captive of the lunatic calculating right-wing extremists” by baseball legend Jackie Robinson. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. declared that if Goldwater were elected, the nation would erupt into “violence and riots, the like of which we have never seen before.”¹⁸

The major reason for the extremist rhetoric was Goldwater’s reluctant vote, on constitutional grounds, against the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Goldwater, who had voted for the 1957 and 1960 civil rights bills, wanted to support the 1964 act but objected to two of its provisions: Title II (public accommodations) and Title VII (fair employment).

Goldwater’s integration of the Arizona Air National Guard took place more than two years before President Harry Truman integrated the U.S. armed forces.

Drawing on a legal analysis prepared by Robert Bork, then a professor at Yale, Goldwater said that he could find “no constitutional basis for the exercise of Federal regulatory authority in either of these areas.” He feared that Title VII would culminate in government dictating hiring and firing policy. He was not persuaded when Senator Hubert Humphrey, who guided the legislation through the Senate, insisted that the act “does not require an employer to achieve any kind of racial balance in his work force by giving preferential treatment to any individual or group.”¹⁹ As Goldwater warned, preferential treatment, or affirmative action, mandated by government became general practice.

Goldwater treated all people the same. As a private citizen, he flew mercy missions to Navaho res-

ervations, never asking for recognition or accepting payment. He felt that “the red man seemed as much—if not more—a part of Arizona and America as any white or black person.”²⁰ Moreover, a few weeks after Goldwater was discharged from the Army in November 1945, Democratic Arizona Governor Sidney Preston Osborn asked him to organize the Arizona Air National Guard. One of Goldwater’s first recommendations, soon approved, was to desegregate the unit. Goldwater’s integration of the state’s Air National Guard took place more than two years before President Harry Truman integrated the U.S. armed forces.

Goldwater was an early member of the Arizona chapters of both the NAACP and the National Urban League, even making up the latter’s operating deficit when it was getting started. Later as a Senator, he desegregated the Senate cafeteria in 1953, demanding that his black legislative assistant, Kathrine Maxwell, be served along with every other Senate employee after learning she had been denied service.

In the mid-1970s, a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, investigating improper operations of the intelligence community in the United States, proposed that transcripts of the FBI tapes about Martin Luther King Jr.’s alleged indiscretions be published. An outraged Goldwater declared he would not be a party to destroying King’s reputation and strode out of the committee room. A fellow Senator recalled that Goldwater’s protest “injected some common sense into the proceedings,” and the electronic surveillance transcripts were not released.²¹

That his opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was based on constitutional grounds and not political considerations was underscored in the final week of the fall campaign. Speaking in Columbia, South Carolina, Goldwater condemned segregation and declared that government must treat “all men as equal in the arena of law and civil order.”²² He pledged if elected President to implement all provisions of the act. His forthright pro-civil rights speech was televised on 87 stations throughout the South.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Retired but Never Retiring

After he retired from the Senate, Goldwater often took “libertarian” positions on social issues such as abortion and gay rights, causing some conservatives to criticize and even ostracize him. In fact, however, there had always been two Goldwaters: the Russell Kirk–Edmund Burke conservative and the F. A. Hayek–Milton Friedman libertarian.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, these two sides of Goldwater were generally in balance, but when the social issues of the 1970s and 1980s came to the fore, Goldwater often assumed a libertarian stance, extolling individual rights above almost all else. When the question of gays in the military came up, he wrote that “You don’t need to be ‘straight’ to fight and die for your country. You just need to shoot straight.”²³

Of his libertarian comments about abortion, gay rights, the Religious Right, and similar issues, Phyllis Schlafly, the renowned First Lady of the Right, said: “Let him enjoy his retirement.... [His] legacy is

the way the 27 million who braved the vitriol of Big Media in 1964, lived to grow into the 54 million that validated the Reagan Revolution.”²⁴

By placing issues and ideas at the center of his campaign, Barry Goldwater is considered by many to be the first ideological presidential candidate of a major political party. He was not so much the candidate of a political party as the personification of a political movement. His candidacy for President marked the beginning of a tectonic shift in American politics—from East to West, from the cities to the suburbs, from big government to limited government, from containment to liberation, from liberal to conservative—that continues to shape the nation to the present day.

—*Lee Edwards, PhD, is Distinguished Fellow in Conservative Thought in the B. Kenneth Simon Center for Principles and Politics, of the Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity, at The Heritage Foundation.*

23. *Ibid.*, p. 458.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 465.