William M. Steger: The Campaign for Governor of Texas, 1960

Mike Lantz
From the time Reconstruction ended, most, if not all, of the political competition in Texas took place within the Democratic Party. By comparison, the Republican Party in Texas was stagnant and uncompetitive, relegated to little more than vocal opposition. The best the Republican Party could do was offer "token" opposition in a limited number of state and local positions with candidates who for the most part had absolutely no chance of success.

Beginning in 1960 the Republican Party began to make small steps toward becoming a more competitive party. Changing ideology played a part, but much of the change also came from stronger leadership within the Republican Party and candidates for statewide office who refused to be "token" competition. One of the "pioneers" within the Republican Party was the Republican candidate for governor in 1960, William M. Steger.

William "Bill" Merritt Steger was born on August 22, 1920, in Dallas, Texas. He grew up in Dallas, was graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1938, then moved to Waco to attend Baylor University. His college education was cut short by the sudden entry of the United States into World War II. Two days following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Steger, three years into his college education and twenty-one years of age, enlisted with the U.S. Air Corps. Following a year of training in the United States to be a fighter pilot, Steger was stationed in Morocco, where he volunteered to fly British-made Spitfires and took an active part in the Allied invasions of Sicily and Italy. After completing fifty-six combat missions, Steger spent two years stationed in Florida as a flight instructor and test pilot.

Steger was discharged from the U.S. Air Corps in January 1947, moved back to Dallas, married, and attended law school. He was graduated from SMU Law School in August 1950, and moved to Longview to begin a legal practice. While in private practice in Longview, Steger campaigned in Gregg County for Dwight Eisenhower for president in 1952. In July 1953, at the age of thirty-two, Steger was appointed U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Texas. Six years later, in September 1959, Steger resigned and joined Tyler.

Mike Lantz is a deputy clerk for the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler.
attorneys Murph Wilson and Marshall Spivey to form the Wilson, Spivey, and Steger law firm.

Bill Steger went to work for the new Wilson, Spivey, and Steger law firm in Tyler on September 1, 1959. Because the Hatch Act forbids employees of the executive branch from public involvement in partisan politics, Steger had not given politics much thought for several years. Instead, he had been busy with the challenge of supervising and managing the U.S. attorney’s office. And even now that he was out of the public sector, the idea of getting involved in politics was not foremost to him. Steger’s primary interest was to resume his career as a private attorney.

Early in 1960, Republican Party state chairman Thad Hutcheson called to ask if Steger would allow his name to be submitted to the Republican convention “as a candidate for state-wide office.” Steger told Hutcheson that he would consider it. When Steger went home that evening, he discussed the offer with his wife, Ann, and they “decided that we were very interested in – as we had always been interested in – building a two-party Texas, and decided that if that’s what the convention wanted, I was willing to submit to it.”

Along with other potential Republican candidates, Steger attended a meeting of the nominating committee in March prior to the Republican convention in McAllen, Texas in May. Here Steger met John Tower, a Midwestern State University government professor from Wichita Falls, who was also being considered as a candidate for statewide office. Steger and Tower discussed the prospect of who would run for what office, and as Steger tells it, “We were wanting to help the party, but we really weren’t all that interested in one race or the other. So we finally decided that I would run for governor, if the convention wanted, and that he would run for the senate, if the convention wanted it. So our names were submitted without opposition, and we were nominated as candidates for those offices.”

The Republican state convention was, in those days, the vehicle for party nomination, since the party seldom drew more than 200,000 votes in gubernatorial elections. By law, only parties receiving more than this number of votes for governor could conduct a primary election in the following election cycle. Although the Republican Party might exceed that number in presidential election years, mid-term elections attracted few Republican voters to the polls. The only occasions in Texas history in which a Republican candidate for governor acquired more than 200,000 votes took place in 1952 and 1956. In 1952, incumbent governor Allan Shivers ran on both Democrat and Republican tickets, garnering 1,375,547 votes as a Democrat and 468,319 votes as a Republican. And in the rematch between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson in 1956, William R. Bryant, the Republican candidate for governor, received 261,283 votes. However, in the mid-term elections of 1954 and 1958, the Republican candidates for governor received only 66,154 and 94,086 votes. The Republican Party had not conducted a party primary since 1934.
The Republican Party had been searching for candidates for statewide offices who would be legitimate political alternatives to the Democrats in office. In Steger, the party found their candidate for governor. Steger's years of experience as U.S. Attorney gave him credibility as an administrator, manager, and federal prosecutor with a legitimate track record of accomplishments in that office. Also, his experience as a fighter pilot in World War II implied a variety of character attributes that would appeal to Texas voters. As Republican State Chairman Thad Hutcheson said in nominating Steger for the office, the time had come for a "spectacular change" in the governor's office, and Steger was "able, active, and aggressive." just the man to succeed Governor Price Daniel.

Steger lived up to Hutcheson's description. He refused to play the role of the "token candidate," and was reported to have stated that it was up to the Republican rank and file to provide the backing he needed to pursue a major race. Steger and John Tower both called on the Republican Party "to go home, raise campaign funds and help . . . make it a good fight."

"In the past," noted a Tyler news article, "Republican candidates for state office have not campaigned to any great extent, choosing to feel that it was just an empty honor to be so named." Steger was different in that he had every "intention of making an aggressive campaign for the office."

This does not mean that Bill Steger ever believed he could defeat Price Daniel. Steger acknowledges that his race for governor "was a token race." Most of the funds raised for the campaign were, according to Steger, "spent primarily on the senate race. Tower and I campaigned side by side, but I didn't have much money . . . We knew it was a token race. I was running against Price Daniel who had been in there for two or three terms."

Governor Marion Price Daniel was campaigning for his third term, and Steger was too much of a realist to believe that he could compete with Daniel for the office of governor. A well-entrenched traditional Democrat, Daniel previously had served as a U.S. senator, Texas' attorney general, and member and speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. Steger, by comparison, was a political novice, who had never campaigned for public office. With less than $6,000 to spend on his campaign, Steger's candidacy for governor really was a "token race," but it was a candidacy with a purpose. Steger's goal was to acquire enough votes in the election to ensure a Republican primary election in the next election cycle, and to establish a solid political foundation that the Republican Party could build upon in future years to compete for and win state-wide elective offices.

Following his nomination, Steger's press conference in Tyler established this theme, which he continued to emphasize throughout the campaign:

I feel deeply honored that my party has seen fit to choose me as its candidate for Governor of Texas ... I am willing to accept this responsibility and have done so because I have a strong belief that Texas should have a two-party system of government ... I feel that it is the only way that the voters of Texas may really express their preferences in regard to various candi-
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I have always believed that the one-party system limits the voter’s opportunity to ensure good government, and I invite voters of all political beliefs to join me and the Republican party in establishing such a system.11

At the end of July, Steger attended the National Republican Convention in Chicago as a guest. He had declined a position as a delegate-at-large because his responsibilities as a lawyer would not allow him to attend all of the sessions of the convention. Still, Steger received an invitation to attend a breakfast with President Dwight Eisenhower in the Constitution Room of the Morrison Hotel in Chicago. While at the convention, Steger also met Vice President Richard Nixon. A picture of that meeting was published in The Tyler Courier-Telegraph on July 28. The original photograph is addressed to Steger “with every good wish,” and signed, “Dick Nixon.”

Just before the Republican convention in Chicago, the Democrats met in Los Angeles and nominated John F. Kennedy as their candidate for president. Governor Price Daniel was, to say the least, disappointed with Kennedy’s nomination. According to an AP news release, “Daniel’s anger and displeasure was obvious,” with Daniel first having no comment on Kennedy’s nomination, then reluctantly acknowledging that he would vote for the Democratic ticket. Asked if he would work for the Democratic ticket, Daniel sharply replied, “I said ‘vote’ for it,” leaving little doubt of his dissatisfaction with the Democratic platform and the Democratic presidential nominee.12 Following the nomination of Lyndon Johnson as vice president, however, Governor Daniel modified his position and grudgingly agreed not only to vote for, but also to work for and to support the Democratic ticket. Still, he adamantly refused to support the Democratic national platform.13

Bill Steger began his campaign for governor on September 8, 1960, with an address to the Dallas Association of Young Republicans at the Baker Hotel in Dallas, “declaring that he favored a general sales tax, excepting food and medicine, and also ... a constitutional convention to rewrite the state’s constitution.”14

Steger’s position on the establishment of a state sales tax was not one with which most Texans would agree; yet, considering the deteriorating status of the state’s financial situation, it was an issue that needed to be discussed and debated. As un-Republican as it may have seemed to favor a new tax, Steger knew that some method of taxation was necessary to provide revenue for the increasing services that Texans were receiving. From a management standpoint, this was common sense. From a political standpoint, however, it was problematic.

I am fully aware of the philosophy among politicians that it is unwise to run for a political office and advocate any form of a tax program if elected. But, likewise, I am aware of the fact that a candidate seeking a political office should be honest with the voters and be realistic in the promises which are made.

The masses of the people of Texas are benefiting the most from the expenditures of our state government, and should bear their part of the high
cost of government.

We have many citizens of Texas who reap the benefits of an outstanding public school system as well as the many other advantages of being a Texan, and yet they pay practically no taxes whatsoever in return for these precious opportunities.

I submit that the union labor cry of the gross unfairness of a sales tax is pure propaganda.15

Steger criticized the National Democratic Party platform as "the most radical, socialistic, political ideology ever presented to the American people. The Democratic platform is a blueprint for economic, moral and spiritual bankruptcy and full of the promises that go with a welfare state." Steger noted the political waffling of Governor Daniel in his support of the Democratic presidential ticket and his party's platform. He charged that Daniel first had said "he would vote for Kennedy but not work for him in Texas;" however, after Johnson’s nomination as vice president, Daniel changed his mind and said he would work for the Democratic ticket. But, noted Steger, Daniel "changed his mind again by saying he would vote and work for the Democratic national ticket but would not support the platform." "Fellow Texans," said Steger, "I am at a loss to see how our governor can support the Democratic ticket and then soothe his conscience by saying he will not support the principles advocated by the men who comprise that ticket." Steger concluded his speech by pledging his "support to returning Texas to the sound, conservative principles of government practiced by our forefathers," and added that "with enlightened intelligent thinking on the part of all Texans in November, this can be accomplished."16

Later in September, Steger attended the Republican state convention in Galveston. Delegates selected Texas' electoral college nominees and instructed them to support the Nixon-Lodge ticket; elected state party officers, including the chairman and state executive committee members; and adopted a state party platform, emphasizing states' rights and "sound money" practices. As in all party conventions, this one involved a great deal of ideological rhetoric and posturing. Two resolutions passed by the convention are of particular interest. One resolution, read at the convention by Senator Lyndon Johnson's opponent, John Tower, denounced Johnson for running for two elective offices at the same time. The resolution said in part: "We condemn as irresponsible his running for two high offices simultaneously .... We challenge Sen. Johnson to state why, if he has confidence in the ability of the Kennedy-Johnson ticket to carry the nation, he seeks political insurance by running for the U.S. Senate as well as the vice presidency." The second resolution called on conservative Democrats to support the Republican nominees "in the interests of conservatism," and invited former governor Allan Shivers to lead Democratic conservatives into the Republican Party. Steger described Shivers as "one of the greatest statesmen in Texas history."17
Texas Senate. In 1946, he was elected lieutenant governor, reelected in 1948, and succeeded Governor Beauford Jester as governor in 1949 following Jester’s death. Shivers was then elected to three separate terms as governor from 1950 through 1956. Despite his political success, Shivers angered many traditional Democrats, and was accused of disloyalty to the party, for his active support of Republican presidential candidate Dwight Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956. In fact, Shivers was instrumental in delivering Texas’ electoral votes to Eisenhower in 1952. Following his loss for reelection in the Democratic primary in 1956, Shivers officially retired from state politics in 1957 and in 1960 campaigned for the Nixon-Lodge Republican presidential ticket. Because of his support for Republican candidates, Shivers drew the ire of Democrats such as former president Harry Truman, who considered any Democrat’s support of Republican candidates, an act equivalent to treason. “[Nixon] has the nerve to come to Texas and ask you to vote for him,” said Truman during a campaign swing through Texas. “And if you do it, you ought to go to hell.”

Still, with Shivers actively campaigning for Richard Nixon for president, Steger and other Republicans saw an opportunity to extend their base of support in Texas by emphasizing common conservative beliefs. “We feel we are very close to conservative Democrats,” said Steger. “Our thinking is very similar... One of the greatest things Gov. Shivers could do would be to lead conservatives out of the Democrat party and into the Republican Party. I issue to him a personal invitation to do so. The doors are wide open.”

Bill Steger’s campaign began in earnest in October, and Steger campaigned as much as time and money permitted. However, his was not a full-time campaign. As a lawyer who recently had begun practicing in his new firm, Steger often had to attend to business and had to work his campaign schedule around the demands of his law practice. “I couldn’t be out of the office as much as I’d like to have been,” said Steger. “But I made a number of trips around the state. Tower and I made a number of them together.” Steger recalled campaigning in Amarillo, Lubbock, Odessa, El Paso, Dallas, Waco, Austin, and several times in Houston. He admits that the rallies at which he spoke were small. “We didn’t have all that many people at that time,” he said. But, he added, “we had good newspaper coverage.”

At the end of September, Governor Daniel’s vocal disappointment with the Democratic Party’s national platform became national news. A Republican congresswoman from New Jersey, Florence P. Dwyer, criticized Daniel for attempting to separate the message from the messengers. “If Governor Daniel has any information that Senators Kennedy and Johnson have agreed to abandon the Democratic platform in spirit as has already been done by congressional Democrats in fact,” she said, “he owes the people of New Jersey, indeed all Americans, an explanation of his statement.”

Steger had attempted to make Daniel’s lack of support for the Democratic platform an issue in the gubernatorial campaign in Texas, but the governor had ignored Steger’s criticism. Now that the criticism became a
national issue, Daniel was compelled to respond to the challenge and state his position. Daniel effectively sidestepped the controversy by restating the issue and denying that he was opposed to everything in the national platform. According to Daniel, his original comment had been: “No one should interpret my support of the nominees as support of all the provisions of the platform that was written at Los Angeles . . . . What I meant,” said Daniel, “was that if and when some of these provisions arise in Congress, I would oppose them. I spoke only for myself.” Then he added, “Does Republican Rep. Dwyer propose to support every word and sentence in the Republican platform? I doubt it.”22 Despite Daniel’s attempt to separate his support for the national candidates and his opposition to portions of the national party platform, Bill Steger attempted to make much of the apparent contradiction. In a speech before a Dallas Republican Women’s Club, Steger said, “I challenge Governor Daniel to speak to the people of Texas and explain how this radical, socialistic platform will not be enacted into law though they vote for Kennedy and Johnson.” Steger continued, “I do not believe that Governor Daniel has the courage to follow his own convictions about matters vitally affecting Texas when he refused to repudiate a platform that opposes the oil depletion allowance, the tidelands, the right to work law and many others involving states’ rights.”23

The next day, Steger took part in a major campaign rally in Dallas with John Tower and Bruce Alger, Republican candidate for Congress. Steger then went on to East Texas State College in Commerce, Texas, to take part in a forum sponsored by the history department, and spoke about “The Role of the Republican Party in Our Political Life.” Optimistic and upbeat, Steger commented the following day to reporters about the positive momentum his campaign was beginning to acquire. He said, “I believe that the effort I’m putting forth this year is a tremendous step forward in helping build a two-party system in Texas, which is badly needed.”24

On October 12, Steger was in Amarillo giving a speech at a Potter-Randall County Republican rally in which he continued to hammer away at Daniel’s position: “I challenge Governor Daniel to go before the people of Texas and tell them why they should vote for Kennedy and Johnson and thereby give aid and comfort to their political platform when he himself does not believe in their principles.”25 And on a trip to Houston a few days later, Steger criticized Daniel regarding the state’s financial situation. “He still hasn’t revealed any program to get the state out of the financial dilemma,” said Steger. “Our financial picture is critical now.” Steger also challenged Daniel to explain why Texas voters should support the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, noting that former governor Allan Shivers was campaigning for the Nixon-Lodge ticket and encouraging conservative Democrats to vote Republican. “Shivers is doing what the governor as leader of the state ought to be doing, “ he said. “Shivers is expressing his conviction and doing it in a commendable manner.”26

Years later, Steger recalled that the “[Associated Press] covered me real well,” giving him good statewide coverage. Steger remembered one incident
during a campaign stop in Austin where he met the press, "I went to Austin ... and they had a press room there for all the press and at that point ... [AP correspondent] Dave Cheavens led off ... and said, 'We don't know much about you, so tell us about yourself so I can write smart about you.' ... [T]hat gave me a real hearing. I mean, I was in there 30 or 40 minutes, and Dave practically wrote a biographical sketch on me, which on AP, you know, goes out everywhere ... I got good coverage on it."27

The two resulting articles written by Cheavens are interesting and informative, describing Steger in a positive, yet realistic, light. According to one article, Steger "hit hard at Daniel, saying the governor has not furnished Texas the leadership it needs in solving its financial crisis or in the national political campaign," and that Governor Daniel's "opposition to the Democratic platform—while claiming he supports Sens. John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson—serves only to confuse the voters when they need real leadership."

"Daniel either has no convictions," said Steger, "or lacks the courage to follow them." Steger then discussed his primary motivation for running for office, which was to develop a basis for a competitive Republican Party in Texas, "I believe we are on the threshold of making Texas a two-party state," said Steger. "It is closer than many people think. We have many strong county organizations and we have a good chance of electing some of our candidates to the Legislature."28

In a second article by Cheavens, Steger "admits he may lose to traditional Democratic voting habits in his effort to defeat Gov. Price Daniel's bid for reelection. But if he does lose, says Steger, underlining the 'if,' the effort is worthwhile in the interests of future two-party government."29 Steger also took this opportunity to challenge Daniel to "a face-to-face debate on issues in the governor's race," a repeated challenge by Steger that Daniel ignored throughout the campaign.

Steger's press conference in Austin also was covered by Austin American capitol correspondent Ken Towery, and appears to be the only time Steger's campaign for governor was mentioned in the Austin newspaper. Steger was quoted at length regarding his position on issues that he continued to emphasize throughout the campaign. In particular, Steger attempted to highlight the ideological rift and inconsistency within the Democratic Party by criticizing Governor Daniel and praising former governor Shivers for their leadership roles within the party: "I think it is inconceivable for Gov. Daniel to state he is going to support Kennedy and Johnson and yet he is not going to support their platform. This means he does not support the things they believe in .... I feel that former Governor Allan Shivers is one of the most patriotic Texans we have. He has convictions, and I think it is a bad situation to have to call upon a former governor for leadership at a time when we face the greatest crisis in our history. Gov. Daniel has served only to confuse the voters ... ."30

While Steger made plans to campaign in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Governor Daniel addressed a Democratic rally in San Marcos, defending his
support for the national Democratic candidates and his lack of support for the national Democratic party platform. "None of this is inconsistent in voting for nominees although we disagree with and will oppose in the Congress some of the planks in the platform," said Daniel. "There is seldom any candidate or any political party with which you can agree 100 percent." Daniel also noted that "The Republican platform is just as bad on some of these points of disagreement, and yet there are Texans supporting the Republican nominees without embracing all of the Republican platform."33

The following Friday and Saturday, October 21 and 22, Steger toured the Lower Rio Grande Valley, making campaign stops at San Juan, Brownsville, San Benito, Mercedes, Weslaco, Alamo, Edinburg, and McAllen. Steger then left for Houston to meet with President Eisenhower, along with other state and local Republican leaders, while Eisenhower was in Houston to give a speech at Rice University.

On October 26, advertisements in the Tyler newspapers announced a political rally promoting the two Republican candidates for statewide office. "Tonight!" proclaimed the advertisement. "See and hear WM. (Bill) Steger, Tyler's Own Republican Candidate for Gov. 5:00 p.m.* John Tower Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate 7:30 p.m. KLTV Channel 7." Another political announcement read: "You're invited to the Steger * Tower Rally. Come as you are and meet these forthright, CONSERVATIVE candidates IN PERSON! 8:15 Carlton Hotel, Turquoise Room - On Ground Floor. TONIGHT!" 33

Steger held a press conference at 11:15 a.m. in the library of the Tyler Courier-Times-Telegraph building. He answered questions and promoted his positions on the issues, contrasting his candidacy with that of Governor Daniel. "I am a conservative candidate for Governor of Texas," said Steger. "And a surprising number of conservative Democrats have rallied to my support. . . ." Steger was asked at the press conference about state financing and emphasized that he opposed a state income tax as "bad taxation," but he would "support a broad-based sales tax of two per cent excepting medicine and groceries, if it were recommended by the tax committee appointed to study taxation."33

Following numerous appearances in Tyler, Steger and Tower each presented thirty-minute speeches that were broadcast by KLTV in Tyler. Following the speeches, a political rally was held at the Carlton Hotel.

On November 6, the Tyler-Morning Telegraph printed a sample ballot along with a "Voter's Guide to Tuesday Candidates" that listed the major candidates for statewide office, their responses to questions about their qualifications, and their positions on particular issues. In response to the question, "What changes in our State Constitution are most needed in solving the basic governmental problems of Texas?" Steger's response was "no answer."

The third question, "What changes do you recommend in the financial management of Texas—regarding revenues, expenditures, and/or organization and administration?" received a more thorough answer by Steger:
I believe that Texas has many antiquated laws controlling revenue and expenditures and that these laws need to be revised and modernized and keyed to modern day problems. In this connection I am referring also to the many special funds we have which I believe is [sic] unworkable and that many of these should be consolidated. I also am opposed to additional general sales taxes and believe that Texas' financial problems can be solved by good management and cutting costs of our present government.  

Steger's campaign advertisement that appeared in the Tyler newspaper, titled "Elect Tyler's Own, William M. Steger, Governor of Texas," promoted Steger's personal qualities as "Consistent, Conservative, Progressive." The ad highlighted his beliefs on specific issues, including states' rights, waste and inefficiency in government, the oil depletion allowance, and the tidelands issues. The most interesting statement in the advertisement concerned the issue of "Jeffersonian Democracy," and stated that Steger "Believes in a return to the principles of Thomas Jefferson with regard to individual and states' rights which made America the world's most prosperous country and the protector of world freedom ... the principles of self-reliance, individual initiative, personal resourcefulness and the limitations of government power."

The Tyler Morning Telegraph published an editorial which, although not specifically endorsing Steger for the governor's office, certainly implied endorsement, noting that Steger "has campaigned hard and long for the office, and his campaign theme has been totally consistent with his personal convictions .... we can recommend Bill Steger of Tyler for any task in which he chooses to accept the responsibility."

After the votes were counted, Steger lost his bid for governor by an almost three-to-one margin. Out of 2,237,506 votes cast, Steger received only 609,808 votes (27.3%), and of the 254 counties in Texas, Steger received the majority of votes in only three. In most counties Steger lost by a three- or four-to-one margin, receiving in most cases only a few hundred votes to Daniel's thousand or more. Yet in Smith County, his home county, Steger polled a respectable forty-two percent of the vote.

Following the election, Steger thanked his Smith County supporters in "An Open Letter to the People of Smith County," and then highlighted the significance of his campaign:

Texas, at the State and County level needs a two-party system of government, because one-party government creates apathy and irresponsibility on the part of some public officials when they have no competition by a strong opposition political party. The Republican Party in Texas, from its inception, has been a very ineffective and weak political party on the State and County level. It has always been my view that this is true only because the Republican Party has failed to present candidates to the voters who are willing to sacrifice their time and aggressively campaign for the office for which they have been nominated. In other words, it has been my view that the voters of Texas will work for and support a
Republican candidate if they are convinced the candidate is qualified and is willing to actively campaign for the office ....

... Texas is on the threshold of becoming a two-party State, provided those who believe conservative principles of government are willing to organize and work for better government and conservative government through the Republican Party.

It is my sincere desire that from this point forward, Smith County and the remaining Counties in the State of Texas will create strong Republican organizations and persuade conservative thinking men to accept the responsibility of running for our State and local offices and thereby bring about the wholesome competition between political parties which will bring about a better and more efficient local and State government.

This is the challenge we face, and I know that the majority of you will accept the challenge and render a service to your community and State by giving your efforts to the cause of better government."

As Steger notes in his "Open Letter," his candidacy was not a complete failure. His original goal of attracting more than 200,000 votes was accomplished, and a Republican primary was ensured for the next election. Steger also acquired more votes than any previous Republican candidate for governor, and the "success" of his candidacy helped propel the Republican Party to a new level of competition in Texas and established the foundation for the party's success in the years to come.

Bill Steger did not fade into political obscurity as many unsuccessful political candidates often do. He continued to play an active role in Republican Party politics for the next decade. In 1962, he ran a competitive campaign for Congress, gaining forty-nine percent of the vote, and losing by only 1,378 votes. He continued to work actively and enthusiastically in the Texas Republican Party as a presidential elector (1964), a delegate to the Republican National Convention (1968), a member of the Republican State Executive Committee (1966-1969), and ultimately chairman of the Republican State Executive Committee (1969-1970).

In December 1970, Steger was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas by President Richard M. Nixon and moved to Beaumont, where he presided in federal court for seven years. Upon completion of the Tyler federal annex building, Steger returned to Tyler in 1978. Steger took senior status in 1988, and although now a senior judge, William M. Steger remains a full-time judge and prominent citizen of the Tyler community.

NOTES


2. According to state law, the Republican Party was required to conduct three separate conventions in 1960. The first convention was to nominate candidates for the general election. The second convention, in June, was to designate delegates for the national convention. The third con-
vention, in September was to finalize party business, such as selection of electoral college nominees, election of state party officers, and the adoption of a state party platform.

Interview with Steger, September 14, 2001.

Interview with Steger, September 14, 2001.


Steger Opens His Campaign Thursday,” Tyler Morning Telegraph, September 8, 1960.

Interview with Steger, September 14, 2001.


Daniel to Vote For, Won’t Work For Kennedy Ticket,” The Tyler Courier-Times, July 14, 1960.


Republicans Challenge LBJ On Two Offices,” Tyler Morning Telegraph, September 21, 1960.


Interview with Steger, September 14, 2001.


Steger’s Campaign Gaining Momentum,” The Tyler Courier-Times, October 7, 1960.

Steger Issues Dare to Daniel,” The Tyler Courier-Times, October 12, 1960.


Interview with Steger, September 14, 2001.

Steger Says Daniel Must Begin Fight Or Face Defeat,” The Tyler Courier-Times, October 18, 1960.

Capitol Stormed By Tylerite In Campaign,” Tyler Morning Telegraph, October 18, 1960.

Steger Raps Vote Stand by Daniel,” Austin American, October 18, 1960.


Tyler Morning Telegraph, October 26, 1960.


Voters Guide to Tuesday Candidates,” Tyler Morning Telegraph, November 6, 1960.

The Tyler Candidate For Governor,” Tyler Morning Telegraph, November 6, 1960.


An Open Letter To the People of Smith County,”