Running from Behind: Nelson Rockefeller and the Liberal Republicans During the 1964 Republican Primaries

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Date of Award
12-2017

Document Type
Thesis

College
College of Arts and Sciences

Degree Program
History

Degree Name
Master of Arts

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Abstract
This thesis seeks to examine if the conservative victory in the 1964 Republican presidential primaries was inevitable. Based on archival research, primary source materials, and secondary source materials, it is concluded that conservative candidate Barry Goldwater faced numerous instances when his campaign could have been defeated by Republican challengers, campaign blunders, and internal party factions. This thesis focuses on liberal Republican Nelson Rockefeller’s campaign with the intention of articulating the fracturing of the Republican Party in the early 1960s. Rockefeller’s quest for the nomination is emblematic of the changing nature of presidential politics in the post-World War II era leading to changes in voter preferences, campaign tactics, and ultimately the path to the White House.

Recommended Citation
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The 1964 Republican standard bearer – Barry Goldwater – is a decided shift to the right. https://oildale.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/22045053/NBC-The-Republican-Party-Of-Barry-Goldwater-1964.mp3. NBC Radio – The Republican Party of Barry Goldwater – July 1964 – Gordon Skene Sound Collection –. So, the GOP represented a much more social values Party than the Democrats during that time. What has happened over the years, has been a shift – the Democrats are now perceived as the Party of Social issues and the GOP is perceived as the party of less government and bigger tax breaks. Barry Goldwater’s victory represented a death-knell to the liberal wing of the GOP. Nelson Rockefeller, in full