

Harris Supporter Likes Campaigns

By Bill Gilkeson

Staff Reporter

David Ohmberger works at a local restaurant making pizzas, but his bosses, being sympathetic, periodically let him have time off to pursue his avocation — working in political campaigns.

He worked in the 1972 New Hampshire and New Jersey primaries for McGovern, a year before he finished at Wake Forest University.

In 1974 he went to Iowa to beat the bushes for Jim Shavin, a Democratic candidate for governor.

This year, he's working for Fred R. Harris for president.

To a large extent, Harris, the former senator from Oklahoma, appeals to the same liberal young people that McGovern did.

Not Preacher-like

But Ohmberger, who fits the mold of that kind of supporter, said there is a big difference between the two candidates. "Harris' tone," he said, "is not moralistic or preacher-like. McGovern was telling blacks and whites to love each other. Harris is saying you don't have to love each other. Just recognize the fact that we're both getting screwed."

Harris' platform, much of it outlined in the book called "The New Populism," calls for the break-up of corporate monopolies, the guarantee of everyone to health care, policies that favor family farms and a moratorium on nuclear power.

"Tired of Elitism"

"The New Populism can win elections," wrote Harris. "People are tired of elitism, privilege, bigness and concentrated power."

"The Old Populism of the late 1800s and early 1900s often had a strain of racism," he wrote. "The New Populism maintains that a majority coalition of economic self-interest can be put together across race, age, sex and regional lines."

That attitude impresses the handful of supporters that Harris has picked up here. William G. Pfefferkorn, a lawyer who has been involved in consumer-oriented litigation, was asked why he backs Harris. He mentioned populism and said, "Read Woodrow Wilson's First Inaugural Address in 1913." He said there are issues on the use of wealth for the good of the country which have yet to be faced.

Another Difference

There is another difference between McGovern and Harris, however. McGovern did well in the New Hampshire primary in 1972, and Harris did not do so well there in 1976.

Ohmberger, a chief contact in this state for the national Harris campaign, said the Harris people have given him little word about Harris' plans. Harris is on the March 23 North Carolina primary ballot, but he said the national strategists will say little until after the Massachusetts primary Tuesday.

If Harris does well there, he said, money may be available — otherwise, probably not.

"Only Liberals"

"The focus is that (Morris K.) Udall and us are the only liberals on the ballot," he said. Others on the ballot are George Wallace, Jimmy Carter, Henry Jackson and Lloyd Bentsen.

Ohmberger took off earlier this year to organize a congressional district in Iowa for Harris. Delegates there were chosen in party caucuses, he said, so the people he was beaming the message at were more sophisticated than ordinary voters.

Carter got more delegates than any other candidate and, because Iowa was the country's first delegate test, won publicity that helped build his momentum.

W-5 JOURNAL 3/11/76