

The Running Mates

Who will be on the tickets in 2000?

BY ALEXANDRA STARR

“**I** DO NOT PROPOSE TO BE BURIED UNTIL I am really dead,” replied Daniel Webster when he was offered the Whig Vice Presidential nomination in 1848. For much of our nation’s history, live entombment has been a largely accurate analogy for the Number Two job. Men who hoped to one day become leader of the free world have found themselves attending funerals, refereeing spelling bees, and playing political errand boy. Few have enjoyed their stint on the peripheries of power; most would probably agree with John Nance Garner’s bitter assessment of the position. “The vice presidency,” said FDR’s first running mate, “isn’t worth a pitcher of warm piss.”

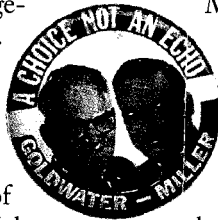
Ambitious politicians, however, have lusted after the V.P. slot. Remember the dramatic contest between John F. Kennedy and Estes Kefauver to run with Adlai Stevenson in 1956? And who can forget Dan Quayle’s unbridled enthusiasm—reminiscent of a kid who had just been tapped to join a college fraternity—when he was introduced as George Bush’s running mate? The first impression most Americans had of the future second-in-command was of a breathless man tugging at Bush’s sleeve, shouting “Let’s get ‘em!”

Perhaps Quayle’s excitement was justified. After all, more than half a century after Garner made his oft-misquoted remark, the veep’s job description has changed. Since Jimmy Carter assured Fritz Mondale a weekly luncheon, West Wing office, and access to his own aircraft (Spiro Agnew had to ask permission to be ferried around on what his staff dubbed Air Force 13—a military transport plane without windows), the vice presidency has become more than a spare tire in the automobile of government. Al Gore is the most activist veep

in history, serving as head of the Reinventing Government task force, point man on the environment, and occasionally as de facto Secretary of State. “It’s not a job where you wait for the president to die anymore,” says Matthew Dickenson of Harvard University. “The office has its own sources of power.” It can also be a stepping stone to the presidency: Since 1960 every sitting vice president who sought his party’s nomination has won it.

As we veer towards the 2000 elections, the choice of who will be a heartbeat away from the presidency is no insignificant matter. There are, however, few clear indications of who will occupy the office. The selection calculus can be inscrutable: Who would have guessed Barry Goldwater would ask William Miller to be his Number Two because the New York Congressman “drove Johnson nuts”? For that matter, who had Gore on their short lists? When Clinton picked a centrist babyboomer from a neighboring state, he threw traditional V.P. selection rules out the window—with impressive results. “1960 was the one year where the vice presidential choice was decisive; Johnson really helped in the south in a tight race,” says Charlie Cook of *The Cook Political Report*. “But you could argue that when Clinton chose Gore, the sum was greater than the parts. It was chemistry that worked.”

Clinton’s choice was perfectly suited to the era of information-based politics, say political strategists. With campaigns essentially conducted via TV screens, it’s important for nominees to articulate a clear message, and the vice presidential pick can be a way of reinforcing the candidate’s themes. With two young stars on the ticket, the Democrats could legitimately lay claim to the “New Generation” mantle in 1992 and 1996. “When



Clinton chose Gore, he called me and said, "The message is going to be the changing of the guard," says Al From, chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council. "Voters connected with that."

Traditionally, presidential nominees haven't used the veep choice to expand on the campaign's image so much as to "balance" the ticket and preferably lure a certain demographic to the polls. It was never a surefire approach. Michael Dukakis, liberal governor of Massachusetts, played it by the book when he tapped Lloyd Bentsen, centrist-conservative senator of Texas, to be his running mate. (The campaign had a dreamy eye on the Kennedy-Johnson ticket, what Dukakis called the Boston-Austin connection, where geography tipped the election.) Pitifully few Americans thought Dan Quayle was better qualified to be vice president than Bentsen. But Bush won the election decisively; a reminder, perhaps, that people vote for the president, not his running mate. On the demographic front, Geraldine Ferraro didn't bring a surge of women voters to the Democratic ticket in 1984 (she didn't even carry her home state, New York). Nor did Dan Quayle prove a seductive poster boy for baby-boomers (in fact, he may have reduced Bush's margin of victory).

Whether the 2000 presidential nominees adhere to an "amplification" (e.g., Clinton and Gore) or "diversification" (e.g., Dukakis and Bentsen) strategy remains to be seen. Ultimately, presidential nominees want to tap someone who will help them win the election but could also be a plausible president. As the Quayle choice demonstrated, ignoring the qualifications of the veep in the hopes of attracting a certain demographic to the ticket can backfire. "The feeling is, if you're a serious candidate for the presidency, you pick a serious running mate," says Tom Mann of the Brookings Institution.

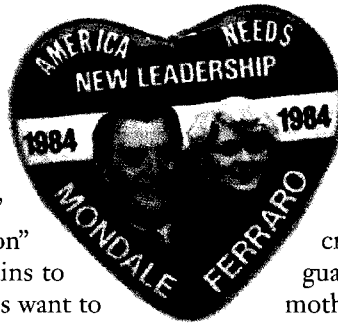
With the election more than a year and a half away, it is undoubtedly early to be speculating who will be second on the ticket. We were taken to task for jumping the gun. ("I cannot believe you are playing these *games*," said Mann. "And I am *appalled* I am playing these games with you!") But for what it's worth, here are his and other political intelligentsia members' vice presidential picks, in no particular order.

The Democrats:

(assuming Al Gore is the nominee)

Evan Bayh: Bayh is a virtual Gore clone. Both are sons of prominent senators who were elected to the Senate in their own right (Bayh is the offspring of liberal senator Birch Bayh of Indiana; Gore's namesake was a long-time senator from Tennessee). Like Gore, Bayh has staked out a middle-of-the-road position—his tight fiscal spending policies earned him the moniker "Republicrat" during his two-terms as Indiana's governor. His moderate politics played well in the heavily-Republican state, and he left the governorship in 1997 with an astounding 79 percent approval rating. The 43-year old, who has long been viewed as a rising star in the Democratic party, gave a keynote address at the 1996 Convention. His speech didn't make much of a splash (then again, Clinton's 1988 snoozer didn't either). Still, Bayh isn't known for his charismatic presence, which could be a significant drawback in light of the probable presidential nominee. It's also unclear whether Bayh could carry his home state in the 2000 elections—the last Democrat to win Indiana was Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

Bill Richardson: Until the Energy Department spy scandal surfaced earlier this year, Richardson would have topped everyone's Democratic vice presidential list. The bilingual son of an Anglo father and Mexican mother, Richardson's Hispanic credentials could help Gore with Latinos. That could be particularly useful if Bush is the Republican nominee; Hispanics comprise the fastest growing portion of the electorate, and George W. has proven apt at wooing them in Texas. Richardson's overseas trouble-shooting missions on behalf of the Clinton administration garnered heavy media attention, and when he negotiated the release of two Americans imprisoned in Iraq in 1995 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. After a stint at the United Nations, Richardson took the top job at the Department of Energy (DOE) last year. Oil, gas, and uranium interests are major players in New Mexico, and Richardson reportedly thought the position could serve as a springboard for a gubernatorial run in his homestate. Unfortunately for the Energy Secretary, the long-festering spy scandal at DOE labs erupted on his watch. Depending on



how he handles the fall-out, he could still make it on the ticket, but his prospects are dimmer.

Zell Miller: A former marine and two-term Georgia governor, Miller would certainly spice up a Democratic ticket. He electrified the Democratic National Convention in 1992 when he described the Bush-Perot-Clinton lineup as “a race between an aristocrat, an autocrat, and a Democrat.” And charisma isn’t all he brings to the table: By the time he left the governor’s mansion in 1998, Miller had created the most comprehensive college scholarship program in the country and established pre-kindergarten education for Georgia’s four-year olds. *Governing* magazine named Miller one of its 1998 public officials of the year, commending the former governor for phasing out antiquated civil service rules that made it all but impossible to fire sub-par workers. The 38-year veteran of state government also embarked on smaller, quixotic campaigns in his gubernatorial tenure. Intrigued by studies suggesting that early exposure to classical music improves a child’s creative and analytical skills, Miller persuaded Sony Music Corp. to distribute free tapes to Georgian babies and provided copies of *The Little Engine That Could* (a seminal childhood influence) to Georgia’s preschoolers. While Georgia has become increasingly conservative, Miller was a very popular governor, and he could carry the state. At 67, however, he wouldn’t project a youthful image, and some political analysts say his chance to be a national standard bearer has come and gone.

Longer shots:

Diane Feinstein: Before the Democrats won decisively in California’s gubernatorial election, Sen. Feinstein had a much better chance of nabbing the Number Two slot. Her chances would improve considerably if Republicans put Elizabeth Dole on the ticket (the GOP convention takes place before the Democrats’, and Gore could feel pressured to neutralize Dole’s presence). A sponsor of the assault weapons ban, Feinstein has established a reputation as a moderate and able legislator in the Senate. But she can come off as abrasive, and her husband Richard Blum’s business deals have raised questions of impropriety (hmmm, remember Ferraro in ’84?).

Jeanne Shaheen: New Hampshire’s governor,

dubbed by one pundit as “the world’s most composed redhead,” could also counter a Bush-Dole ticket. Shaheen won election in conservative New Hampshire by championing a statewide kindergarten program and increased surveillance of HMOs. She also garnered plaudits for raising emergency funds for New Hampshire’s public schools without imposing a state income tax. Shaheen already has a connection to the Gore operation: Her husband, William, is running the vice president’s New Hampshire campaign. But Shaheen is little known outside of her state, and many voters would probably surmise she was put on the ticket purely because of her gender.

Joe Lieberman: The only Orthodox Jew in the Senate, Lieberman has cultivated a reputation for personal integrity, and he was one of Clinton’s fiercest critics in the Monica Lewinsky scandal. A champion of defense interests and “V-chips” for parents to block out TV programs that have objectionable material for kids, he’s regarded as a moderate and conscientious lawmaker. Connecticut brings a whopping eight electoral votes, however, and if Clinton has a veto over Gore’s running mate, he may not look fondly on the man who delivered a blistering floor speech criticizing the President’s behavior.

Bill Bradley: Al Gore’s sole challenger for the nomination, Bradley is one of the more unusual personalities on the political landscape. The former Rhodes scholar, star forward for the Knicks, and three-term New Jersey senator would make sense geographically (New Jersey is a swing state). But if the primaries get nasty, his chances of landing a spot on the ticket are slim.

Bob Kerrey: A telegenic war hero (he lost part of his right leg in Vietnam and was awarded the Medal of Honor), the second-term Nebraska senator and former governor has long been bandied about as a national candidate. His relationship with actress Debra Winger made him something of a dashing figure and helped him tap into Hollywood coffers in his unsuccessful 1992 bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. On policy issues, Kerrey has been a leading advocate for health care reform and reining in entitlement spending. But the senator doesn’t shy away from criticizing his fellow Democrats, and Gore might not trust him to be a team player.



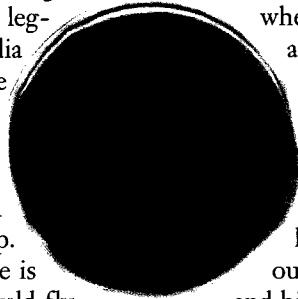
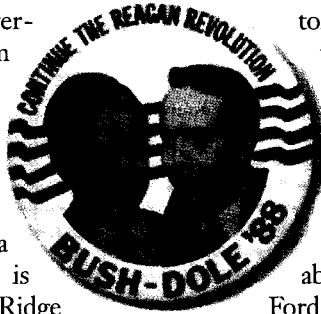
The Republicans:

(assuming George W. Bush is the nominee)

Tom Ridge: The Pennsylvania governor, former congressman, and Vietnam vet would seem a natural Number Two. Pennsylvania is a swing state, and the GOP would love to lay claim to its 23 electoral votes. Ridge, who has a hearing problem which was aggravated in Vietnam, was overwhelmingly reelected to a second gubernatorial term in 1998 and is personally close to Bush. In the House, Ridge represented the heavily blue-collar Erie district and earned one of the highest ratings from labor unions on the Republican side of the aisle, although he supported GOP tax and immigration initiatives. As governor, Ridge has carefully hewed to the middle, cutting taxes on businesses and the working poor, deregulating the electric industry, and brokering a deal with insurance companies to lower workers' compensation rates. In an era where "inclusiveness" is a buzz word, Ridge has covered his bases, appointing the first minority woman to co-chair the Republican state committee. Ridge is pro-choice, but he champions every abortion restriction imaginable, so he could still pass muster with the more conservative wings of the Republican party. If he's tapped, Ridge's coronation would occur on his home turf—Philadelphia is hosting the 2000 Republican convention.

John McCain: The maverick Arizona Republican is shooting for the presidential nomination, but people have been floating his name for the veep slot, too. McCain's compelling background as a POW in Vietnam, forthright manner, and against-the-grain stands on campaign finance and tobacco legislation have earned high marks from media types. "He's the media's favorite because he thinks like they do on certain issues," says Ken Rudin, political editor at National Public Radio. "But his stands on campaign finance and tobacco make him anathema to the Republican leadership. Plus, he has a very hot temper, and there is a fear in the Republican party that he could fly off the handle in a debate or on the campaign trail." Still, McCain's foreign policy credentials could flesh

out a Bush ticket. While a Bush-McCain team wouldn't make sense geographically, neither did Clinton-Gore in 1992. "I think at this point, it's the Republicans' best ticket," says Rudin.



Elizabeth Dole: Nothing is supposed to rile Sugar Lips more than the accusation she is running for Vice President. (This may be partially due to the fact she has heard her husband grouse about being wrongfully blamed for Gerald Ford's 1976 presidential loss when Dole ran as Ford's Number Two.) But Elizabeth Dole, who has never held elected office, is a more credible candidate for the vice presidency than leader of the free world. "She has the most important qualification for a vice presidential candidate," says Stu Rothenberg of the *Rothenberg Political Report*. "She smiles nicely." Aside from her pearly whites, Dole's chief assets are her last name and her XX chromosomes—and for a party that has had its problems wooing female voters, putting a woman on the ticket could narrow the gender gap. But Dole's pro-life stance could alienate a chunk of the soccer moms she is supposed to lure to the GOP side, and female candidates do not automatically pull in the female vote (just ask Geraldine Ferraro, who ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic Senate nomination in New York last year, or Jane Harman, who was creamed in the Democratic primary of the 1998 California gubernatorial race). If Dole runs well in the primaries, however, she could become the GOP's poster girl.

Longer Shots:

George Pataki: New York's governor ended speculation he would run for the presidency himself when he endorsed Bush this spring. His announcement effectively delivered the New York primary to the Texan, and Pataki is clearly gunning for a position on the ticket. As governor of New York, he is by definition a potential candidate, but a "two Georges" ticket seems unlikely. Pataki is hardly colorful, registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 5 to 3 in New York, and his pro-choice views on abortion could rattle the conservative wing of the GOP. Still, Pataki did win re-election handily, and a Bush-Pataki ticket

would force the Democrats to spend money in what should be a safe state—draining their resources for swing states.

Chuck Hagel: The first-term Senator from Nebraska and decorated Vietnam vet is in many ways

the quintessential Washington insider. After working as a Republican Hill staffer and making a mint in the cellular phone industry, Hagel considered running for office in Virginia but opted instead to throw his hat in the ring in his home state. His conservative record and foreign policy expertise could help shore

Who's Who

BY SUSAN THREADGILL

One of our favorite stories involves the late **Marvella Bayh**, whose son **Evan** is a senator from Indiana, a seat that had previously belonged to her husband, **Birch**. When she got the news that her husband had been declared the winner of his first senate race, she exclaimed, "Daddy this means we get to go to Europe!" That's all the background you need to understand the news that Senators **Richard Shelby**, **Ted Stevens**, and **Ben Nighthorse Campbell** and their wives attended the Paris Air Show last month as the official representatives of the United States Senate.

They say **Al Gore** can't pick Energy Secretary **Bill Richardson** as his vice presidential running mate because of the Chinese spy scandal. But how much hay is **George W. Bush** going to be able to make out of that scandal—which, after all, went on undetected for the four years his father occupied the White House?

The causes we share with **Steve Forbes** are few, but there is one

matter in which we agree. He says the new \$20 bill looks like "Monopoly money" and promises to replace it. Why on earth did **Robert Rubin** and **Larry Summers** give us such dubious-looking currency?

Speaking of **Al Gore**, here's what **Dick Morris** has to say about his choice of campaign manager: "Vice President Al Gore has selected the former skipper of the Titanic to save his sinking presidential campaign. **Tony Coelho** ... earned this amazing promotion after masterminding the Democratic Party's most massive defeat in 50 years—the 1994 loss of the House and the Senate."

When Republican presidential hopeful, Sen. **Robert C. Smith** asked a luncheon audience for questions after his speech to the conservative Federalist Society, someone inquired about Smith's views on **Bill Lann Lee**, the acting head of the Justice Department's civil rights division who is high on the conservatives' most unpopular public officials list. Smith replied, according to *Slate*, with an indignant denunciation of the Energy Department security lapses. They should have kept a closer watch on the fellow, Smith said, concluding that people were saying "the bombing in Kosovo was designed to distract the public's attention from the Bill Lann Lee matter." Smith appears to have thought that Bill Lann Lee was

Wen Ho Lee, the scientist suspected of having leaked nuclear secrets to China.

When Republicans took control of the House of Representatives in 1995, they enacted a six-year limit on committee chairmanships. This has become a matter of the deepest regret to the II committee chairman who will have to surrender their chairs after the next election. They include Bill Clinton's pal **Henry Hyde** (Judiciary), tax foe **Bill Archer** (Ways and Means), and tobacco advocate **Thomas Bliley** (Commerce). The chairmen are not, however, going quietly into the night. Most are said to be plotting to preserve their essential powers. Transportation Committee Chair **Bud Shuster**, for example, "will likely take over a recently formed subcommittee with consolidated oversight of all highway and rail matters," according to *The Wall Street Journal's* **Greg Hitt**.

Now that the recent conflict in Yugoslavia has cast doubt on **Tom Friedman's** dictum that countries with McDonald's don't go to war, *The New York Times* columnist has substituted Starbucks for McDonald's. He now says, "A country with a middle class willing to pay \$3 for a cup of coffee with foam on it is much less likely to go to war with its neighbors."

Speaking of **Bud Shuster**, his dear friend **Ann Eppard**, who