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THE ment Of Defeat

By Les AuCoin

in, a member of The Oregonian news and staff writer, spent election evening and Morgan, defeated Democratic Sena- date.

HIS NAME is Howard Morgan. He had stumped the far reaches of Oregon seeking the Democratic nomination to the United States Senate. He had shaken countless hands, visited scores of factories and addressed too many organizations to remember. He had spent close to \$45,000 on a hard-hitting campaign, battling a seasoned veteran of the political wars, Rep. Robert B. Duncan.

On election day, he was defeated. Decisively.

How did he take it? Publicly, as he conceded, he was poised. Everybody knows it hurts, but he admitted defeat gamely. But what of the PROCESS of losing? This is something else again. Here one has no chance to establish a veneer, to collect oneself. In the hub-bub of the special election night motel headquarters, one dies perhaps a thousand deaths, awaiting the agonizingly slow precinct returns.

ONE'S EVERY MOVE is scrutinized—by campaign aides, by well-wishers, and by the dozens of newsmen who follow around the room, trying to get the candidate to tell them how he is faring.

This was the scene last Tuesday as Morgan watched the election returns. Three television sets were set up in the suite, each tuned to a different channel and blaring. A radio contributed to the din. TV cameras were aimed at a table where Morgan was to make a statement once the results had been learned. Wires and cables were tangled across the floor and the camera lights made the room almost intolerably hot.

THE NEWSMEN represented the national media because this campaign had far-reaching ramifications; it was the first serious test of the government's policies in the Viet Nam war. Morgan's campaign was outspokenly critical of that policy while Duncan supported it, point for point.

At first, Morgan remained apart from the crowd which jammed the room. Visitors came up, expressing good wishes and the former federal power commissioner smiled politely, chatted a moment and then strolled off to be by himself and his thoughts, always eyeing one of the TVs.

HIS DARK BLUE business suit was creaseless and a red and navy striped tie was knotted neatly under a starched collar. It was a calm, confident-looking Morgan the crowd saw. But it also was an intent Morgan. He strolled easily between the TV sets, then to the corner for a word with his wife, then back to the TVs.

At 8:15 p.m. the first results began to trickle in. Duncan: 609; Morgan 369. Morgan, the state Democratic chairman from 1952 to 1956, lit a cigarette as he watched the set. His opponent came on the air, via video tape, and stated his views on the war.

MORGAN LISTENED a moment, then moved to another set where the announcer was saying Duncan now had 3238 votes to Morgan's 1748. It

fabric nervously.

By 9 p.m. the crowd swelled so that one could barely move about without bumping others. The talk was loud as people tried to be heard over the TV. And as the crowd grew noisier, the television-watchers upped the volume and now the room reverberated with a steady drone.

A N O T H E R ANNOUNCEMENT came and people stopped talking and rushed to the sets. Duncan: 7770; Morgan: 3827. At this point the TV commentator, analyzing the race, said he thought Morgan had more "name familiarity" with the voters than Duncan, which brought a chuckle from Morgan. It was his first real laugh of the evening. Tom Morgan, 13, the candidate's youngest son, came up and grabbed his father's sleeve. He asked for the count and his dad told him. "We might still make it, Dad," Tom said. And Morgan smiled broadly and patted him on the shoulder.

Tom walked through the maze of cameras and cables to his mother across the room. He said the same thing to her and Mrs. Morgan laughed nervously while she tightly clutched a pack of cigarettes.

AS THE NIGHT wore on Duncan continued to lead. But Morgan, now sitting and sipping coffee, showed little strain. When a commentator predicted a "strong Duncan victory," however, Morgan pursed his lips and jumped up again. Beads of perspiration appeared beneath his close-cropped, greying hair.

"... if you happen to lose, would you throw your support to Duncan?"

And, after avoiding newsmen's questions all evening, Morgan yielded to them now. With Duncan holding 72 per cent of reported vote, the reporters tried to lead him.

"If this trend continues," one asked, "who will you back in the November race?"

Morgan's eyes narrowed and his dark eyes darted over to his questioner. "This is entirely too early to tell anything," he said. "I remember in 1954, Dick Neuberger went to bed trailing by some 25,000 votes. He woke up the next morning the winner."

THE REPORTER SHOT back: "But if you should happen to lose, would you throw your support to Duncan?"

The TV men had been filming this exchange and the heat from the lights reddened Morgan's face. "Look," he said, "it's going to be a long night; will you wait awhile?"

The reporter hushed up. Wistfully, Morgan said he wished the election had been scheduled a month or two later. Because of the civil strife in Viet Nam, he said, "the tide of American opinion is changing. It hasn't run its course yet. It would have helped if

getting again. The strain began Morgan praised the Senate Relations Committee hearings Nam, saying they helped voters feel "qualified" to judge administration's conduct of the

The newsmen fired more and Morgan fielded them. But was looser now and the shir quite as sharp. Now the TV m ed him.

"HEY SENATOR," one "Could we get a shot of you set, watching the returns?"

Morgan agreed and smile walked to the TV. But the sm ed forced and the lines under looked deeper after almost th of jostling and talking.

Cameramen satisfied, he across the room where he wa by an elderly lady who had ting silently most of the night.

"GOD BLESS YOU, Howe said. "Don't give up yet. We a chance."

"It's been done before," said, and he patted her har walking on.

The crowd was thinning ou Duncan's margin continued to Then suddenly:

"We're gaining! We're gai was Mrs. Morgan, who had herself next to the radio. " she called, "we're moving u

MORGAN'S HEAD JERKE and he left a group he had l ing to. "What is it now?" he

"We've got 35% (of the votes)," his wife announced, applauded loudly and the grinned freely. It was the fi news they had heard.

Soon another batch of TV proached him. They were wor national network, they said, the candidate and his wife m ling with the crowd?

The Morgans agreed an around the room, shaking h smiling under the hot lights.

Then with Duncan leading of the vote, the news came counting computers had trouble and returns were de nearly an hour. This dam party's spirits and at midnig suits still trickled in, the w went home.

WITH THE SUITE virtual coffee cups and soda bottle: the tables and floor, remn: baked ham strewn about, S rine Neuberger appeared on Oregon Heart Fund publi commercial.

Morgan's daughter, Sa watched the retiring legisla post her father was seeking. looked up at Morgan who s with perspiration glistening brow.

"Daddy," she said jokingly the cause of it all!" She wor lace with an Army par badge. Her boyfriend, a draft to her just before he was sc



Reflecting