

Church cites record in preparing

for 1980 ^{July 1979} re-election

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U.S. Sen. Frank Church, now 54 but who at 30 was the youngest senator ever elected, is girding for the sternest test of his 24-year career in the U.S. Senate.

In personable and vigorous Republican Steve Symms, of the Idaho First District, Church will be paired against an opponent who is well known, will have considerable conservative money behind him and is a rough and tumble fighter in the political arena.

Church, as a Democrat in a strong Republican state of Idaho, has never won by much of a margin in the four times he has been elected. In fact, he won by only a hotly disputed 125 votes in his first Democrat primary to oust the maverick Glenn H. Taylor, but went on to handily unseat the communism-baiting Republican Herman Welker in the general in his first attempt in the Senate in 1956.

Since then, his margin of victory has ranged between 55 and 60 percent which is not exactly overwhelming for one who has served as long as he has and with distinction.

Expensive campaign

This political observer believes Church and Symms may each spend close to \$1 million in the costliest and most bitter senatorial campaign to ever be waged in Idaho.

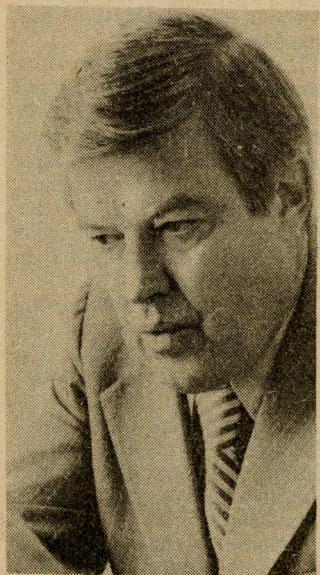
Symms is expected to announce for the Senate post late this fall, probably in November, to give him greater latitude as a congressman and not as a candidate.

One of the clues that he is certain of jumping into the senatorial race is his absence of announcement for re-election after early September. If Symms feels he can't beat Church then he would announce for re-election in September to give other Republicans an opportunity for the Senate.

However, at this time, all signs point to Symms challenging Church.

In preparation for the coming campaign, Church has distributed a 12-page brochure which recounts what he calls his condensed record of 23 years' service.

future of the area and presented it to Church. He championed the plan in Congress — and it became law within a year under Church's sponsorship. Timber sales are now going ahead; local jobs have been assured; and generations to come will be



Sen. Frank Church

Ironically, Symms at the same time sent his latest photo and brief background, further strengthening belief for his senatorial try. His record will be analyzed in a later column.

Church's achievements are indeed imposing and most agree he is one of the best-known and capable senators in the United States.

Church ranked last in seniority of the 96 senators then serving. Now he ranks eighth among the 100.

Auspicious start

Church caught the attention of Senate leaders early in his career. Lyndon Johnson, then Senate majority leader, broke with precedent to sponsor the young Idaho senator for a seat on the Foreign Relations Committee in 1959, only two years after he came to the Senate. Today Church is chairman of Foreign Relations, the Senate's most prestigious assignment. This position of power has placed Church not only in the center of major decisions affecting war and peace, but has also put him in a position to shape such things as international commodity agreements to give Idaho farmers a better deal in the international marketplace.

He is the ranking member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, where he heads the subcommittee that handles all legislation dealing with energy research and development, as well as irrigation and reclamation — a priceless asset for a state with a heavy commitment to reclamation and which is the site of the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, one of the nation's foremost nuclear development centers.

The senator is also the former chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and remains its ranking member — a post he has used to write much of the legislation benefiting the nation's senior citizens during the past decade.

In 1973, he investigated charges of U.S. meddling in the internal affairs of Chile. In 1974, he ran the most thorough and wide-ranging investigation in U.S. history into big oil in the aftermath of the Arab oil embargo. In 1975, he was tapped to investigate charges that the CIA had violated the rights of American citizens. And between 1973 and 1976, he conducted a bipartisan study of the growth of presidential powers that led to legislation curbing emergency government.

Natural resources

Church is both one of the fathers of the National Wilderness System and a leading proponent of increased utilization of our natural forests.

His approach is best characterized by the case of the Gospel-Hump roadless area in Idaho County north of the Salmon River. There, controversy had raged for years between those who wanted the area designated as wilderness and those who wanted it opened for multiple-use management.

The two groups learned that they had much more in common than they initially believed possible. They wrote a plan for the

able to enjoy the breath-taking beauty of the Gospel-Hump Wilderness Area.

Church used the same approach to resolve the future status of the scenic St. Joe River in North Idaho.

"There seems to be a myth circulating in the land that our problems can't be solved," Church said. "I don't believe it. When people of good will put their minds to it, with common sense and ingenuity, they find problems can be surmounted and solutions found."

He is the author of landmark legislation with national significance, as well as bills specifically tailored to problems in Idaho. Among the highlights:

— Church is one of the fathers of the National Wilderness System; he was the Senate manager of the legislation that created it in 1964.

— He was one of the authors of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which makes funds derived from mineral leases available to states and local governments for development of parks and outdoor recreation.

— Church authored the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to preserve for future generations some of the nation's few remaining untamed rivers.

— He teamed up with Idaho's former Sen. Len Jordan to sponsor the legislation that created the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, and later sponsored the bill that created the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.

When the Administration ruled that timber sales from national forests had to be handled by sealed bid — thus threatening small local sawmills — Church wrote the legislation that ordered the traditional western method of oral auction bidding reinstated.

— Church has been a critic of bureaucratic delays in evaluating roadless areas and opening them up to logging, where appropriate.

— He is presently sponsoring, by request three legislative proposals to decide the future status of the Idaho and Salmon River Breaks Primitive Areas.

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