

Litton killed in plane crash

Tragedy strikes hours before his upset victory

By our wire services

The death of U.S. Rep. Jerry Litton in a plane crash Tuesday night threw Missouri's primary election into confusion. Litton was scoring an upset victory in a three-way Democratic nomination race to succeed retiring Sen. Stuart Symington.

The congressman and five other persons were killed as their plane was taking off from Chillicothe for a Kansas City election night party.

The Missouri Highway Patrol said that the twin-engine plane nose-dived into a field at the end of the Chillicothe Airport runway and burst into flames.

The plane, owned by Rupp Automotive Supply of Chillicothe, was taking off for the southeast in good weather and just had become airborne when it banked to the right, then crashed.

John Ashford, Litton's campaign manager, announced in Kansas City that all those aboard the plane had been burned beyond recognition. But he said it was certain Litton was among the victims.

Also believed to be aboard the plane were Litton's wife Sharon and the couple's children, Linda, 13, and Scott, 12, pilot Paul Rupp, and Rupp's son.

The bodies were taken to a Chillicothe funeral home.

Litton, a millionaire cattle rancher, spent almost \$1 million in a tough battle for the primary nomination. Rep.

James Symington, son of the retiring senator, started the campaign as the favorite to win the nomination. Others in the race were former Gov. Warren E. Hearnes and Kansas City Mayor Charles Wheeler Jr.

With 2,711 of 4,042 precincts, or 67 per cent, reporting, Litton had 237,134 votes, or 44 per cent. Hearnes had 141,324 or 26 per cent; Symington had 137,421 or 26 per cent, and 6,774 or 1 per cent for Wheeler.

On the Republican side of the race, with 32 per cent of precincts reporting, Atty. Gen. John Danforth had 69,085 votes, or 93 per cent, and Gregory Hensman had 5,147 or 7 per cent.

The Democratic State Committee will choose a replacement in the case of the death of the nominee. The committee is expected to give the nomination to the second-place candidate.

News of the crash shocked political leaders across the state.

Gov. Christopher Bond, told of the news while vacationing, said the "primary results fade away under the tragedy of that plane crash."

"The hearts of all Missourians go out to the remaining members of the Litton family."

Participants in the scheduled St. Louis victory party for Rep. Symington stood shaking their heads. Symington made a brief statement, asking his supporters to "close down the headquarters and everyone go home and say some prayers."

Symington said he and his family were "stunned beyond words by this tragic news. It is unbelievable. It is horrifying. The energy, commitment and devotion of purpose which marked Jerry Litton's campaign will stand out in the annals of Missouri politics forever. It is a time for grief and nothing more."

In Columbia, Boone County Sheriff Jack Meyer, asked about his own victory, said, "I really can't say a whole lot about because of what's happened to Litton and his family. It's a terrible tragedy."

Litton was born May 12, 1937, in Lock Springs. He graduated from the University with a degree in agriculture journalism. He married Sharon Summerville in 1959.

Long active in politics, Litton served as a member of the National Committee of Rural Americans for Lyndon Johnson, as finance chairman for the Sixth District during Sen. Stuart Symington's 1970 campaign for reelection, as State Youth Director for Kennedy for President, and twice as State Youth Director for Symington.

He first was elected to the House of Representatives in 1972. He was re-elected in 1974.

Litton, former co-owner of the Litton Charolais Ranch at Chillicothe, became chairman of the House Agriculture Committee's subcommittee on forestry in 1974. He also was a member of the District of Columbia Committee.

Aides interviewed Monday by the Columbia Missourian credited Litton's success in the Senate race to a tenacious adherence to a demanding campaign schedule. "He campaigned seven days a week, 19 hours a day," said Crawford Cook, Litton's South Carolina campaign consultant.

"And he outcampaigned his opponents," he added.

Said Cook of Litton, "Here was a fella with a different idea—the only political animal new in the race."

Litton himself cited an extensive campaign organization. "We built organizations in 106 of Missouri's 114 counties," he said, noting the organizations were built around "people who have never been in politics before."

But not all members of "Missourians for Litton" were new to the political scene. Matt Reese, president of the American Association of Political Consultants, and the Washington-based engineer of John Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign were among those aiding Litton.

Litton had campaigned in Columbia Monday as part of a county-wide Democratic rally. He was greeted by loud, exuberant outbursts as he spoke from the flatbed truck podium.

"I sense victory," he said. "I've talked to too many people who want something fresh in government. There's going to be a change. And I hope to be a part of it."



U.S. Rep. Jerry Litton, D-Mo., and his wife were killed Tuesday night when their plane crashed on takeoff from a Chillicothe airport. Litton was en route to a primary election night rally in Kansas City. This photo was taken Feb. 24 when Litton was in Columbia to kick off his campaign for the Democratic nomination for U.S. Senate. (Missourian photo)

Insight Uncertainty still shrouds Republicans

By Jack W. Germond
Washington Star

WASHINGTON — The contest for the Republican presidential nomination has come down to the detail level with just two weeks remaining.

But the outcome is far more likely to depend on the final pre-convention maneuvers at Kansas City next week than on the claim and counterclaim that can be expected from the headquarters of President Ford and Ronald Reagan the rest of this week.

The one constant in the picture is uncertainty. It is apparent now, as it has been since the primaries ended almost two months ago, that neither Ford nor Reagan will arrive at Kansas City with unshakable confidence. He will prevail when the roll is called two weeks from Wednesday.

And that, in turn, means the situation could turn on a single miscalculation — or master stroke — in the preliminary debate over convention rules and party platform that begins in the convention city next Monday.

By most objective evidence including virtually every delegate, except Reagan's own, Ford holds the lead. Perhaps the best evidence of that — in the eyes of political professionals, at least — was the extraordinary gamble Reagan took eight days ago in publicly designating the liberal Sen. Richard S. Schweiker of Pennsylvania as his choice for vice president. In the last eight days it has become clear that neither Reagan's wildest hopes nor his worst fears have been realized.

The choice of Schweiker has shaken Reaganites to their boots in many delegations, but so far it has not caused any serious defections from his banner. The worst setback probably has been the endorsement given to Ford by the Mississippi state chairman, Clarke (See REAGAN, Page 12A)



Shock, dismay, and astonishment mark the faces of these Democratic campaigners at the Tiger Hotel, on hearing the confirmation of Rep. Jerry Litton's death Tuesday night. (Missourian photo by Ray Brodzinski)

Rural area lifts Meyer to win

By Allison Finn
Missourian staff writer

Jack Meyer's complaint of public apathy toward him which led to his brief withdrawal from the Republican race for nomination as sheriff, was proved wrong Tuesday as voters pushed him to a narrow victory over Second Ward City Councilman Pat Barnes.

A record turnout of 18,266 Boone County registered voters brought victory to the incumbent sheriff over Barnes, who had engaged in a vocal campaign, by 1,439 to 1,375 votes. Tom Watson, the third contender in the Republican sheriff's race, trailed with 598 votes.

In other races, Charlie Foster easily won the Democratic nomination as sheriff while, also among Democrats, Fred Dannov was nominated probate judge and Kay Murray Boone County treasurer.

Barnes and Meyer were neck and neck as results came in throughout the evening, at one time were only one vote apart. But as returns from rural areas were reported, it became apparent that

Meyer had won. The challenger had waged an intensive campaign, differing with Meyer on such issues as cooperation between the sheriff's department and the Columbia police.

Meyer, describing himself as extremely tired, withdrew briefly from the race in June but later changed his mind. He complained at the time that the public didn't seem to care about him or his department's problems.

Foster, as expected, won handsily over Democratic challengers Walter Garrett Jr. and Estell "Red" Strwan. He netted 8,897 votes, 72 per cent of the Democratic total in that race.

"As I said earlier," Meyer explained Tuesday, "it was a decision for the people to make and I think they've made it. I'm talking about all the hell I've gone through medawise and with the County Court. People are saying now it wasn't me. I've just been hamstrung."

Barnes said late Tuesday, "I sure was surprised. I don't know how to explain it. I certainly respect Sheriff (See FOSTER, Page 14A)

County Court incumbents score big wins

By Martha Polkey
Missourian staff writer

The two incumbent County Court judges swept to their parties' nominations in Tuesday night's primary election with impressive victories over their opponents.

Republican Kenneth Vale also scored an impressive victory over Lee Loy to win his party's nomination for the Southern District judge.

Only Democrat Richard Farmer had difficulty in his race for the Northern District judge nomination.

In the race for the Democratic

nomination for the state Senate for the 19th district, Warren Welliver defeated two opponents by winning 52.33 per cent of the vote in state House of Representative races, Republican Jim Lemon convincingly defeated H.O. Tolson for his party's nomination in the 48th district. Steve Faber defeated Phil Hanson for the Democratic nomination for the 111th House district.

Southern District Judge Carolyn Lathrop amassed 82.25 per cent of the vote in defeating Bobby Bayte 6,519 votes to 1,407.

The Republican incumbent, Northern District Judge Rodney Smith, defeated

two opponents in his bid for his first elected term to the court. Smith received 705 votes to 189 votes for Lawson Chadwick and 323 votes for Ken Wilhelm Smith was appointed to the court by Gov. Christopher S. Bond to replace Clarence Drew, who resigned in June.

Farmer managed a narrow victory over fellow Democrat Urban Wussler, 1,501 to 1,268. Farmer gained 28.69 per cent of the vote in winning the nomination for Northern District judge. His four opponents split the rest of the vote.

The closest state legislative race was

fought between Democrats Faber and Hanson, Columbia's Third Ward councilman, for the nomination to the 111th state representative district. Faber won the contest with 56.91 per cent of the vote, 2,359 votes to Hanson's 1,786.

In the Republican race for the nomination to the 48th house district, Lemon amassed 83.97 per cent of the vote in gaining a 262 to 50 vote victory over Tolson.

Welliver received 52.33 per cent of the vote in defeating two opponents for the Democratic nomination for the 19th state senatorial district. Charles Atkins

received 4,883 votes and Bob Brown got 1,233 votes. Brown, Boone County Court presiding judge, withdrew from the race last week and asked voters not cast their ballots for him. He cited personal reasons for his withdrawal.

In uncontested races, Republican Jerry Epple received 2,955 votes in his bid to replace Sen. Larry Marshall in the 19th state senatorial district. Marshall did not seek re-election. Epple will face Democrat Welliver in the November general election.

State Rep. John Rollins, D-Fulton, won re-election to the 147th district. (See REISCH, Page 14A)

'Walkin' Joe' will face Bond in November

St. LOUIS (AP) — Kansas City Attorney Joseph Teasdale, riding recognition won in a walk across the state four years ago, won his bid for the Democratic governor's nomination as election returns from the urban areas slowly were reported early this morning.

With 34 per cent of the precincts reporting, Teasdale held a 7 percentage point lead over state Senate President Pro Tem William Cason of Clinton. Teasdale, with 107,632 votes, had 49 per cent of the ballots counted while Cason, with 93,195, had 42 per cent. The remainder of the votes was spread over seven other candidates.

Cason, who had captured most of the party's organization support, took an early lead in the battle as rural votes were counted. But with returns from St. Louis city and counties in both metropolitan areas gradually coming in, Teasdale bolstered by a last minute media advertising blitz, took the lead.

The winner of the Democratic primary will meet incumbent Republican Christopher S. Bond in the Nov. 2 general election. Bond won easy renomination over token opposition.

Local election officials said the returns were being slowed because of the heavy voter turnout for the

primary, predicted to be a record 1.25 million.

Voters also were deciding party nominees in four other races for statewide posts. All statewide offices except auditor will be filled this year.

In the Democratic battle for lieutenant governor, Richard Rabbit of St. Louis, twice selected speaker of the Missouri House, held a healthy lead over businessman John McAllister and self-style consumer advocate Alberta Slavin, both of St. Louis.

With 36 per cent of the precincts in, Rabbit had 56 per cent, McAllister 21 per cent and Slavin 19 per cent. The

remainder went to Rolla farmer Leonard Bade.

Former four-term state Rep. Eric Fink held a slim lead over two-term Rep. Mildred Huffman in the GOP primary for secretary of state, less than 450 votes separating them with 23 per cent of the precincts reported. The winner will face incumbent Democrat James V. Kirkpatrick, who won easy renomination over minor opposition.

In the two-man Republican primary for treasurer, Albert Kemp, former director of the Missouri Elections Commission, was also knotted in a tight battle with St. Louis surgeon Robert

Rainey, holding a narrow 100-vote lead with 23 per cent of the precincts reporting. The winner will face unopposed Democratic incumbent James Spainhower.

The Democratic primary for attorney general saw three term state Rep. James Baker of Kansas City neck and neck with former St. Louis County Circuit Court Judge George Schaaf. With 36 per cent of the precincts reporting, Schaaf had about a 5,000-vote lead over Baker. The winner meets former assistant Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft, who was unopposed in the GOP primary.



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