

# Candidate has tackled the 'impossible' and won

THERE WILL be no pretense of lofty detachment in these remarks. They are about the New York Democratic County Committee's imminent decision on a nominee to fill Mayor Koch's vacated Congressional seat. The field is crowded with credible candidates, and a secret ballot defies any prophecy or advance head counts. But let it be recorded clearly here that my deep personal preference is the latest entry—Allard Lowenstein.

I write with a certain candid passion not only because I have been identified with him in so many battles, but because some of the younger journalistic smart set sound so innocent of the nature of the man and his history. He has been alternately depicted as a quixotic "loser," a compulsive peripatetic and a political man without a country. There is a deceptive title of half-truth in each characterization. After initially winning election to Congress in a rough Nassau County district where only one other Democratic had prevailed in this century, he was subsequently the victim of a Rockefeller-designed gerrymandering, yet lost by only 3 percentage points.

Lowenstein has indeed been



By James A. Wechsler

more than a provincial man. I once described him as a roving ambassador to humanity's underdogs—from Mississippi to Africa and from Spain to Alabama. Which is exactly why his pleas for justice for beleaguered metropolitan areas like New York can, as Congressman Pete McCloskey remarked during an appearance here for Lowenstein over the weekend, have special impact in Congress.

Ironically, the charges that Lowenstein has been "all over the place" is an echo of the cry so often leveled at the woman who first requested that I meet "a fine young man" named Allard Lowenstein. Her name was Eleanor Roosevelt and the time was shortly before John F. Kennedy's election.

She was serving as a member of the U. S. delegation to the UN and Lowenstein, lawyer-leacher and former president of the National Student Assn., had just returned from a meeting with underground anti-Franco

leaders in Spain and an African mission.

"Loser"? Now Spain is free, and Lowenstein's name is valued by many of the dedicated antifascists with whom he kept open the lines of communication.

The hand he extended to oppressed diakers in Africa remains unforgettable: at a recent UN human rights session in Geneva at which Lowenstein, without any headline heraldy, fought persuasively to separate the anti-apartheid issue from an "anti-Zionist" linkage, one of the Africans who sided with him gratefully remembered his deadline visit to his small village some fifteen years ago.

"Loser"? It was Lowenstein who first recognized the role that student leaders could play in mobilizing opposition to the Vietnam war. Even after he left his National Student Assn. post, he retained remarkable recognition and popularity on the campuses and, more than any other American, he was responsible for rallying the impressively diverse coalition of undergraduate presidents and student editors that triggered so much of the effective resistance. That insurance became the prelude to the decisive challenge to the Johnson presidency in which Lowenstein again played a key part.

Then, as so often, he was told he had undertaken a mission impossible. He refused to yield to the "realists."

Limited as his Congressional tenure was, his ability to function as both catalyst and bridge-builder earned him the honorably of a high place on Richard Nixon's "enemies list." His extraordinary combination of spirit, diffidence and grace are still recalled by many with whom he served—and who are in one way or another striving to promote his candidacy now.

He weighed his new move for many weeks, clearly risking the consequences of delay. Serving as UN deputy to Andrew Young, his long-time friend and companion in the civil rights movement, he felt he could not ask for a leave until the Assembly session had ended.

...The case for Lowenstein rests not on negative appraisal of his opponents but on the very special distinction and courage he has exhibited on so many fronts since he entered politics as a youthful supporter of Adlai Stevenson.

He has been a citizen of the world who has neither forgotten nor lost his roots in New York and whose presence in Congress could have unusual meaning for the city at this critical moment. He is the embodiment of our best instincts and traditions, that rare political figure who, in Bergson's phrase, "acts as a man of thought and thinks as a man of action."

Paid for by Elect Lowenstein to Congress Committee  
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(A copy of our report is filed and is available for purchase from the Federal Election Commission, Washington, D.C.)