

# Black Leaders' View of Wallace's Big Victory

Birmingham, Ala.

George C. Wallace's crushing renomination victory was attributed by black leaders yesterday to his success in shedding a racist image and his clear standing as the state's most powerful political figure.

Returns from Tuesday's Democratic gubernatorial primary gave the partially paralyzed governor a record 64 per cent majority over four opponents. And in one predominantly black county after another, where a decade ago he was labeled a bigot, the 54-year-old Wallace ran powerfully in front.

With 4093 boxes tabulated out of 4655, Wallace had 464,179 votes, more than double the 216,803 votes, or 30 per cent, for the runner-up, state Senator Gene McLain.

Former Governor James E. Folsom, the uncle of Wallace's wife, Cornelia, had 24,317 votes, or three per cent; Ralph Price, a veteran of many losing political battles, had 8543, or one per cent, and newcomer Thomas Wesley Robinson got 6517, or one per cent.

Wallace will face Republican nominee Elvin McCary in November. No one but a Democrat has held state office in Alabama in nearly a century.

One exception to Wallace's victory in largely black areas was Macon county, but even there he more than doubled his percentage of four years ago. He got 16.9 per cent of the vote in the 1970 governor's race, 33.4 per cent Tuesday.

Wallace, considered the frontrunner from the start, did not mention race during the campaign, stressing instead his record and his oft-stated opposition to "big government."

But he openly solicited the black vote, appearing unexpectedly early in the year at a meeting of black officials from throughout the South

and gathering endorsements from black leaders during the campaign.

John LeFlore of Mobile, a black who was nominated to the state legislature, said yesterday that Wallace's showing proved "blacks have begun to believe there is a new image being projected by Wallace."

A black sheriff, John Hullett of Lowndes county, said the key to the heavier than usual black vote for Wallace was that "people went for what they thought was the best candidate. He didn't have the competition he had in the past."

Associated Press