

Wallace Announces He'll Run

By Jules Witcover
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MONTGOMERY, Ala. Nov. 12—Gov. George C. Wallace, pledging to wrest the Democratic Party from "the ultra-liberal, exotic left-wing few," today became the tenth declared candidate for the 1976 Democratic presidential nomination.

Identifying the nation's chief domestic issue as "the survival and salvation of the middle class," Wallace called on "average Americans" to join him in "a political revolution in the ballot box, in the primaries in 1976."

Discarding a long text, Wallace spoke extemporaneously before network television cameras at an elaborately staged news conference in a Montgomery motel.

With rising voice, he declared himself to be in "excellent" health and said he was "able to campaign actively and I do not care what they (the media) say." Supporters in the hall cheered lustily, and when a reporter asked whether Wallace would submit to a medical examination by a special board, many booed.

Wallace did not hear the question, and his wife, Cornelia, sitting at his side, repeated it to him in an audible whisper, adding: "It's an insult to your own physicians."

Wallace thereupon replied to the reporter: "In fact, when you talk about independent doctors it's really an insult to some of the best in the country." Doctors, like newspaper columnists, differ greatly in their findings, Wallace said.

"If all the other candidates want to submit to this board, I'll consider it," he said. "But my health is all right. In fact,

See WALLACE, A4, Col. 2.

WALLACE, From A1
people ask me, do I get tired? I'll tell you what I get tired of. I get tired of you asking me about my health."

Wallace was driven in a limousine to the hall, the car entering through a doorway about 50 feet from where he spoke. He was then taken in his wheelchair to the podium, where he sat throughout the news conference. He has been confined largely to the chair since the shooting attempt on his life in May, 1972 left him paralyzed from the waist down.

The three-time Alabama governor said he was entering the presidential race, his fourth, "for the purpose of winning the nomination and winning the presidency." He brushed aside questions about a third-party candidacy if he

fails to become the Democratic nominee. Third-party speculation, he said, was "mostly talk."

Wallace also said "I just don't think that I would" accept the vice presidential nomination. As one who has led the movement of the middle class, which he claims is about to take over the party, Wallace said, "I ought to have the first seat."

The governor said he would bypass the presidential primary in New Hampshire on Feb. 24, 1976, because other candidates have a head start there and "I just feel like you have nothing to gain and everything to lose."

But he said there is "a good chance" he will enter the Massachusetts primary a week later, though he said it is

a state "propagandized by the media" against his prospects.

While saying he will campaign actively, Wallace pointedly observed that he is still governor of Alabama with responsibilities, just as senators who are running have responsibilities in Washington. "Running all over the country all of the time is certainly something I'm not going to do," he said.

In his prepared text, Wallace asserted that "the issue of forced busing has created unnecessary problems for our people, with nothing meaningful for anyone contained in this folly. The answer to forced busing is to stop it." But he did not mention the controversial topic in his news conference remarks.

Wallace has said he will not

start campaigning actively until 1976. He is scheduled to be on "Meet the Press" on the NBC television network Sunday.

Wallace was born on a farm in Barbour County, Ala., on Aug. 25, 1919. A tough, feisty farm boy who quarterbacked the Clio High School football team at 96 pounds and was twice state Golden Gloves bantamweight champion, he worked at assorted odd jobs to support his widowed mother and to get through the University of Alabama law school.

He served aboard a B-29 bomber in the Pacific in World War II and on his return began his political climb. He served as an assistant attorney general, state representative, and a state trial judge before being elected governor for the

first time in 1963 on the slogan, "segregation now... segregation forever."

Three months later he stood in the door at the University of Alabama as a symbolic gesture against admittance of two black students, but as sentiment turned on the racial issue he backed off somewhat in his rhetoric. Still, he remained a symbol of segregation to many voters despite his public disavowals.

In three earlier runs for the presidency, in 1964 and 1972 as a Democrat, and in 1968 as a third-party candidate, Wallace ran as a hard-line law-and-order man, espousing "freedom of choice" on matters of racial integration.