

To Most Americans, Wallace Is Symbol of Defiance

NYTimes

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

His admirers have called him an indomitable fighter for the best of American tradition. His enemies have labeled him a stubborn opportunist calling up the darkest impulses of the American spirit.

But to few in a nation divided by controversy has George Corley Wallace become anything less than a symbol of defiance — the little man's defiance of big, impersonal government, the troubled parent's defiance of court-ordered school busing, the conservative voter's defiance of Republican and Democratic party promises.

Over the last decade, since he leaped to national prominence with a futile "stand in the schoolhouse door" to block integration at the University of Alabama in 1963, Governor Wallace has evolved from simply a regional opponent of integration into a politician with a national following.

Third Run for Presidency

In that time, he has controlled the Alabama Statehouse, winning the Governorship twice while his late wife, Lurleen, held the office once, and has run three times for the Presidency of the United States, in 1964 and 1968 as well as this year.

The 52-year-old Governor has emerged from the days of desegregation in the South in the early nineteen-sixties as a leader of the nation's firmest conservatives. Describing himself as a segregationist but not a racist, Mr. Wallace found his major following in the South. But as primary elections unfolded this year, it has become increasingly clear that his popularity was not confined to the South.

He had already carried primaries in Florida, North Carolina and Tennessee this year, and has made strong showings in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and elsewhere. He was shot on the eve of primaries in Michigan and Maryland, where he was considered the favorite.

His Support Widens

He appeared to have wider support this year than in 1968, when he ran as a third-party candidate of the

American Independent party and carried Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi. He won 46 electoral votes in the 1968 general election.

In 1964, he entered the Democratic primaries in Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland and made a surprisingly strong showing, withdrawing when Barry Goldwater won the Republican nomination because, he said, he wanted to avoid splitting the conservative vote.

Despite his national prominence, Governor Wallace has always been at home, personally and politically, in Alabama.

It was there that he was born and grew up and learned to be a scrapper. He supported his widowed mother, worked his way through col-

lege and studied law with borrowed books. He boxed his way to the state Golden Gloves bantamweight title twice and, after World War II service aboard a B-29 bomber, entered the political battles of his home state.

Election Victory in 1946

After brief service as an assistant state attorney general, Mr. Wallace won his first political office in 1946 as a member of the Alabama House of Representatives, where he had once worked as a teen-aged page.

He served six years in the house until his election in 1952 as a trial judge in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He held the post for six years, gaining a reputation as a "fighting little judge" in Barbour County.

In 1958, Mr. Wallace ran for Governor but was defeated by a candidate who political analysts said took a more extreme segregationist stand than he did. Four years later, after a campaign in which none could label him "moderate," Mr. Wallace won the governorship.

In his inaugural address, he pledged himself to defy Federal efforts to bring down Alabama's racial barriers, and declared: "I say: segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . and segregation forever."

Confrontation With Dr. King
Within weeks after taking office, the Governor found himself in a confrontation with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who led mass black demonstrations against segregation in Birmingham and Selma.

The "schoolhouse door" episode at the university occurred the following June. He was brushed aside by Federal marshals, but his "stand" made him a symbol of resistance to integration and a national figure.

In his first administration, the Governor started a network of junior colleges and succeeded in doubling the state's public school budget.

Under Alabama law, he was permitted only one term as Governor. Despite his immense popularity with the voters, he was unable to convince the Legislature in 1966 to amend the constitution to allow him to run for another term.

Wife Wins Election

His wife, Lurleen, standing in for him, won one of the most overwhelming victories in state history. With Mrs. Wallace as Governor, Mr. Wallace made the major decisions. In May, 1968, Mrs. Wallace died of cancer.

Two years ago, Mr. Wallace again ran for Governor, winning a close race over Lieut. Gov. Albert P. Brewer, who had succeeded his wife. Shortly before returning to the Governor's mansion, Mr. Wallace married Cornelia Snively, a 32-year-old divorcee who is the niece of a former Governor, James E. Folsom.

George Wallace was born on Aug. 25, 1919 on a Barbour County farm near Clio, the first of four children of George C. Wallace Sr. and his wife, Mozelle.

Growing up during the depression years, he picked ber-

ries and sold magazines door to door. When his father died in 1937, five months after young George's graduation from high school, mortgage holders foreclosed on the family farm. George went to work, driving taxicabs and trucks, waiting on tables, finding what jobs he could.

He Enrolls at University

After his widowed mother went to work as a W.P.A. sewing-room supervisor, young Wallace enrolled at the University of Alabama. He earned his law degree in 1942.

Mr. Wallace and the former Lurleen Burns, who was working as a clerk in a Tuscaloosa variety store, were married on May 22, 1943. They had four children, Bobbi Jo, Peggy Sue, George Jr. and Janie Lee.

Mr. Wallace volunteered for pilot training in the Army shortly before his wedding, but had to drop out of flying school because of spinal meningitis. Recovering, he went to flight engineers' school and spent much of World War II on a B-29 bomber, "Sentimental Journey," over the Pacific. He was discharged with a 10 percent disability described as a "nervous condition" resulting from combat fatigue and complications arising from his earlier ailment.

As a legislator after the war, Mr. Wallace sponsored an industrial development program that played an important part in Alabama's growth. During his governorship, the state gained an estimated \$2-billion in new and expanded industry.