



EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewer's Briefing Materials **Wyche Fowler Interview, 11/09/2009**

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

Miller Center Documents¹

- Wyche Fowler Timeline.
- Wyche Fowler Fact Sheet.

Secondary Source Materials

- Wyche Fowler bio, <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.
- Martin Tolchin, "Confrontation in the Gulf," *The New York Times*, 01/12/1991.
- John Mashek, "Southern Democrats Face Dilemma on Thomas Nomination," *The Boston Globe*, 08/11/1991.
- Walter Robinson, "Senators Open Debate on Thomas Nomination," *The Boston Globe*, 10/04/1991.
- David Von Drehle, "Sen. Fowler is Defeated in Runoff," *The Washington Post*, 11/25/1992.

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WYCHE FOWLER, JR. TIMELINE

Prepared by Bryan Craig

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 10/19/2009

- 1940** Wyche Fowler, Jr. is born in Atlanta, Georgia. (*Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress*)
- 1962** Fowler graduates from Davidson College.
- 1963-1964** Fowler serves as an Army intelligence officer.
- 1965-1966** Fowler serves as chief of staff for Rep. Charles Weltner (D-GA).
- 1966-1969** While going to law school at Emory University, Fowler serves as “night mayor” of Atlanta, in which he handles overnight crises. (Richard Fenno, Jr. *Senators on the Campaign Trail*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986, p. 168)
- 1969** Fowler gets a J.D. from Emory University.
- 1970-1973** Fowler serves on the Atlanta Board of Alderman.
- 1972** Fowler loses to Andrew Young, Jr. in the fifth district House election. (Fenno, p. 169)
- 1974-1977** Fowler is president of the Atlanta City Council.
- 1977** Important issues that Senator Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) works on during this year include criminal law and sentencing reform, lobbying reform, election day voter registration, public participation in agency proceedings, FDA ban on saccharin, sunset on tax spending, lobbying and voter reform, anti-recession jobs program, minimum wage, NSF reauthorization, small business innovation research program, and the situations in Argentina and northern Ireland, including the Four Horsemen.
- April* On the 5th, Fowler wins a special election when Young becomes President Jimmy Carter’s Ambassador to the United Nations.
- July* On the 27th, Fowler is appointed to the newly established House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence with Rep. Edward Boland (D-MS) as chairman. (*1977 Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc, p. 378)
- 1978** Important issues that EMK works on in 1978 include airline deregulation act, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, labor law reform, extension of ERA ratification deadline, Vietnamese family reunification, China and Soviet trips, hospital cost containment, Nurse Training Act, capital gains tax reform,

Community Mental Health Centers, Commission on Biomedical Ethics, D.C. representation in Congress, opposition to military sales to Middle East, opposition to budget cut for the F-18, Soviet emigration, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, the Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy, and extension of the Civil Rights Commission.

1979 Important issues that EMK works on in 1979 include judicial nomination for women and minorities, Illinois Brick Antitrust Reform, conglomerate mergers, oil company mergers and acquisitions, court improvement/reform, capital punishment, opposition to restrictions on Supreme Court jurisdiction, regulatory reform, Higher Education Student Loan Reform, Three Mile Island, FBI charter, women in science, offshore drilling, FDA reform, windfall profit tax, Cambodian refugees, and the Taiwan Security Act.

January EMK becomes chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Fowler is assigned to the House Ways & Means Committee. (1979 CQ Almanac, p. 5)

1980 Important issues that EMK works on in 1980 include the Stephen Breyer Circuit Court Nomination, the Protection of Rights of Institutionalized Americans, Fair Housing bill, Mental Health Systems Act and bill of rights, trucking deregulation, Cuban and Haitian refugees, Refugee Act, attorney fees in agency proceedings, Low Income Energy Assistance, Biomedical Research Authorization, and the presidential campaign.

1981 Important issues that EMK works on in 1981 include Senate policy reforms, opposition to the Reagan tax cut, small business tax reform, Watt nomination as Interior Secretary, energy conservation, oil price de-control, the Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan nomination, opposition to health care block grants, infant formula, opposition to AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia, military aid to El Salvador, handgun control, opposition to martial law in Poland, food and medical aid to Poland, the formation of Friends of Ireland in Congress, the U.S.-Canada Maritime Treaty, 1981 legislation to extend VRA (successfully extended in 1982) and the creation of the Fund for a Democratic Majority.

1982 Important issues that EMK works on in 1982 include the Voting Rights Act Extension, opposition to the Reagan budget cuts, the “nuclear freeze” resolution, the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act, opposition to tax credits for segregated schools, the Job Training Partnership Act, the extension of unemployment compensation, emergency public works jobs, summer jobs for youth, the Orphan Drug Act, opposition to means-testing for Medicare, Medicare Part B Deductible, a waiting period for handgun purchases, the Small Business Innovation Development Act, opposition to arms sales to Jordan, opposition to funds for Contras, MX missile, and reelection to the Senate.

December The Boland Amendment is passed, prohibiting CIA efforts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government but allowing aid for other purposes. The provision is

largely drafted by Fowler. The provision is kept in the conference report on the second continuing appropriations resolution for FY1983. EMK votes against the appropriations authorization. (1982 *CQ Almanac*, p. 238)

EMK announces he will not run for president in 1984.

1983 Important issues that EMK works on in 1983 include the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday, the Civil Rights Commission, Liberty Baptist College/separation of church and state, Commission on the Bicentennial of the Constitution, reintroduction of the ERA, the Industrial Policy Task Force, health care for the unemployed, youth unemployment, hunger field hearings, withholding on interest and dividends, and defense/foreign policy issues including marines in Lebanon, opposition to SDI, nuclear warheads on conventional missiles, the B-I and stealth bombers, Ireland and the New Ireland Forum, Contra Aid, and the assassination of Philippines opposition leader Aquino.

January EMK begins serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Spring Upon hearing daily news reports that the Contras are seeking to overthrow the Nicaraguan government, Boland sends Fowler to Central America to investigate. Fowler reports back that the Boland Amendment is being violated. (*The Washington Post*, 06/14/1987)

May On the 3rd, the House Select Committee passes the Boland-Zablocki bill (named after Boland and Rep. Clement J. Zablocki, D-WI), an amendment to the 1983 Intelligence Authorization Act expressing disapproval of the Reagan Administration's military support for the Contras. It also recommends deleting all funds for the covert operation in Nicaragua. Fowler and his Democratic colleagues support the bill. (1983 *CQ Almanac*, pp. 126-127)

July On the 19th, the House holds a closed session to be briefed on Nicaragua by the Select Committee on Intelligence. Fowler states the committee in 1981 and 1982 reportedly insisted on limiting covert activity to blocking the flow of arms to leftist guerrillas in the region, and Reagan had expanded the activity to Nicaragua. Republicans argue that the committee reportedly approved covert activity specifically in Nicaragua. (1983 *CQ Almanac*, p. 129)

On the 28th, the House votes to pass the Boland-Zablocki bill. Although symbolic, EMK says this vote "sends a clear and unequivocal message to this administration that it is time to end the dangerous escalation of covert warfare in Central America." (*The Washington Post*, 07/30/1983)

August EMK and Senator Gary Hart (D-CO) introduce legislation to ban all combat troops in Nicaragua. In the House, Fowler asks "at what point short of the Sandinistas' resigning in Nicaragua will our unilateral display of power subside?" (*The New York Times*, 08/06/1983)

- October* As the Senate passes measures supporting CIA activities in Nicaragua, the House passes another provision on the 20th attached to the fiscal 1984 intelligence authorization bill that prohibits U.S. covert aid to the rebels in Nicaragua. Fowler supports the measure. (*1983 CQ Almanac*, p. 131)
- November* Congress clears a compromise on covert aid to the Nicaraguan Contras in the FY1984 defense and intelligence bills, in which Reagan wins \$24 million in Contra aid, and the congressional opposition secures a better chance to block the program in mid-1984, when the aid expires. This decision allows the Boland Amendment of 1982 to expire on September 30 without renewal. Fowler does not vote on the compromise. (*1983 CQ Almanac*, pp. 123-124)
- 1984** Important issues that EMK works on in 1984 include *Grove City*, the Wilkinson nomination, the line item veto, the Omnibus Crime Control Act, Kennedy-Gephardt Medicare Cost Control, the Women's Educational Equity Act, El Salvador elections, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and the Sudan.
- January* The House Intelligence Committee learns the CIA has mined Nicaraguan harbors, which breaches international law. (*1984 CQ Almanac*, p. 88)
- March* On the 27th, the House Intelligence Committee receives a full briefing on the CIA mining Nicaraguan harbors. (*1984 CQ Almanac*, p. 88)
- April* EMK learns through Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE) and his membership on the Senate Intelligence Committee that the Sandinista charges that the CIA has mined its harbors are in fact true. EMK introduces a non-binding resolution attached to a tax bill stating, "It is the sense of Congress no funds heretofore or hereafter appropriated shall be obligated or expended for the purpose of planning, executing or supporting the mining of the ports or territorial waters of Nicaragua." The vote the following day is 84-12. EMK says this means the Senate has taken a first step towards halting Reagan's "secret war in Nicaragua." The House of Representatives follows two days later with a 281-111 vote in favor of the resolution with Fowler supporting it. (Adam Clymer, *Edward M. Kennedy: A Biography*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1999, pp. 356-58; *1984 CQ Almanac*, pp. 89, 28-H)
- May* EMK chairs a congressional forum where Miskito Indians from Nicaragua testify that the Contras are murdering children and kidnapping young men. (*The Washington Post*, 05/26/1984)
- On the 24th, Fowler votes against a resolution for Reagan's \$21 million request for Contra aid, as well as money to introduce combat troops in El Salvador and Nicaragua should the president determine there to be a Communist threat. (*1984 CQ Almanac*, p. 54-H)

- August* Reagan pressures Congress for \$28 million for the Contras. On the 2nd, Fowler votes for a resolution that prohibits any form of U.S. aid to military or paramilitary groups in Nicaragua. It passes by a 294-118 vote. (1984 CQ Almanac, p. 94-H)
- October* Congress approves a compromise barring Reagan from providing further aid to the Contras until after February 28th, 1985 – and then only if Congress agrees. The compromise is made between House Democrats, who want to ban all aid to the guerillas, and Senate Republicans, who still support Reagan’s policy. The compromise comes after support in the Senate for Reagan’s Contra policy has steadily eroded following the disclosure of the mining of Nicaraguan harbors in April. Reagan signs the continuing appropriations resolution. (1984 CQ Almanac, pp. 22, 86)
- 1985** Important issues that EMK works on in 1985 include South Africa, the Drug Export Act, the Arms Control Observer Group, the Meese and Reynolds nominations, the McClure-Volkmer Gun Control Act, NIH, the Boland Amendment on Nicaragua, Social Security cuts, Medicare-Medicaid fund restoration, emergency hospital care for the poor, D.C. statehood, the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and Philippine democracy.
- January* Reagan suspends negotiations with Nicaragua, claiming Nicaragua is refusing serious discussions. (1985 CQ Almanac, p. 73)
- EMK, Fowler, Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), Rep. Dante Fascell (D-FL), and Rep. William Gray III (D-PA) are among a newly formed group called the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews. On the 30th, they attend a lunch of black bread and potato soup on Capitol Hill. It is a meal typical of Jewish prisoners. (The New York Times, 01/29/1985)
- June-Aug.* Congress approves \$27 million for non-military Contra aid after Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega visits Moscow. The legislation, however, does bar the CIA from distributing the aid. Congressional Democrats respond by passing a sense-of-Congress declaration to bar combat forces in the area. EMK criticizes the legislation and argues that calling the aid humanitarian “is totally misleading.” Fowler also opposes the aid. (1985 CQ Almanac, pp. 61-80)
- December* EMK announces in a televised statement that he will not run for president in 1988. He acknowledges the following day at a news conference that his decision may mean that he will never again run for president.
- 1986** Important issues that EMK works on in 1986 include trips to Latin America, Israel, and the Soviet Union, intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), South Africa sanctions, the nominations of William Rehnquist to the Supreme Court and Daniel Manion to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, immigration reform, economic aid to Northern Ireland, Bradley-Gephardt tax reform, Superfund, Medicare

deductible, the Omnibus Health Act, infant mortality, catastrophic health insurance, and AIDS research.

Congress passes legislation to give \$70 million dollars of military aid and \$30 million of non-military aid to the Contras. Congress also agrees to lift the ban on direct CIA involvement in managing the aid program. EMK and Fowler oppose this legislation. (*1986 CQ Almanac*, pp. 394-414)

- January* Fowler announces that he will run for the U.S. Senate. (*The Washington Post*, 01/07/1986)
- June* On the 11th, the House Ways and Means Committee approves a ban on imports from South Africa in a larger sanctions bill (H Rept 99-638). The House passes by a voice vote a sanctions bill imposing a trade embargo on South Africa and requiring all American companies in South Africa to leave within 180 days. EMK hails the legislation and introduces the bill in the Senate. (Clymer, p. 396; *1986 CQ Almanac*, p. 363)
- August* The Senate debates the South Africa sanctions bill, which is weaker than the House version. EMK argues the Senate must close loopholes undermining the intention of the bill. On the 15th, it passes in the Senate. EMK and Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, set out to get the House to agree to the weaker Senate bill unchanged, as a conference will leave no time for a vote to over-ride a veto before Congress adjourns for midterm elections. EMK persuades House members in favor of a stronger bill to pass the Senate version. Reagan later vetoes the bill, and Congress over-rides it. (*1986 CQ Almanac*, p. 367; Clymer, p. 400, 402)
- Fowler wins the Senate Democratic nomination beating Hamilton Jordan, Carter's former chief of staff. (*The New York Times*, 08/17/1986)
- October* Reagan comes to Georgia to campaign for Senator Mack Mattingly (R-GA), Fowler's opponent for the Senate. In a speech on the 8th, Reagan says Fowler is as "liberal as Kennedy. You wouldn't want a Senator who's as liberal as Teddy Kennedy, would you?" (*The New York Times*, 10/08/1986)
- November* The Democrats regain control of the Senate in the mid-term elections. Fowler beats Mattingly to become a Democratic Senator from Georgia.
- The Iran-Contra scandal breaks in the media.
- 1987** Important issues that EMK works on in 1987 include fair housing, literacy corps, Irish immigration, Chernobyl, coal mine safety, minimum wage increase, minimum health benefits for workers, savings bonds for college education, satellite education, welfare-to-jobs incentives, G.I. bill of rights, nuclear aircraft carriers, Panama, Poland, and the Bork nomination.

- January* EMK becomes chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, as well as the Judiciary's Immigration and Refugee Affairs Subcommittee. Fowler is assigned to the Agriculture, Budget, and Energy and Natural Resources Committees. (*Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress*)
- Fowler and EMK are among the guests at the Washington Press Club Foundation's Salute to Congress. EMK's son, Patrick, newly elected to the House, is also in attendance. (*The Washington Post*, 01/29/1987)
- February* The Tower Commission releases its findings on the Iran-Contra Affair, which accuses Reagan of neglect for not knowing what was happening in his administration as they swapped arms for hostages. Commenting on the report, Fowler argues the president will not be able to set a legislative agenda, and EMK calls Reagan AWOL as commander in chief. (*The Washington Post*, 02/27/1987)
- July* On the 1st, Reagan announces his nomination of Federal Circuit Judge Robert H. Bork to replace Powell. Bork has spoken out strongly against Supreme Court precedents important to liberals, including *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Griswold v. Connecticut*, and *Roe v. Wade*. Within an hour of the announcement, EMK delivers a controversial floor speech calling for the Senate to reject Bork's nomination. (Clymer, pp. 416-417)
- August* EMK co-sponsors Fowler's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Technology Competitiveness Act of 1988, but it does not pass the Senate. It becomes law in 1989, but EMK is not a co-sponsor. (THOMAS on S 1554, S 448)
- October* On the 7th, Fowler announces his opposition to Bork's nomination, reportedly due in part to Bork's civil rights record. With Fowler's colleague Sam Nunn (D-GA) opposing Bork, it makes it increasingly difficult for Reagan to get the 50 votes needed for nomination. (*The Washington Post*, 09/13/1987, 10/08/1987)
- The Bork nomination is rejected 42-58 on the 23rd. EMK and Fowler vote with the majority, and EMK warns Reagan not to produce another nominee equivalent to Bork in judicial philosophy. (Clymer, p. 427; *1987 CQ Almanac*, p. 60-S; Congressional Research Service, p. CRS-21)
- 1988** Important issues that EMK works on in 1988 include *Grove City*/civil rights, Fair Housing, education issues including ESEA and minority medical education, the Older Americans Act, the Developmental Disabilities Act, infant mortality, Comprehensive Child Development Centers, child abuse, polygraph tests in the workplace, hunger, and health manpower.
- July* On the 6th, the Senate passes EMK's plant closing notification bill by a 72-23 vote. The House passes it and it becomes law with enough votes to over-ride a

veto by Reagan. Few Georgia legislators vote for the bill, but both Fowler and Nunn vote for it. (*1988 CQ Almanac*, pp. 213, 37-S)

The 1988 National Democratic Convention is held in Atlanta. Democrats nominate Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts. Fowler is considered in the press as a potential candidate for vice-president. (*Christian Science Monitor*, 07/05/1988; *The Washington Post*, 07/20/1988)

Nov.-Dec. Fowler seconds and EMK supports George Mitchell's (D-ME) nomination for Majority Leader. Fowler, who is from Georgia, is reportedly a key supporter for Mitchell against Southern rival Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-LA). After Mitchell's election, Fowler is named to the Appropriations Committee, the Democratic Steering Committee, and the newly created Assistant Floor Leader position. Fowler begins attending leadership and White House meetings to help shape legislation. (Fenno, pp. 170-171; *1986 CQ Almanac*, p. 5; *The Boston Globe*, 11/30/1986)

1989 Important issues EMK works on this year include national service legislation, the minimum wage, national health insurance legislation, the Employee Pension Protection Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), flag burning, NEH cuts, aid to Poland and Hungary, the Motor Voter Act, elderly health care, air travel smoking ban, the Tower nomination, aid to El Salvador, SDI, Tienanmen Square, nurse immigration, and VISTA.

1990 Important issues EMK works on in 1990 include the ADA, civil rights legislation, the Ryan White Comprehensive Aids Act of 1990, Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990, Head Start Improvement Act of 1990, child care, vocational education, the National Community Service Act of 1990, NEA funding, the National Health Service Corps Revitalization, NIH funding for women's research, Housing Trust Fund, aid to Chile, trip to Soviet Union, organ transplantation, TB, home health care, Family and Medical Leave, Immigration Act of 1990, Ireland, age discrimination, math-science education, the Souter nomination, and the homeless.

February Fowler co-sponsors EMK's Civil Rights Act of 1990. However, the Senate lacks the votes to over-ride a presidential veto. (THOMAS on S 2104)

April Fowler co-sponsors EMK's Excellence in Mathematics, Science and Engineering Education Act of 1990, but it does get to the Senate floor. (THOMAS on S 2114)

Fowler co-sponsors EMK's bill, the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency Act, to combat AIDS. (THOMAS on S 2240)

July Fowler co-sponsors EMK's Excellence in Teaching Act. (THOMAS on S 1675)

August Iraqi forces invade Kuwait on the 2nd. The Democratic-controlled Senate, which is

debating the FY1991 defense authorization bill, votes for authorization below 1990 levels on the 4th. EMK and Fowler support this bill, and also vote in favor of S Res. 318 condemning the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and urging President George H.W. Bush to “to act immediately, using unilateral and multilateral measures, to seek the full and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory” through trade sanctions, diplomatic efforts, and, if necessary, multilateral military action. Bush deploys troops to Saudi Arabia, stating the invasion “will not stand.” (Clymer, p. 480; *1990 CQ Almanac*, p. 680)

October The House and Senate pass non-binding resolutions on the 1st and 2nd, respectively, endorsing Bush’s economic embargo against Iraq and the deployment of 100,000 U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia. They do not, however, provide explicit authority to go to war. Fowler supports the resolution, while EMK votes against it, calling it a “blank check endorsement for future actions...in effect, a Tonkin Gulf Resolution for the Persian Gulf.” Only Senators Mark Hatfield (R-OR) and Bob Kerrey (D-NE) vote with EMK. (Clymer, p. 483; *1990 CQ Almanac*, pp. 717, 734)

November On the 8th, Bush announces a substantial troop buildup to the levels of 430,000 in the Persian Gulf, provoking a firestorm of criticism from Congress. EMK argues it makes war “inevitable.” (*1990 CQ Almanac*, pp. 717, 738)

On the 29th, the UN Security Council adopts Resolution 678 setting January 15th, 1991 as the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

1991 Important issues EMK works on this year include higher education legislation, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, Gulf War, emergency unemployment benefits, CFE, free trade with Mexico, economic stimulus, Soviet aid, family planning, capital punishment, habeas corpus, women in combat, comprehensive health reform, WIC, the Thomas nomination, and Medicare funds for hospitals.

January On the 4th, the Senate begins debate on the Gulf crisis. EMK states that going to war without Congress’ consent would precipitate a “constitutional crisis.” (Clymer, p. 483; *1991 CQ Almanac*, p. 439)

Bush formally requests an authorization from Congress for the use of force against Iraq on the 8th, the first such request by a president since the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. (Clymer, p. 483; *1991 CQ Almanac*, p. 439)

On the 12th, the House and Senate vote in favor of S.J. Res. 2 authorizing the president to use military force against Iraq pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 678. The Senate passes the authorization 52-47. EMK and Fowler vote against it. Fowler states, “Is war with Iraq justified? Absolutely yes...But there is a difference between a war being justified or being prudent or necessary or needed... We should chose the war option only when less costly, less risky alternatives, such as the use of economic and political sanctions, cannot achieve our objectives...” (*The Washington Post*, 01/12/1991) Both men instead had

supported the Mitchell-Nunn substitute authorizing “the use of American military force to enforce the United Nations (U.N.) economic embargo against Iraq; to defend Saudi Arabia from direct Iraqi attack; and to protect American forces in the region.” (S.J. Res. 1, Library of Congress) The resolution also called for continued sanctions and diplomatic pressures and declared that Congress, vested with the power to declare war, will consider future requests by the president for a declaration of war and for authority to use military force against Iraq. The resolution failed in the Senate 53-46. (1991 CQ Almanac, pp. 438-441, 2-S)

On the 14th, Fowler co-sponsors EMK’s Neighborhood Schools Improvement Act. It goes to conference but stalls. (THOMAS on S 2)

On the 16th, Bush orders an air campaign against Iraq, transforming Operation Desert Shield into Operation Desert Storm.

On the 17th, the Senate unanimously approves a resolution backing the president.

- February* On the 27th, Bush announces a cease-fire and declares Kuwait “liberated.” Iraq accepts cease-fire terms in March, agreeing to destroy weapons of mass destruction and allow monitoring by U.N. inspectors. A formal cease-fire is signed in April, which establishes a no-fly zone in Northern Iraq to protect the Kurds.
- March* EMK co-sponsors Fowler’s National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1992 that strengthens the review process and the power of the federal government to protect sites and antiquities. It becomes law in 1992. (THOMAS on S 684; National Park Service Website, http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/FHPL_HistPrsrt.pdf)
- Spring* William Kennedy Smith is charged with sexual battery in Palm Beach, Florida.
- June* Fowler co-sponsors EMK’s Family Planning Amendments of 1991, but the bill never leaves the Labor Committee. (THOMAS on S 1197)
- July* On the 8th, Clarence Thomas is nominated by Bush to replace Thurgood Marshall as Associate Justice. Thomas is the only African American on Bush’s short list of conservative nominees, and Bush calls Thomas “the best qualified,” despite possessing reportedly minimal legal experience in entry-level jobs and an unremarkable year on the appeals court. (Clymer, p. 493; *The New York Times*, 07/07/1991; U.S. Senate Homepage)
- September* On the 17th, Fowler co-sponsors EMK’s Comprehensive Maternal and Early Childhood Health Care Act to improve access to immunizations for poor children and provide various other types of health care for pregnant women and young children. The Labor Committee approves it, but it is not voted on by the full Senate. (1991 CQ Almanac, p. 387; THOMAS on S 493)

On the 27th, the Judiciary Committee votes 7-7 on the Thomas nomination and sends it to the floor, even though a tie could have held the nomination in committee. (Clymer, p. 497)

October As debate begins on the Senate floor for the Thomas nomination, Fowler publicly announces his support. He will vote in the hope that Thomas can be impartial, and says Thomas has the “record, temperament, and character to do that.” (*The Washington Post*, 10/04/1991) The next day the press breaks the Anita Hill story that she had been sexually harassed by Thomas. (Clymer, p. 497; *The Boston Globe*, 10/04/1991)

Because of Hill’s accusations, additional Judiciary Committee hearings take place from the 10th to the early morning of the 14th. Hill discusses her allegations against Thomas in excruciating detail, yet Biden gives into the Republican offensive led by Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), who accuses Hill of fantasy, resentment, political conspiracy, and later perjury. Although EMK has done some private negotiating for Anita Hill’s witnesses, he has little to say but for a short defense of her character on the 13th. EMK tells witnesses testifying on behalf of Hill, “Some people just don’t want to believe you.” (Clymer, pp. 497-498; *The New York Times*, 10/14/1991)

Fowler votes for Thomas and EMK votes against his nomination as he is confirmed by 52-48 vote. Fowler states despite the strong viewpoints from his constituents against the nomination, there was no proof in the charges against Thomas. (*USA Today*, 10/16/1991; *1991 CQ Almanac*, p. 285)

EMK gives a speech at the Kennedy School at Harvard University in which he acknowledges that he has made mistakes in the conduct of his private life.

1992 Important issues EMK works on this year include national health care and fetal tissue research, Family and Medical Leave, Older Americans Act, abortion, women’s health, fetal tissue research, FDA prescription drugs, Religious Freedom Restoration Act, L.A. riots, bilingual voter assistance, campaign finance reform, law enforcements and education issues, including aid to higher education and school reform.

July EMK marries Vicki Reggie in McLean, Virginia.

September The Senate confirms Edward Carnes for the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that covers Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Fowler is the only Senator in the district to oppose Carnes. EMK also opposes Carnes’ nomination reportedly for being insensitive to racial discrimination in the criminal justice system. (*1992 CQ Almanac*, pp. 319-321)

- October* Fowler co-sponsors EMK's bill to amend part D of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for income dependent education assistance, but it stalls in the Labor Committee. (THOMAS on S 2255)
- November* Fowler gets 49.3% of the vote in a three-way Senate race, forcing a run-off election. On the 24th, in a low turn-out election, he loses to Republican Paul Coverdell. In a television ad, Coverdell charges that, if Fowler "takes his marching orders from Teddy Kennedy, you're going to be out of synch with Georgia." (*The New York Times*, 11/25/1992) It is reported that Fowler's campaign did not have a unifying theme, project his Senate successes, or use the media effectively. He loses some of the female and liberal voters due to his vote for Clarence Thomas. Also, he is reported to be preoccupied by the illness and death of his friend Weltner. (Fenno, p. 160, 172, 180, 205; "Wyche Fowler," *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgianencyclopedia.org>)
- 1993** Fowler works at the Federal Election Commission. (*The Washington Post*, 05/23/1993)
- 1994** *The Washingtonian Magazine* runs an article on women finding "trophy husbands," and one of the women featured is Vicky Reggie Kennedy. The magazine reports she was trying to get a date with Fowler before she met EMK. (*The Boston Globe*, 09/09/1994)
- 1995-1996** Fowler is a visiting fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard and serves on the Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community. On the commission, Fowler raises the issues of waste found in the intelligence budget and the failings of CIA's covert actions. ("Wyche Fowler," *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgianencyclopedia.org>)
- 1996-2001** Fowler serves as ambassador to Saudi Arabia. ("Wyche Fowler," *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgianencyclopedia.org>)
- 2001-Present** Fowler serves as chairman of the Board of Governors at the Middle East Institute. (*The Washington Post*, 10/30/2001; "Wyche Fowler," *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <http://www.georgianencyclopedia.org>)
- 2009**
- August* EMK dies at his home in Hyannis Port. Fowler serves as an honorary pall bearer at his funeral. (*The Boston Globe*, 08/29/2009)

WYCHE FOWLER, JR. (D-GA) FACT SHEET

Prepared by Bryan Craig

Miller Center, University of Virginia, 10/21/2009

House career & committee service: 1977-1987

- 1977-1978: International Relations.
- 1977-1978: Small Business.
- 1979-1987: Ways and Means. (1983-1987: Subcommittees on Public Assistance & Unemployment Compensation; Social Security).
- 1979-1985: Select Committee on Intelligence.

Senate career & committee service: 1987-1993

- Assistant Floor Leader, 1989-1993: this position was reportedly created for Fowler by the in-coming Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell.
- 1987-1993: Appropriations.
- 1987-1993: Agriculture.
- 1987-1993: Budget.
- 1987-1989, 1991-1993: Energy and Natural Resources.

Other positions:

- 1965-1966: Chief of Staff for Rep. Charles Weltner (D-GA).
- 1969-1973: Atlanta Alderman.
- 1973-1977: President, Atlanta City Council.
- 1993: Federal Elections Commission.
- 1995-1996: Visiting fellow at Harvard's Institute of Politics; Commission on the Roles and Capabilities of the United States Intelligence Community.
- 1996-March 2001: Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (appointed during Senate recess).
- 2001-present: Chairman, Middle East Institute.
- 2009: Honorary pall-bearer at EMK's funeral.

Possible interview topics:

- Fowler's friendship and personal relationship with EMK.
- Nicaragua/El Salvador and the Boland Amendment: Fowler and EMK both actively opposed military aid to the Contras; Fowler helped draft the Boland Amendment while serving on the House Select Committee on Intelligence.
- South Africa sanctions: Fowler was on the House Ways and Means Committee that helped break the impasse over sanctions in 1986.
- Soviet Jews: Fowler and EMK both served on the Congressional Coalition for Soviet Jews, which was formed in 1985.
- Middle East: In the 1991 Gulf War, Fowler and EMK supported the Mitchell-Nunn resolution to give sanctions more time to work before taking military action in Iraq. Fowler later served as ambassador to Saudi Arabia under Clinton.
- Supreme Court nominations: Fowler and EMK both voted against the Bork nomination; Fowler voted for and EMK against the Thomas nomination.
- Healthcare & Education: As Assistant Floor Leader, Fowler kept tabs on legislation.