

# Kemp and Quayle figured in 1982 re-election attempt

Which restaurant in Bloomington hosted a future vice president of the United States and a vice presidential candidate? Read on.

Joel Deckard, a Republican from the Evansville area, was scheduled to make a few routine campaign stops in Bloomington during October of 1982. A several-term congressman, Deckard hoped to be re-elected.

Unfortunately, he lost control of his car on a rain-slick curve near the Posey and Vanderburgh county line and ran into a tree. The investigating officer noticed alcohol on the congressman's breath before he was taken to the hospital for a head injury.

The accident was a front-page item in the area newspapers, including the *Bloomington Herald-Telephone* of Oct. 7. (The newspaper had a particular interest in that particular campaign, since Deckard's two opponents Frank McCloskey and Robert Arno, were both from Bloomington.)

Several days later, the newspaper reported that Deckard's speech in Bloomington was probably going to be rescheduled. In fact, Deckard was due in town within the week for



## LOOKING BACK

By Rose McIlveen

a fund-raising breakfast. U.S. Senator Dan Quayle was to have been the main speaker to boost Deckard's candidacy.

Monroe County Republican Party officials anxiously waited to see what the candidate would do. He was still in Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, and the appropriate prosecutor, Bill Gooden, had had to excuse himself, since he had been Deckard's campaign manager at one time.

The *Herald-Telephone* of Oct. 11 informed its readers that Deckard was still in the hospital. Gooden had asked Posey County Judge Steve Bach to name a special prosecutor to handle the case.

Meanwhile, Deckard told reporters that he had been drinking, but he hoped the voters would judge him on the basis of his record in Congress. He explained that on the evening of

the accident he had been very tired and could not honestly say whether it was caused by fatigue or alcohol.

The next day the *Herald-Telephone* Deckard article had a post-script which said, "A 7:30 a.m. breakfast fund-raiser Wednesday with U.S. Sen. Dan Quayle, R.-Ind., at Jeremiah Sweeney's restaurant in Bloomington is still scheduled whether Deckard is able to attend or not ... Sen. Quayle will be appearing in Bloomington regardless."

For the benefit of its readers the newspaper reported, "Deckard who appeared this morning (Oct. 13) in Bloomington with U.S. Sen. Dan Quayle, R.-Ind., at a fund-raiser breakfast, looked tired and weak. A 6-inch scar reached from his left eyelid to the top of his hairline."

Only those who talked freely behind closed doors could answer the question about Deckard's next campaign schedule boost. Was another politician with a national reputation brought in to give Deckard some very much needed help or was he already on the schedule?

On Oct. 20 the *Herald-Telephone* carried a

small notice on page 11. It said, "U.S. Rep. Jack Kemp, R.-N.Y., one of the nation's leading spokesmen for supply side economics will appear in Bloomington Friday in support of 8th District U.S. Rep. Joel Deckard's re-election bid. Kemp will appear at a noon luncheon at Jeremiah Sweeney's restaurant."

Kemp arrived in Bloomington in style, flying in a Lear jet. At the fund-raiser he called Deckard's re-election second in importance only to his own. Reminding the readers that Kemp was first elected to Congress in 1970 after a successful professional football career, the *Herald-Telephone* article of Oct. 22 continued, quoting Kemp, "You can't get out of the recession by taxation. If people want to raise taxes, they can vote for Tip O'Neill or Joel's opponent."

The New York congressman predicted that Ronald Reagan would run for re-election in 1984. He told reporters that he planned to support Reagan's candidacy.

Then Kemp climbed into his Lear jet and went on to the next campaign stop. What of Joel Deckard in that fall election of 1982. In spite of the help, he lost.

H-T 8/19/96