

## Tennessee Political Humor: Some Of These Jokes You Voted For

Roy Herron



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Almost 175 years ago, Congressman Davy Crockett encountered a Massachusetts colleague in Washington. The New Englander, pointing to a farmer driving some mules along Pennsylvania Avenue, quipped: "Hello, there, Crockett, here's a lot of your constituents on parade. Where are they going?" The Tennessee frontiersman shot back, "They are going to Massachusetts to teach school."

Ever since Crockett's day, Volunteer State politicians have used humor to deflate their rivals, garner votes, and keep the public amused. Often the public has laughed at them—sometimes even when they were not telling jokes. This book, the first of its kind for Tennessee, offers a broad sampling of that wonderful comic lore, enriched over the years by Democrats and Republicans alike.

The stories range from extended anecdotes and tall tales to one-line "zingers." Local politics, statewide races, judicial decisions, and Capitol Hill maneuverings are all covered. Occasionally, names have been changed to protect the guilty, but more times than not, real names are used: Howard Baker, Al Gore (Senior and Junior), Estes Kefauver, and Lamar Alexander are just a few of the pols who cross these pages. There are many books about politics, but few books reveal, much less revel in, what makes politics and public service lively and fun. Tennessee Political Humor is a delightful exception—a book that invites us not just to read the stories but to tell them out loud.

The Authors: Roy Herron, an attorney from Dresden, Tennessee, serves in the Tennessee Senate. He is the author of Things Held Dear: Soul Stories for My Sons.

L. H. "Cotton" Ivy, who lives in Decaturville, Tennessee, has served in the Tennessee House of Representatives and was commissioner of agriculture under Gov. Ned McWherter.

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