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Pamphlet, "A Statement,' Governor Winthrop Rockefeller

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I want first to address a brief remark directly to representatives of the news media; to you whose profession requires that you be persistent, but who have been personally patient while I have labored with this question before me. I appreciate the difficult tasks you face. I am grateful that you have appreciated mine.

It is customary, I believe, on an occasion such as this to save until last what you have really come to say. Let me depart from that custom now.

I will seek re-election to the high office of Governor of Arkansas in 1970.

I am proud to announce that Footsie Britt, my good friend and faithful supporter during the past two campaigns, having made his decision not to seek re-election as Lieutenant Governor, will serve as my campaign manager.

My decision, I am aware more than anyone, represents a departure from a statement of beliefs I first placed before you six years ago. All others of those stated beliefs remain unshaken. That they have, in fact, grown ever stronger throughout this period of sweeping change has been deeply reassuring to me.

I spoke in good faith the belief that a governor should not seek more than two terms in office. You have on record my subsequent admission of naivete. Making us a truly two-party state has required an almost fanatical effort to avoid letting our government go back to where it was for so long — into the hands of a few powerful politicians.

This determination remains as alive and healthy with me today as ever before.

It must succeed.

If my commitment is to make our government the government of the people, and keep us on the wonderful course of progress we are just beginning to enjoy, then my candidacy cannot be construed as breaking faith. I will humbly accept the judgment of the people.

I am human, just as are all of you. At times I long for the quiet days of work in the peaceful beauty of Winrock Farms. But my part of this job is not yet finished. To quit now, I know in my own heart, would impose on me a feeling of guilt for all of the rest of my days.

Never have we had more to gain, through the continuing reforms of honest and decent government.

Never have we had more to lose, through backward-looking or disruptive administration. Arkansas has a far greater destiny in the family of states. We are on our way at last to achieving that destiny.

In none of my campaigns have I run AGAINST any man. This will not change. I will run FOR a better Arkansas, on the record of my administration.

I am not afraid of criticism — constructive or otherwise. Valid criticism helps us to get better. Invalid criticism, strewn about for political purposes, reveals on factual examination a job well done.

This administration can show to the satisfaction of the people it serves, and I believe to their complete approval too, that we get more and better state services per dollar spent now, not only than at any time in history, but more than any other state in the nation. (Arkansas has fewer state employees per 100 thousand citizens than any state in the nation — and we pay them less.)

Our state employees, although badly underpaid, are in the great majority doing good work, in an atmosphere free of political threats, and free of fear for their own job security. Many will tell you these three and a half years have been like breathing fresh air again.

Yes, we have problems too. All the states have problems, and many ultimately are more severe than ours. I can assure you, as chairman of the Southern Governors' Conference and as a member of the executive committee of the National Governors' Conference, that we are envied for what has been accomplished in so brief a time — and for the almost limitless opportunities before us.

This will be the message of my campaign: How far we have come; how far we can go.

In a time of turmoil throughout the nation Arkansas can hold its head high. That so many of our people have been working together, making sense and not noise, is inseparable from the many good things that are happening to us.

You saw the figures just recently that last year our working wages for the first time exceeded two billion dollars. It is not by chance that 1969 was a banner year for economic growth in Arkansas. It is not by chance that this year we are setting still another record. Adhering to our present course, and to our new goals, nothing foreseeable can keep each succeeding year from getting better.

Before us, and here truly we are envied by so many of our sister states, is the opportunity to preserve and enhance a wonderful natural environment; a healthy quality of life increasingly cherished by

billions around the world, but decreasingly available with every passing year.

My administration is not leaving to chance the fate of our natural environment. Too much is at stake. We are in fact, through the Southern Governors' Conference, taking the role of leadership for sound planning of programs that will protect the purity of our water and air, and promote the orderly evolution of growth on our beautiful countryside.

The future holds so much for Arkansas. The only limitations upon it will be those we accept ourselves.

Good government is essential to the future we all want. Honest and honorable debate, of real issues, is essential to good government. This, and no less, is what the people of Arkansas will be entitled to in the coming campaign. Whatever I say I will back up with facts. I earnestly hope that the same accountability will be expected — demanded — of all candidates.

For a purely personal reason there has been a brief interval between my reaching this decision and disclosing it to you now. I could not make such an announcement without having at my side my staunchest, hardest working and best looking supporter. Jeannette's schedule, as many of you know, is taking her from coast to coast, in her work with national mental health programs and as a member of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. Her tireless and unselfish efforts, in important roles as the wife of your governor, are bringing credit and broadening the new image of our state, just as I have tried to do in the travels that have brought me criticism. This new image and a better understanding of Arkansas are vital to bringing greater prosperity to our people. I'm so de-

lighted that Jeannette is here with me today, and that she'll be working with me in the busy months ahead.

I will not use this occasion to recite the specific accomplishments of my administration. Instead I will close with a brief factual summary:

In 42 months — long, hard months in many respects but a fleeting period in terms of history, our state — yours and mine — has come from a position of unwanted ridicule to widely held respect.

We have brought our government out of secret rooms where it served as a haven for racketeers, illicit securities and insurance operators, barbaric individuals posing as penal reformers — yes, truly the unscrupulous politicians.

We have brought this government into the sunlight where, with the best of its resources, it now acts as a true servant of the people, protecting them from those by whom they were so recently oppressed.

No one person can claim credit for all that has happened. These are the results of many fine people — people of all faiths and colors, of all walks of life — working together.

It is a matter of great pride to me that these things have come to pass in the first 42 months of my administration. Had they not, I should not be asking this final term.

Of you who have supported me in the past, I will earnestly seek your help again.

Of you who have not, I respectfully request an open mind and a fair hearing.

For us all, I wish one common goal — devotion to building a better Arkansas.

A STATEMENT

Governor Winthrop Rockefeller