

Dukakis takes Pledge issue away from Bush

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Vice President George Bush may have waved the flag at presidential rival Michael Dukakis once too often. Before a national audience Sunday night, Bush raised the pledge of allegiance issue and Dukakis took it away from him.

"I hope that people don't think that I am questioning his patriotism," said the Republican presidential nominee after bringing up Dukakis' membership in the American Civil Liberties Union and his veto of legislation that would have required teachers to lead Massachusetts public school students in the recitation of the pledge of allegiance.

"Of course, the vice president is questioning my patriotism," said the Democratic nominee. "I don't think

there's any question about that and I resent it, I resent it.

"My parents came to this country as immigrants. They taught me this was the greatest country in the world. I'm in public service because I love this country. I believe in it and nobody's going to question my patriotism as the vice president has now repeatedly."

It was a particularly passionate statement from a politician who was asked just moments earlier about his perceived lack of passion, his image as "the smartest clerk in the world."

The pledge of allegiance issue has become a central theme of Bush's attacks on Dukakis. The Massachusetts governor, while affirming his support of the pledge of allegiance, said he vetoed the bill because a state

Supreme Court advisory opinion said it was unconstitutional.

Late in the debate, Bush delivered one of his strongest statements as he responded to a question about his selection of Sen. Dan Quayle of Indiana to be his vice president.

"I'm putting my confidence in a whole generation of people who are in their 30s and in their 40s," responded Bush.

"Judge the man on his record, not on a lot of rumors and innuendo and trying to fool around with his name," Bush continued.

Dukakis usually refers to Quayle scornfully as "J. Danforth Quayle."

"Do you know who J. Danforth was?" asked Bush, looking at Dukakis. "He was a man who gave his life in World War II. So, ridiculing a

person's name is a little beneath this process."

From the start of their 90-minute debate - an event widely regarded as pivotal in a presidential campaign with no clear front runner and an electorate with no strong feelings about either candidate - Dukakis was on the attack.

The first question was about drugs and the Democratic nominee swiftly tossed out one of his most familiar lines, his accusation that the Reagan administration has been "dealing with a drug-running Panamanian dictator."

Bush was ready.

"Seven administrations were dealing with Mr. Noriega," he said. "It was the Reagan-Bush administration that brought this man to justice."

The first volley of one-liners came on a question about the federal budget deficit.

Dukakis said he couldn't understand how Bush could balance the budget and also increase defense spending, cut capital gains taxes, and refuse to consider any other tax increases.

"If he keeps this up he's going to be the Joe Isuzu of American politics," said Dukakis, in a reference to Isuzu commercials in which the salesman makes wildly implausible claims for the car.

"That answer was about as clear as Boston Harbor," retorted Bush, who has scored points in this campaign with an attack on pollution in Dukakis' front yard.

Candidates differ on debate debate

NORTH PLATTE — Sen. David Karnes, R-Neb., attacked Democratic challenger Bob Kerrey for the "gamesmanship" that kept the two from debating Sunday, but Kerrey said he's tiring of the "nonsense" surrounding the debate debate.

Karnes, in campaign stops over the weekend, also painted Kerrey as an enemy of veterans programs and criti-

cized the former governor for his support of a freeze on nuclear weapons and opposition to U.S. military involvement in Central America.

The two candidates were to have debated each other in North Platte on Sunday, but Karnes announced last week he would participate in no more debates because of Kerrey's refusal to enter any forums including New Alliance Party candidate Ernie Chambers.

Karnes accused Kerrey of breaking his word in bowing out of a debate that included Chambers last week.

Kerrey countered that Chambers, a state senator from Omaha, is representing a radical party that has no

legitimate role in the debates.

Kerrey, the former governor, said he is anxious to move on to other issues.

"Now that they're gone," Kerrey said of the debates, "I don't think the people want to sit around debating debates. I know I don't."

Kerrey said the reaction to his refusal to debate Chambers has been "mixed," but most agree with him that "now that you've gotten that nonsense out of the way," it's time to focus on issues.

Reached by telephone, Kerrey said Karnes' statements concerning veterans came from Karnes' lack of experience with setting a budget.

Billy Carter dies of Cancer

PLAINS, Ga. — Billy Carter, the former "first brother" and beer-drinking good ol' boy whose candor and business ventures amused and sometimes embarrassed the Carter administration, died Sunday of cancer. He was 51.

The brother of former President Jimmy Carter suffered for a year with pancreatic cancer — the disease that killed his father and a sister — and lived longer than his doctors expected.

Carter "died quietly and peacefully in his sleep ... with his family at his bedside," according to a

statement issued by the Carter Presidential Center on behalf of the former president and his family.

Billy Carter, who once defined himself as a beer-drinking good ol' boy, was forced into the spotlight when his older brother rocketed from their tiny hometown into the White House.

He put his name on a brand of beer that flopped, got into hot water with remarks denounced as racist or anti-Semitic, accepted money from Libya and was forced to sell some properties to pay a debt to the Internal Revenue Service.


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