

Editor's Corner

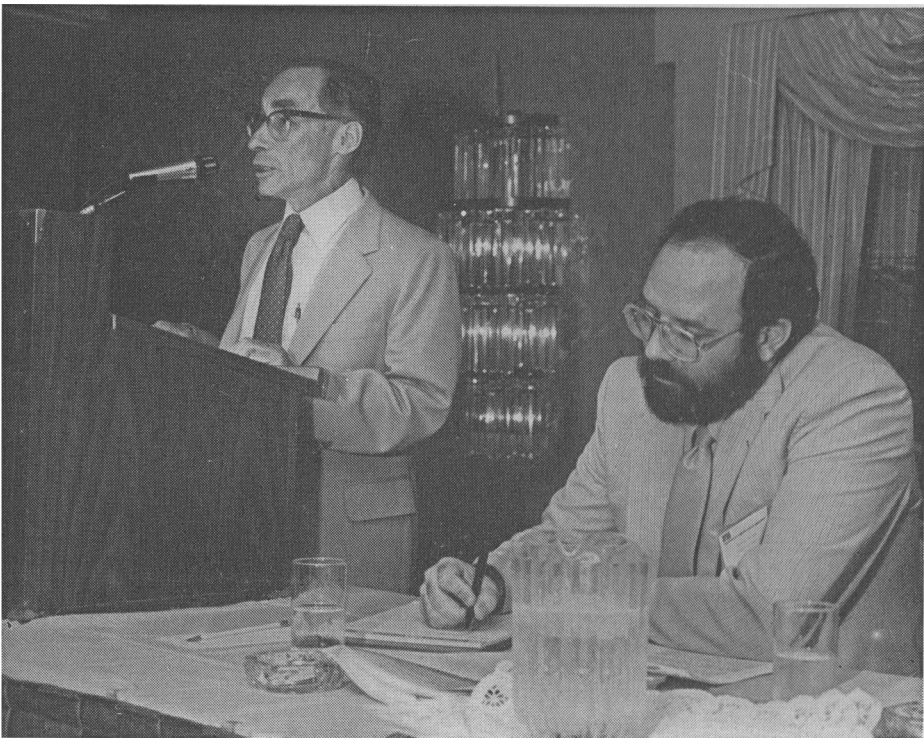
Examining Reagan's Success

Can Ronald Reagan's enormous electoral success be translated into permanent Republican gains? Has the American electorate in fact shifted to the right? What are we to make of Reagan's landslide in November? This issue of *PS* addresses these questions.

The 1984 election was different in one important respect from that of 1980, according to Laurily Epstein. Party loyalty seems to have shifted toward the Republican party. This change, of course, signals a party realignment and suggests

that Reagan's success is less like that of Eisenhower and more like FDR's. Moreover, there is substantial evidence that the white South has already undergone this Republican transformation and that many new voters are entering the electorate as Republicans.

There are some difficulties with this interpretation, the most important of which is that party identification may not mean very much any more, as Seymour Martin Lipset points out. Moreover, too much emphasis is being placed on the party in the electorate and too little on the party as an organization or the party in govern-

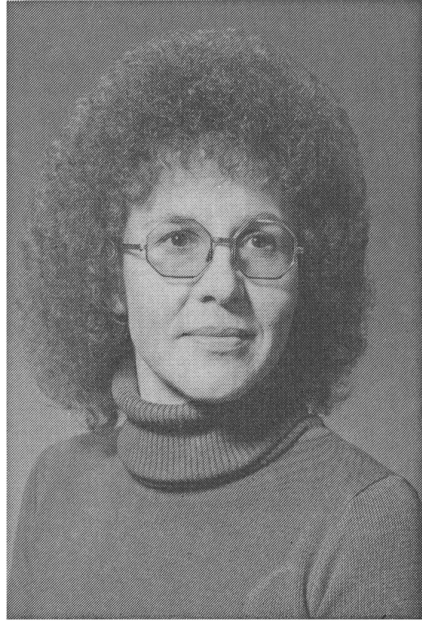


Murray Edelman (left) and **John S. Nelson**

ment, say David Brady and Patricia Hurley. At the state level, for example, Democrats control two-thirds of the legislative chambers and governorships. At the congressional level there is divided party control, and Americans prefer it to unified government, according to Lipset. The most likely probability is that we are experiencing dealignment of the parties marked by volatile political attitudes and behavior.

Kathleen Frankovic and Michael Lewis-Beck look at two other aspects of the election. Frankovic examines the campaign itself, in particular the effect of having a woman on the ballot and of holding the debates. Lewis-Beck, on the other hand, compares a variety of models to evaluate whose predictions proved most accurate.

In addition to the articles on the 1984 elections, this issue features two of the 1984 Lasswell Symposium lectures, one by Murray Edelman and the other by Jean Elshtain, presented at APSA's annual meeting in Washington. Special thanks for making these papers available to *PS* go to Doris Graber, chair of the Program Committee, and John S. Nelson, moderator of the Lasswell Symposium. The



Jean Bethke Elshtain

theme of the Symposium is the relationship between political language and reality, a topic chosen for its timeliness as well as its timelessness.

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- **Congress and its Members** by Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek, Congressional Quarterly Press, Washington, D.C., 1981.
- **The United State Congress: People, Places and Policy** by Charles O. Jones, the Dorsey Press, Homewood, Illinois, 1982.
- **Congress: Process and Policy** by Randall B. Ripley, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1983.

The 1984 Lasswell Symposium: The Relationship Between Political Language and Political Reality

**Murray Edelman
Jean Bethke Elshtain**

Editor's Note: The original versions of these articles were presented as Lasswell Symposium lectures at APSA's 1984 annual meeting in Washington, D.C. Hanna Pitkin also delivered a lecture for the Symposium. Being selected to participate in the Lasswell Symposium, whose moderator this year was John S. Nelson, is one of the major honors of the profession.