

# George Jr. has eyes on run for state office

## Win for father would help

By John Gravois

POST POLITICAL REPORTER

The political future of more than one George Bush may be on the line in the Nov. 8 presidential election.

If George Bush, the father and presidential candidate, wins his home state of Texas, many Lone Star Republicans say it's a safe bet George Bush, the son and once unsuccessful congressional candidate, will run for governor or another statewide office in 1990.

"If his dad wins, George Jr. will be a hot commodity," said lobbyist Gary Pearson. "But if his dad loses, he'll be as cold as they get."

To set the record straight, George Jr. isn't really a junior.

The man who would be president is George Herbert Walker Bush. His son is simply George Walker Bush.

For clarity's sake, however, national Republican strategists decreed more than a year ago that the son — one of the GOP presidential ticket's most active campaign surrogates — would be known as George Jr. until after the election.

George Jr. says he's "flattered" that people are talking about his political future, but for the time being he stresses he wants to spend his time promoting "that other George Bush."

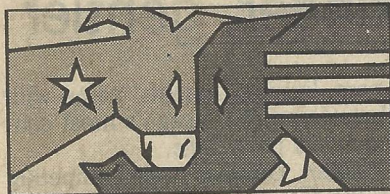
"I really am spending all my time campaigning for my dad and I honestly don't have any plans for myself beyond that. There will be time for that after this election is over," he says.

He concedes, however, that although he now lives in Washington, he plans to move to Dallas after the election, thus re-establishing his Texas residency and making it possible to seek office here.

Before moving to Washington to "get close to the action," George Jr. lived in Midland, where he was in the oil business and made an unsuccessful run for the 19th Congressional District seat. He lost to Kent Hance, now a railroad commissioner, by about 6,500 votes.

Campaigning as a surrogate for his father, who holds a double-digit lead in Texas in recent polls, is giving George Jr. a rare opportunity to make invaluable grass-roots connections statewide.

He campaigns almost daily, often visiting several Texas cities a day. On one recent day, he stopped in Palestine, Jacksonville, Hender-



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son, Carthage, Kilgore, Gilmer, Pittsburg, Linden, Texarkana and Dallas.

He generally sticks to the smaller cities "where I can draw a crowd." In the larger cities, he says, political events tend to generate little interest unless the candidate himself is there.

"He's getting the kind of exposure you can't buy," Pearson says. "He's a smooth-talking Texas politician. He knows how to work a crowd. In fact, in my opinion, in many ways he's a better campaigner than his dad."

But one Austin GOP strategist, who requested anonymity, says George Jr. faces a major hurdle — "he doesn't have a resume."

"Even if his dad is in the White House, people are not going to simply fall in line behind George Jr. in a statewide race. He's going to have to prove himself and win people's support, and I think he's smart enough to realize that," says the strategist.

First story on  
George W. Bush setting  
back into seeking office  
in wake of his congressional  
loss. Story also explains  
that he's not "George Jr."