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“Mr. Arizona:  
The Impact of Barry Goldwater on the Arizona Republican Party”

From the 1940s to the 1970s, the Arizona Republican Party moved from extreme minority status to the dominant power in state politics. Organizing first around non-partisan elections and issue-oriented campaigns, they began successfully challenging the dominant Democratic Party for state-wide and federal office in the 1950s. Other politicians built on the early successes of Gov. Howard Pyle, Sen. Barry Goldwater, and Rep. John Rhodes to expand Republican control over the state legislature, governorship, and other state and federal offices. This remarkable growth marks Arizona as a prime site of study for developing a richer understanding of the origins of the conservative shift that led to Republican Party dominance in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. From the 1940s origins to the 1980s fruition, Barry Goldwater was pivotal in this process at both the national and state levels.

My paper will address Barry Goldwater’s role in shaping the Arizona Republican Party during this growth period. Specifically, I will examine Goldwater’s influence from ideological and institutional perspectives. Though nationally recognized as “Mr. Conservative” and remembered as the fiery ideologue of the 1964 presidential election, Goldwater’s contribution to the state party might better be described as right-of-center or even moderate, especially in comparison to the religious conservatism with which he and his allies contended in state politics. On the other hand, many of his allies and other activists claiming his conservative mantle embraced the mix of evangelical religion and politics that coalesced around Ronald Reagan into the New Right. Organizationally, Goldwater’s influence stemmed from his national prestige and from his personal friendships. Though he never held state-wide elective office, his status as the godfather of the modern Arizona Republican Party lent his endorsement (or refusal to endorse) added weight, particularly in state primary contests. Though as a U.S. Senator he held no formal relation to the state government, his personal friendships with Republican Governors Howard Pyle, Paul Fannin, and Jack Williams provided institutional access at the highest levels. Unpacking Barry Goldwater’s behind the scenes and sometimes contradictory contributions to Arizona Republican politics illuminates the complex process of party-building through institutional and ideological development.