

Arizona "High Noon": The Recall and Impeachment of Evan Mecham

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April 4, 1988 marked the end of the most divisive and tumultuous period in the history of Arizona politics. For the first time in its seventy-six years as a state, Arizona, and the nation, witnessed the removal of a sitting governor, Evan Mecham, by conviction on impeachment charges by the Arizona Senate. Evan Mecham was the first governor in United States history to be confronted with a recall, impeachment and criminal indictment simultaneously. Although removed from office, the impact of Mecham's fifteen-month administration will permeate the social and political fabric of Arizona, as well as cloud its national image, for many years to come. This essay will briefly examine the concept of recall as an exercise in direct democracy, and the factors and context surrounding the recall drive and impeachment proceedings of Governor Evan Mecham.

The Recall and Arizona's Provision

The recall is one of three aspects of the concept of "direct democracy," the others being referendum and initiative. According to Wilcox (1912, p. 169) the initiative and referendum are instruments in the exercise of "pure democracy" which supplement representative government—the initiative is direct participation on the part of citizens in legislative action, while the referendum is an exercise in veto action. Conceptually, however, the recall is different. It does not involve direct citizen participation in the legislative activities of government, but is concerned with their ability to remove officials, principally elected but in some rare instances appointed, from office before the end of their term. As Wilcox stated, recall ". . . is simply the guaranteed right of the people to discharge their public servants when the public servants cease to be satisfactory to them" (Wilcox, 1912, p. 169). Anderson (1925) further indicates that the recall is not used simply when an official has done something wrong in office, but ". . . is designed to be used even in cases where the officer has simply got out of line with public opinion, and has taken official action to which citizens object" (Anderson, 1925, p. 279).

Although first suggested in the Articles of Confederation as a way for states to replace delegates to Congress and later as a constitutional amendment to the South Dakota constitution in 1898 (Zimmerman, 1986), the recall first came into practical use in the United States when incorporated in the charter of the City of Los Angeles in 1903 (Bird and Ryan, 1930, p. 3). Moreover, the recall seems to be a concept that has its origins in the United States evolving from the national platforms of the Socialist Labor Party and the Populist Party (Bird and Ryan, 1925; and Zimmerman, 1986). It was used for the first time in Los Angeles in 1904 against a city councilman, and again, five years later, against the mayor (Beard, 1912, p. 73).

The potential use of recall generated considerable debate over the nature of representative government. Some argued that the principle of representative government did not involve popular sovereignty at all, but simply the right of individuals to elect their governmental officials at specific points in time. This reasoning, according to Wilcox, views the President as a limited term monarch and governors and mayors as temporary princes. The people do not rule; they merely select individuals to rule over them (Wilcox, 1912, p. 170). The other view is that elected representatives are the servants of the citizenry, and, in a representative democracy, people should continue to have some measure of control over them, thus the power to recall is an indispensable instrument (Anderson, 1925, p. 280).

Evan Mecham was the first governor in United States history to be confronted with recall, impeachment and criminal indictment simultaneously.

The debate over the recall and the nature of representative democracy held up Arizona's statehood application. In 1911, President Taft vetoed Arizona's statehood legislation because of the presence of a judicial recall provision in the state constitution. Taft said that its application would have a "pernicious effect" on the independence of the judiciary (Zimmerman, 1986, p. 106). At Taft's request, Arizona submitted the provision to the voters, excepting judicial officials, who, in 1912, adopted a provision for recalling individuals holding elective office, either through election or appointment (Mason and Hink, 1982).¹ At present, Arizona is one of 14 states with constitutional recall provisions (Zimmerman, 1986).

The recall provision has been used a number of times throughout Arizona's history. Some of the more celebrated instances were the attempted recall of three Tempe city councilpersons by members of the John Birch Society in 1961 (Rice, 1964); and the recall attempt against Governor Jack Williams in the early seventies by farmworkers over legislation aimed at them. Challenges to the signatures were filed with the courts but were not resolved until after Williams left office.

The Election of Evan Mecham

Arizona, the home of "Mr. Conservative," Senator Barry Goldwater, is a state in which one talks about differences between the Democratic and Republican parties in terms of varying degrees of conservatism. Congressman Morris Udall, a liberal Democrat, is not the norm in Arizona politics. It is a state that has not been carried by the Democrats in a presidential election since the election of Harry Truman in 1948. However, through the resignation of one Governor, the death of a second and the ascension to governor of Attorney General Bruce Babbitt, the Democrats had managed to hold on to the office since 1974, although both legislative houses were controlled by the Republicans.

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At the beginning of the 1986 primaries, House Majority Leader Burton Barr, a man with a long political history and bipartisan support, was thought to be the eventual Republican nominee and the odds-on-favorite to capture the State House for the Republicans in November. This scenario became even more credible when Evan Mecham, a Pontiac

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dealer from Glendale, became his principle competition in the primary. Mecham had run for governor four times—in 1964, 1974, 1978 and 1982—as well as the United States Senate in 1962 and the U.S. House of Representatives in 1952.

One problem with scenarios is that there is the possibility that the worst case will occur—and it did.

Evan Mecham represented the radical fringe of the Republican Party, having forged his political ideology around the teachings of his mentor, fellow Mormon, W. Cleon Skousen. Skousen, a former aide to J. Edgar Hoover, an ardent supporter of the John Birch society, and a director and founder of the National Center for Constitutional Studies in Salt Lake City, is the leader of a school of thought called "Constitutionalism." Constitutionalists hold that the United States Constitution is a revelation from God and that establishment politicians have harmed the country by taking God out of government (*Washington Post*, June 21, 1987). They believe in a strict interpretation of the Constitution, which limits the power of the federal government. The federal government, constitutionalists argue, should not be involved in social welfare, farm subsidies, aid to education, regulatory agencies or ownership of land other than for military purposes (*Arizona Republic*, October 5, 1986). Moreover, Skousen calls for the abolition of the Federal Reserve Board, Social Security, and a return to the gold standard. Some extremists of this philosophy argue that state and federal governments have no right to require license plates, birth certificates, marriage licenses, automobile licenses, or levy and collect taxes. However, Mecham claimed not to support the latter positions.

One problem with scenarios is that there is the possibility that the worst case will occur—and it did. To the surprise of everyone, Evan Mecham beat Burton Barr in the Republican primary. The explanations for Barr's loss are varied but consensus seems to hold that Barr and his campaign organization assumed that he would be the Republican nominee, therefore, in order to not split the party, did not take on Mecham or rebut his attacks on Barr in the primary. (Mecham had mailed a tabloid to voters accusing Barr of profiting unethically, if not illegally, from his legislative position.) The other prevailing explanation is that Mecham's "throw the rascals out" campaign, targeting Barr as the chief rascal, struck a chord among a sizeable number of voters disaffected with the leadership of the Republican party. Mecham's primary win threw the Republican party into turmoil as it saw its chances for regaining the state house slipping away.

. . . the nominee for State Liquor Superintendent was under investigation for a 1955 murder of a Mexican national.

Moving into the general election, it was assumed the Democratic nominee, Carolyn Warner, Superintendent of Public Instruction, would emerge a winner in the two-way race against Mecham. However, Bill Schulz, a former Democratic candidate who dropped out of the race before the primary, reentered the race as an independent in the general election. The Democratic Party attempted to keep Schultz off the ballot through a series of court challenges, but failed. As party leaders feared, Schulz proved to be the spoiler, Carolyn Warner pulled 34 percent of the vote while Schulz won 26 percent. Evan Mecham captured the office with 40 percent of the vote in an election in which more than half the registered voters did not turn out (*Arizona Republic*, November 9, 1986). Mecham's winning coalition consisted of blue-collar workers dissatisfied with both parties, rural Mormons, and the elderly in the numerous retirement villages.

Mecham's Administration

Mecham took office on January 5, 1987 with little knowledge of the workings of state government—his only previous experience in state government was as a one-term legislator in the early sixties. It was his belief that one could run government like a small business, with bureaucrats and legislators simply responding to his desires and leadership. There is not enough space in this essay to recount all, or even most, of the actions Mecham took or words he spoke, but among his more prominent actions during the first four months in office were:

1. The rescission of the executive order establishing a holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., creating a firestorm of criticism and a protest march on the State Capitol by 10,000 Arizona citizens. Moreover, entertainers and conventions began to cancel or boycott Arizona over the rescission of the holiday.

The book suggests that black slaves themselves were responsible for the oppression and mistreatment they suffered from white slave owners.

2. Recommending individuals of questionable character for high-level appointments. For example, the nominee for State Liquor Superintendent was under investigation for a 1955 murder of a Mexican national; the second nominee for Director of the Revenue Department, which collects state taxes, had failed to file income-tax returns on time believing that he did not have to file because he had a refund coming; his choice for an anti-corruption aide failed to list numerous arrests and two court martials on his application for a private investigators license; the first nominee for the Director of the Revenue Department had been the director of a bank that failed; the nominee to review the state's self-insurance program was under criminal investigation concerning actions while an insurance agent and had had his state insurance license revoked; and his selection for head of an anti-drug program had served time in a federal prison for armed robbery, been court martialled for assault, arrested for assault on a female, and had numerous complaints of domestic violence.

3. Hired as an education liaison an individual who told a legislative committee that if parents tell their child the Earth is flat, teachers should not try to convince the child otherwise, and appointed to the State Board of Education another individual who believed "... [the] women's rights movement [was] created to promote lesbianism and allowing women to work has led to increased divorce" (*Phoenix Gazette*, May 19, 1987).

4. Presented a state budget that called for the repeal of a one percent sales tax causing an uproar from state legislators who indicated that it would be impossible to cut \$300 million from the budget without hurting state programs.

It appeared that every time the recall movement stalled, Mecham did or said something that rejuvenated the effort.

5. Pushed for the state to adopt Skousen's book, *The Making of America*, as part of Arizona's constitutional bicentennial celebration. The book suggests that black slaves themselves were responsible for the oppression and mistreatment they suffered from white slave owners. It goes on to refer to black children as "pickaninies" and suggests

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that white slave owners were the worst victims of slavery. Mecham defended the book and the use of the word "pickaninnies" by saying, "When I was growing up, blacks themselves referred to their children as pickaninnies" (*Arizona Republic*, February 6, 1988).

6. Indicated that he would not follow the established procedure for appointing justices to the State Supreme Court because the individuals on the list did not "represent what I would hope to get as far as a judicial attitude on the bench" (*Arizona Republic*, February 6, 1988). After heated exchanges with the Chief Justice, however, Mecham picked a nominee from the list.

He charged that he had evidence that the attorney general was bombarding his office with laser beams to eavesdrop on his conversations. . . .

In March of 1987, the Mecham Watchdog Committee was formed and promised to circulate recall petitions on July 6th, the date marking Mecham's sixth month in office. The organizer of the Committee was a conservative Republican businessman who was also gay. This unleashed a series of attacks by Mecham on homosexuality. On a radio talk show Mecham asked individuals to send in the names of homosexuals working in state government. He also told Arizona State University that he believed the First Amendment does not give homosexuals the right to have a club on campus. The university ignored his Constitutional interpretations.

At the same time, Mecham found himself embroiled in a budget battle with the legislature. The Governor was intent upon severely reducing funding to education, particularly the three universities, and ran into some major roadblocks, not only from the Democrats, but from Republican legislators as well. Mecham angered Republican legislators even more when he mailed a letter to Republican precinct committeemen asking them to ignore the legislators and to support his university budget (*Tempe Daily News Tribune*, May 9, 1987).

Moderate Republicans were beginning to vocally oppose the actions of the Governor, as they found it impossible to continue to put party loyalty first and foremost (*Phoenix Gazette*, May 12, 1987). Cracks were also beginning to form in support for Mecham among the business community. Upset with Mecham's attempts to cut spending on education, a state-wide coalition of business leaders joined in the battle to protect university funding (*Mesa Tribune*, August 8, 1987).

While all of this was occurring, the Republican party leadership sought ways to restrain Mecham and get him to work more closely with the Republican leadership in the legislature. The party had the State House for the first time in 12 years and, understandably, wanted to unify the party and support the Governor. The party was also having to deal with the growing number of reports suggesting that Mecham's personal finances and business practices were not in consonance with his themes of morality and honesty. Senator Barry Goldwater, as well as other members of the Congressional delegation, were enlisted in the fruitless attempts. The state GOP Chairman became a cheerleader for the Governor, explaining away and justifying the increasing number of faux pas and bad decisions.

Recall Activity

On July 6, 1987, the Mecham Watchdog Committee launched its recall drive. According to the Arizona Constitution and subsequent statutes, they had four months to collect 216,746 signatures, representing 25 percent of the votes cast in the general election, to force a recall election. The reasons for the recall stated on the petitions were as follows:

In his first 180 days as Governor of the State of Arizona, Evan Mecham has demonstrated his

lack of knowledge, vision, and unifying leadership necessary to govern the citizens of this state.

He has embarrassed Arizonans nationally through his insensitive and demeaning statements about women and minorities as well as his appointment of individuals who are not qualified and whose backgrounds are at best questionable. He has failed to appropriately respond to the state's severe environmental problems.

As a direct result of the Governor's actions and inactions, the state's economy has suffered dramatic losses.

Political analysts gave the recall little chance, if any, to succeed. First, the recall organization was a grass roots operation with little structure. Signatures would have to be collected statewide requiring organization and money. Second, even for an established organization, four months was not a lot of time in which to collect the signatures, particularly since most would have had to be collected during the months when many Arizonans leave the state on vacation. Third, it was assumed that people were embarrassed by Mecham but not upset enough to trigger a recall election. Finally, although the Democrats could potentially benefit from a recall election, the party was officially not endorsing the recall, thus none of its machinery would be available to the recall organizers.

Events conspired, however, to increase the probabilities that the Committee would collect the required number of signatures. On the same day the recall drive was announced, Mecham, when told the National Basketball Association withdrew its annual meeting from Phoenix as a protest of the cancellation of King's birthday, responded, "I guess they forgot how many white people they get coming to watch them play." Later in the month, 11 House Republicans, in the first major break in the GOP, held a news conference denouncing actions by Mecham and the state GOP Chairman who they believed were alienating mainstream Republicans. The state Chairman had characterized the leaders of the recall movement as "homosexual agitators." Also, Mecham was accused of threatening to withdraw his support for the state's bid for the Supercollider if his friend, a Washington, D.C. lobbyist, was not given the contract (*Tempe Daily News Tribune*, July 2, 1987).

In September, Mecham supporters sent out a nationwide solicitation letter over Mecham's signature to 25,000 conservatives imploring them to "... sell your house, pack your belongings, quit your job and come to the most beautiful state in the Union" to help him fight the "militant liberals and the homosexual lobby" seeking to oust him from office (Mecham letter, September 30, 1987). In October, another fund-raising letter, prepared by a Mecham aide over the signature of retired Army General John Singlaub, blamed the recall on "lesbians, militant homosexuals, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Communist Party" (*Arizona Republic*, February 6, 1988). General Singlaub denied knowing anything about the letter or giving permission for the use of his signature.

A number of Republican legislators who voted to impeach had their lives threatened. . . .

October proved to be a very busy month. The Pima County Democratic Party became the first party organization to formally call for Mecham's resignation. A statewide poll indicated that for the first time more than half of those polled said Mecham should be recalled (*Arizona Republic*, October 4, 1987). A chief aide to Mecham was indicted for extortion after allegedly threatening a member of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles with the loss of his job if he voted for the resignation of the Board's Executive Director, a Mecham appointee. The *Arizona Republic* reported that Mecham failed to report a \$350,000 campaign loan from a Tempe attorney and developer as required by state law, and that the balance, \$250,000, guaranteed by notes from Mecham aides and supporters, was due November 1. Moreover, the Attorney General indicated that his office was investigating the loan.

GOP support for Mecham was seriously eroding. The Speaker of the House hired an

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attorney, William French, to investigate whether Mecham had committed an impeachable offense and report to the House in January. Senator Barry Goldwater, who had attempted to counsel Mecham and convince him to change his style, called for his resignation, indicating that the Democratic Secretary of State would make an excellent governor and should be given the opportunity (*Arizona Republic*, October 9, 1987). Within the state legislature, many conservative Republicans called for Mecham to resign.

If Mecham was recalled, the impeachment trial would become moot and the Republicans would not be forced to vote on the issue. . . .

The events of September and October gave new life to the recall movement. It appeared that every time the recall movement stalled, Mecham did or said something that rejuvenated the effort. A group of Phoenix developers held a news conference in late October indicating that they were supporting the recall, signing petitions at the same time (*Arizona Republic*, October 24, 1987). Surprisingly, for all of Mecham's attacks on the printed press and their attacks on him, the state's major newspaper, *The Arizona Republic* did not support the recall, denouncing it ". . . as little more than a banana-republic revolution without the fireworks" (*Arizona Republic*, September 20, 1987). On November 2, 1987, the Mecham Watchdog Committee submitted over 388,000 signatures to the Secretary of State, well over the 216,000 signatures required to force a recall election. The recall appeared to be a certainty, although the signatures still had to be verified.

November continued the downhill slide for the Mecham administration. Mecham's aide, with a criminal record for armed robbery and assault, allegedly threatened the life of a former Mecham legislative liaison who was a witness before the grand jury investigating Mecham's campaign finances. This triggered another investigation by the Attorney General. During November, one Mecham aide was indicted for extortion, one was investigated for threatening a grand jury witness, and Mecham and his brother, Willard, were the targets of a grand jury investigation into his campaign financing. December found Mecham unable to pay off business loans on property owned in Washington state, but able to borrow the \$250,000 needed to pay off the outstanding campaign loan. Immediately, the legality of the new loan was challenged.

Impeachment Proceedings

Shortly after the beginning of 1988, the Governor was indicted on six felony counts of intentionally hiding the \$350,000 campaign loan, and his brother, who was his campaign treasurer, was indicted on three felony counts. The polls indicated that 65 percent of Arizonans wanted Mecham to resign (*Arizona Republic*, January 11, 1988). On January 15, ironically the birthday of Dr. King, the attorney hired by the House of Representatives presented his three-month investigation report indicating that Governor Mecham had committed several felonies and malfeasance in office. The very next day, four members of Arizona's Congressional delegation called on Mecham to resign for the good of the state.

On January 25, the Secretary of State certified 301,032 recall petition signatures, notified Mecham that he had five days to resign, and set the recall election for May 17, 1988. In Arizona, the recall election is not an "up-or-down vote" on the subject of the recall drive, but an entirely new election. Therefore, anyone who was able to get 3,336 signatures on a petition would be eligible to run. Mecham's name would automatically appear on the ballot. More than 90 individuals took out petitions, including the former Democratic gubernatorial candidate, Carolyn Warner.

Based on the French report, the House adopted rules for conducting an impeachment

hearing and appointed a House Select Committee. The Committee held hearings on three broad charges: (1) obstructing justice in the investigation by the Department of Public Safety of the death threat against one of Mecham's former aides; (2) illegally funneling \$80,000 of public funds into his ailing Pontiac dealership; and (3) failing to report the \$350,000 campaign loan.

During the House hearings, Mecham accused lawmakers, the press and the attorney general of conspiring to oust him from office. He charged that he had evidence that the attorney general was bombarding his office with laser beams to eavesdrop on his conversations; but he said that he thwarted these attempts by keeping his radio turned on. Calling for an investigation, he also accused the Chair of the Committee with improper dealings involving a race horse. Mecham was also caught in a number of inconsistencies in his testimony, further damaging his credibility. Polls taken after his testimony indicated that 46 percent of those surveyed felt that Mecham lied during his testimony, and 62 percent felt he was evasive in answering questions (*Arizona Republic*, February 10, 1988).

In the end, in an emotionally charged environment, the House voted, 46-14, for impeachment on February 5, forcing Mecham to step down temporarily until a trial in the Senate either acquitted or convicted him. A number of Republican legislators who voted to impeach had their lives threatened, and the fervent group of Mecham supporters vowed to extract retribution at the polls during the next election.

Senate Trial

The drama then shifted to the Senate. State government was in chaos as state business ground to a halt. Who was in charge? For the first time, a state had a governor facing a recall election, an impeachment trial and a criminal trial at the same time. Political analysts were unable to predict a conclusion. Numerous questions were unanswered. How would the trial go in the Senate? What if the trial dragged on until the recall election? What if the criminal trial and the impeachment trial ran concurrently?

Before the Senate, Mecham's attorneys maneuvered to delay the Senate trial until the end of the criminal trial, and argued the reverse before the courts. Mecham steadfastly refused to resign, saying he had done nothing wrong and was the victim of a conspiracy by the attorney general, the media, selected members of the House, and the Department of Public Safety. Despite all this the trial was set to begin February 29, 1988. The House forwarded articles of impeachment to the Senate containing three counts with 22 specific charges.

Since the Senate had failed to prohibit him from ever holding public office again, Mecham indicated that he would run in the recall and was certain he would regain office.

The trial lasted six weeks. Mecham chose not to present a defense of his behavior relative to the articles, but instead attempted to damage the credibility of prosecution witnesses by attempting to explore their personal lives and sexual habits. The presiding judge, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, ruled this type of information inadmissible, thus essentially eliminating most of Mecham's defense. Mecham once again proved to be his own worst witness by contradicting testimony he previously gave during the House hearings: accusing a Department of Public Safety officer of stealing documents from his office, then retracting the statement when it became clear that he was in error; and insisting that his Pontiac dealership was not in financial trouble when he loaned the business

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state funds despite the testimony of prosecution expert witnesses who had convincingly demonstrated the opposite.

After testimony on Articles I and III (obstruction of justice and loaning state funds to his business respectively) and an indication from the prosecution that testimony on Article II (the campaign loan) would take another six weeks, the Democrats wanted to take a vote on Articles I and III. It was clear that if the trial continued it would run up against the recall election. The impeachment rules, however, stated that a vote could only be taken after testimony was heard on all three articles. The Senate Republicans were not inclined to alter the rules because it was to their benefit for the trial to continue through the recall. If Mecham were recalled, the impeachment trial would become moot and the Republicans would not be forced to vote on the issue, thus protecting them from constituents who were ardent Mecham supporters. Moreover, if former Congressman John Rhodes, a recall candidate, won the election, the Republicans would still control the state house.

Although Evan Mecham was removed from office through the impeachment process, it is clear that removal would not have occurred had the recall movement not pushed elected officials in that direction.

The Democrats recognized the Republican's strategy and wanted to force a vote on impeachment, but all avenues were closed by the Republicans. Unknowingly, however, a staunch Mecham senator provided the Democrats with their opportunity. He offered the usual motion to dismiss charges, specifically Article II, assuming that it would fail as the others had in the past. This time, however, the 11 Democrats voted with the five Mecham supporters to dismiss the charges. The final vote was 16-12 to dismiss Article II, which was the most serious charge, effectively ending the trial. The Democrats had taken a big gamble that could backfire on them because conviction required a two-thirds vote, 20 out of 30 Senators.

The Republicans were stunned and disorganized. A vote was going to be taken and Republicans would have to take positions on conviction or acquittal. If they voted to convict Mecham, then the Democrats regained the state house and many of the Republican senators would be targeted for defeat by Mecham supporters. On the other hand, if they voted to acquit Mecham, he would resume the Governor's office, throwing state government into even more disarray than before. During the trial, Mecham had threatened to fire the Director of Public Safety and others who were witnesses against him if he were returned to office.

The Democrats' gamble paid off. The Senate convicted Mecham on the obstruction of justice charge by a vote of 21-9; and by a vote of 26-4 convicted him on the charge of loaning public funds to his Pontiac dealership (*Arizona Republic*, April 5, 1988). There was an ironic twist to the impeachment vote. Mecham was convicted on April 4, the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. King; and the 20th vote to convict on the first article was cast by the only black senator, who is also female.

Mecham's removal from office through conviction on impeachment charges did not resolve all the questions. The recall election was scheduled for May 17 and the attorney general had already indicated that once the election was set, it would have to be held. Moreover, it was unclear whether Mecham, who was automatically on the ballot, could still run. Since the Senate had failed to prohibit him from ever holding public office again, Mecham indicated that he would run in the recall and was certain that he would regain office. This confusion lasted for several weeks until the State Supreme Court resolved the issue by cancelling the recall election. The Court indicated that the subject of the recall was no longer in office, hence the election was moot.

Conclusion

Although Evan Mecham was removed from office through the impeachment process, it is clear that removal would not have occurred had the recall movement not pushed elected officials in that direction. The grass roots drive kept the issue of Mecham's competence center stage, and as the months passed the state-wide public opinion polls indicated that public dissatisfaction with the governor was growing. The submission of over 300,000 valid signatures was difficult for elected officials to ignore, particularly since it was larger than the number of people who initially voted for Mecham. Moreover, the recall effort brought new people into the political process, as many registered to vote in order to sign petitions. It was also clear that a sizeable number of the new voters were registering as Democrats, thereby reducing the gap between the two parties.

The political winds could no longer be ignored, particularly by the Republican Party. If it was going to survive this hurricane, the GOP had to act or be swept away. It was apparent that the great displeasure with Mecham was rooted in behavior and approaches over and beyond whether an impeachable offense was committed. Moreover, it became evident to legislators that they would not necessarily be vulnerable if they voted for impeachment and conviction, but that they might be if they took no action. State legislators realized that they could no longer play the part of timid townspeople peering from behind the shutters as the recall movement waited in the dust to defend their state against the outlaw. They did muster the courage to venture into the street at Arizona's "high noon."

About the Author

Paula D. McClain is associate professor in the School of Public Affairs at Arizona State University. Her research and publications are in the areas of urban homicide and public policy issues and black political and economic development. Her most recent book, coauthored with Albert K. Karnig, is *Urban Minority Administrators: Politics, Policy, and Style* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989). She is a former member of the APSA Executive Council and president-elect of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists.

Note

1. Arizona's recall provision indicates that after six months in office, an official holding elective office may be the subject of a recall. In order for a recall election to be held, valid signatures of registered voters equaling twenty-five percent of all the votes cast in the last general election for the office in question must be submitted on recall petitions to the Secretary of State (Mason and Hink, 1982, pp. 22-23).

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