



House Majority Leader Albert stands in foreground with such well-known Democratic names as (left to right) Senate Finance Committee Chairman Harry Byrd, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Vice President Johnson, Senate Majority Whip Hubert Humphrey and Speaker McCormack.

*photo by United Press International*

## *How Tall Is a Giant?*

**W**HEN the announcement came from Capitol Hill that the Little Giant from Little Dixie was to be Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, the nation's press had a field day. Carl Bert Albert, '31ba, is a man of proven ability and quiet popularity, but he also has a success story that is straight from Horatio Alger. The newsmen loved him for it.

Albert spent his boyhood in an Oklahoma farming community with the colorful name of Bug Tussle (officially named Flowery Mound). Disciplined by hard work and a hickory limb, he built his future with industrious hands, a brilliant mind and a ringing voice.

While attending nearby McAlester High School he won the midwest championship and a trip to Europe in a national oratorical contest and was valedictorian of his class. When he left for O.U.—against his father's

advice—he had \$10 in his pocket and the will to work. But freshman ambition alone doesn't always make a Congressional leader of a Bug Tussle farm boy.

Albert also had talent and drive and a deep sense of responsibility. He worked his way through school and also managed to be active in Kappa Alpha social fraternity, serve as president of the student body, belong to the debate team and win another national oratorical championship with a prize of \$1,500 and a trip to Honolulu. He got in enough study in his spare time to be elected to Phi Beta Kappa and win a Rhodes scholarship for three years at Oxford University.

The late Dr. W. B. Bizzell, president of the University when Albert was enrolled, considered him the most brilliant student who was ever graduated from O.U.

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# *the House has yet to learn of Congressman Carl Albert's effectiveness as an orator*

After three years at Oxford where he earned a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of civil law, Albert returned home and took a job as a legal clerk for the Federal Housing Administration in Oklahoma City. He was an attorney for Ohio Oil Company in Marshall, Illinois, before entering the Army in June, 1941, as a buck private; he was discharged in 1946 as a lieutenant colonel.

After the war Albert had in mind spending a little time adjusting to civilian life before starting anything new. But on the last possible day he filed for election as representative from the Third Congressional District. He and his law partner hurriedly whipped his campaign into shape, and Albert went stumping around the district. He was forced into a runoff primary and just squeaked by his opponent by 350 votes. From there he was a shoo-in—the Third District never elects a Republican.

In January, 1947, Albert became a part of the 80th Congress and has been re-elected every two years. When Albert arrived on Capitol Hill, his youthful stature—he is 5 feet 4 inches tall—caused many Congressmen to mistake him for a page. One Representative even handed him a sheaf of papers and told him to deliver them. Albert did, without comment.

In Congress Albert has served on the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, the Committee on House Administration, the Joint Committee on the Library of Congress, the Select Committee to Investigate Lobbying Activities, the Democratic Steering Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee and the House Committee on Agriculture. He was chosen Majority Whip in the 84th Congress and held that position until his election as House Majority Leader in January.

**A**LBERT has been traditionally nonbelligerent and nonaggressive as a Representative, but one of the major duties of the Majority leader is to speak vigorously and forcefully in floor debates on behalf of the party's position. Those not familiar with his brilliance as a campaigner and orator have yet to learn that he is an amazingly articulate and effective speaker.

The perseverance that makes Albert an

orator was spawned in the old days in Bug Tussle when he was working hard to win the national oratorical contest. As a high school freshman, Albert was a typical self-conscious, tongue-tied 14-year-old. He had tried a little public speaking and had fallen flat. But he wanted to win that contest. In 1924 he prepared a 10-minute oration on the Constitution for the school elimination. He came in last.

**H**E CHUCKED that speech and started again. This time he read, and he researched, and he studied oration; he jumped at every chance to speak in public, and when the 1925 contest came, he won the school elimination. On the district level in Ardmore he gave it everything he had and came in third—in a field of three.

Another talk on the Constitution hit the wastebasket. In 1926 he studied more and researched more and practiced more, and he sailed through to the state contest in Oklahoma City and from there went on to the midwest semifinals in Kansas City, where he placed second.

Not satisfied with second place, Albert returned to Bug Tussle and began working toward the 1927 contest. In three years he had completed his metamorphosis, shedding the freshman cocoon and emerging an accomplished debater and a formidable opponent. Albert swept by his opposition in the state, won the midwest semifinals and went on to Washington to compete for the national honors. There he failed to hit the top three, but he had accomplished his purpose by winning the midwest championship and his trip to Europe.

Albert's whole career is marked by the same dogged determination that made him a champion orator. He is unswervingly true to his word. Once he declared that he planned to visit every fourth-class post office in his district to talk to the people. In the midst of his rounds the Oklahoma rains flooded the swollen rivers and blocked his road to a town. Borrowing a horse, Albert forded the river to keep his appointment.

Another time Albert accepted an invitation to be the honored guest at a big Democratic dinner in Oklahoma City. But then he remembered he had already agreed to

make a commencement speech in a small community in his district on the same night. He declined the dinner and went to the commencement.

Perhaps Albert's professional political acumen is best shown in his appointment as Majority Whip. He once asked the late Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn why he had been chosen. Rayburn said that when he and John McCormack, then Majority Leader, started down the list, they got only as far as Albert and agreed immediately, "This is our man."

In addition to his public popularity Albert is a devoted family man. He and his wife Mary have two children, Mary Frances, 14, and David, 7. Albert hauls his own kids and a carful of their friends to school every morning on his way to the Capitol, and on Sundays he often loads a batch of them in the car for a trip to the zoo. When he can get back to Oklahoma at fair time, he's the best customer at the Pittsburg County Fair, and, when time allows, he likes to teach Sunday School in the Methodist church back home. For relaxation he plays a sharp game of bridge, reads about politics and history and maintains a fluent command of Spanish by reading, listening to recordings and practicing the language.

**C**ONGRESSMAN Albert's selection as Majority Leader is the giant step in his career. It is also a giant step for Oklahoma. Congressman Ed Edmondson, '49Law, termed Albert's election the "most significant development for Oklahoma in the nation's capital since statehood."

The duties of Majority Leader involve planning the legislative program, scheduling the order of business on the floor of the House, supporting legislation to implement the party's platform, co-ordinating committee action, and using his influence to keep the party members in the House in line with party policies.

"Congressman Albert has the qualifications to fulfill these duties," Edmondson said. "His approach to every issue I've witnessed in the House has been bigger than a partisan approach, and consistently in the best interest of the entire country."