Power and Public Service

Political change and leadership in Oklahoma

OKH.C.8.4 "Summarize the contributions of Oklahoma leadership in a changing political environment. Identify the contributions of contemporary politicians and public servants (e.g., Speaker Carl Albert, Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick…"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each leader's name and underline what that person did. Put a star beside the sentence that shows a change in party power.

Who Shaped Oklahoma?

1 After the Great Depression, Oklahoma Democrats dominated state elections for decades. Many voters connected the party to federal relief programs and to leaders who promised help during hard times. Carl Albert, a Democrat from southeastern Oklahoma, served as speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1971 to 1977. He guided debate and legislation in Congress while Oklahoma's political loyalties began to shift. In 1962, voters elected Henry Bellmon, the state's first Republican governor, showing that Democrats no longer held every major office.

2 Bellmon's victory did not turn Oklahoma Republican overnight. Democrats continued to win many offices, but Republicans gained a stronger place in statewide contests. Meanwhile, Oklahoma leaders served beyond state elections. Jeane Kirkpatrick, born in Oklahoma, represented the United States as ambassador to the United Nations from 1981 to 1985. During Cold War debates, she defended the Reagan administration's foreign policy before other nations. Her work shows that Oklahoma's public servants could shape national and international decisions even as voting patterns changed at home.

3 Leadership also took forms outside party politics. Wilma Mankiller, principal chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1985 to 1995, expanded community programs, including efforts to improve water access. Historian Angie Debo examined how policies and land dealings harmed Native peoples, challenging familiar accounts of Oklahoma history. Educator and historian Eddie Faye Gates recorded the memories of survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Their work made communities' experiences harder to ignore and widened the story of who shaped Oklahoma's public life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Bellmon's election challenge an earlier voting pattern, and what did not change right away?

2. How did Albert and Kirkpatrick each serve beyond Oklahoma state government?

3. How did Mankiller and Gates serve communities in different ways?

4. How did Debo's research change accounts of Oklahoma history?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label that uses Bellmon's election to explain a political shift and compares one government leader with one leader outside government. End by explaining why the museum should include both kinds of leadership.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.8.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each leader's name and underline what that person did. Put a star beside the sentence that shows a change in party power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Bellmon's election challenge an earlier voting pattern, and what did not change right away?	**His election showed a Republican could win the governorship after decades of Democratic dominance. Democrats still won many offices.**
2	How did Albert and Kirkpatrick each serve beyond Oklahoma state government?	**Albert guided debate and legislation as U.S. House speaker. Kirkpatrick represented the United States at the United Nations.**
3	How did Mankiller and Gates serve communities in different ways?	**Mankiller expanded Cherokee community programs, including water access efforts. Gates recorded Tulsa Race Massacre survivors' memories.**
4	How did Debo's research change accounts of Oklahoma history?	**She documented harm to Native peoples from policies and land dealings, challenging familiar accounts.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After decades of Democratic dominance, Henry Bellmon's 1962 victory showed that a Republican could win Oklahoma's governorship. As House speaker, Carl Albert guided national debate and legislation. Historian Angie Debo challenged familiar accounts by examining how Native peoples were harmed. A museum should include both kinds of leadership because government decisions and historical research each shaped public life.

Accept accurate comparisons drawn from the passage. The museum label should connect Bellmon's victory to political change and distinguish a government role from work outside government.