



## Who Runs Georgia?

*Calvin Kytte, James A. Mackay*

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## **Who Runs Georgia?** Calvin Kytle, James A. Mackay

Nearly one hundred thousand newly enfranchised blacks voted against race-baiting Eugene Talmadge in Georgia's 1946 Democratic primary. His opponent won the popular vote by a majority of sixteen thousand. Talmadge was elected anyway, thanks to the malapportioning county unit system, but died before he could be inaugurated, whereupon the General Assembly chose his son Herman to take his place. For the next sixty-three days, Georgia waited in shock for the state supreme court to decide whether Herman or the lieutenant governor-elect would be seated.

What had happened to so suddenly reverse four years of progressive reform under retiring governor Ellis Arnall? To find out, Calvin Kytle and James A. Mackay sat through the tumultuous 1947 assembly, then toured Georgia's 159 counties asking politicians, public officials, editors, businessmen, farmers, factory workers, civic leaders, lobbyists, academicians, and preachers the question "Who runs Georgia?" Among those interviewed were editor Ralph McGill, novelist Lillian Smith, defeated gubernatorial candidate James V. Carmichael, powerbroker Roy Harris, pollwatcher Ira Butt, and more than a hundred others—men and women, black and white, heroes and rogues—of all stripes and stations.

The result, as Dan T. Carter says in his foreword, captures "the substance and texture of political life in the American South" during an era that historians have heretofore neglected—those years of tension between the end of the New Deal and the explosive start of the civil rights movement. What's more, *Who Runs Georgia?* has much to tell us about campaign finance and the political influence of Big Money, as relevant for the nation today as it was then for the state.

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