

# Browder Focused on Future of Democracy, Democrats

**BROWDER, from page 31**

contribute to the functioning of American democracy," Browder said. "So I never felt that I had to have a career in [Congress] to be happy."

Browder is now the eminent scholar in American democracy at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Ala., and a distinguished visiting professor of national security affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif. He is also the author of "The Future of American Democracy: A Former Congressman's Unconventional Analysis."

These roles allow Browder to devote his energy to "encouraging a national discussion about the future of American democracy," something he said he spent decades thinking about but is now his primary calling.

"Jacksonville State University, fortunately, encourages me to discuss this, and to enhance this discussion in whatever forum is available," Browder said.

In addition to teaching, Browder has taken his discussion on the road, visiting colleges and high schools, as well as political science audiences, in Alabama, Washington, D.C., California and internationally.

"I really believe we need to have a national dialogue about the future of American democracy," Browder said.

The students and academics he speaks with, he said, have been very receptive to that message. "They've wondered and thought about things — issues and developments," Browder said of his audiences, "but never really put them together in a broad, comprehensive theory about where America is going. So I think in those niche

areas the response has been pretty good."

Part of Browder's new role has entailed remaining nonpartisan, which was never much of a stretch for the conservative Southern Democrat whose reputation on Capitol Hill was that of an honest broker and consensus builder.

"I generally don't get involved one way or another about what America ought to mean other than my personal commitment to America as a national experiment in democratic ideals," Browder said of his effort to foster an environment of civic discourse.

Recently, though, Browder got the attention of many of his current and former colleagues by jumping back into the partisan fray.

In March, Browder sent a memo — which he quickly expanded into a thesis — to Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean outlining the need for Democrats to quickly develop a "New Southern Strategy." The memo was circulated by liberal Web loggers and picked up by the Mobile Register.

His thesis countered the strategies of both the 2004 Democratic presidential nominee, Sen. John Kerry (Mass.) and Dean by saying Democrats can neither ignore the "Solid South," nor can they expect to successfully barnstorm it with a liberal message.

"The Democratic Party's best bet for re-emergent majorityism is a revised version of an old idea, cracking this regional bloc with a new strategy of embracing moderate southern voters," Browder wrote.

"Ever since I left Congress, I've stayed out of partisan politics," Browder explained. "But after sitting back and watching election after election go the way they did, I just really felt like I needed to say something."

The 62-year-old admits that while he was motivated to help his party succeed, he was

also acting out of a desire to rein in a growing Republican majority.

"I think that it is bad for American democracy for any party to exercise virtual control of the entire forum of governance for extended periods of time," Browder wrote.

Browder said the same is true of Democrats. "In Congress, we had been in control so long, we needed to get our butts kicked. And we did," Browder said, recalling the 1994 midterm elections that forced a changing of the guard on the Hill.

Rep. Jo Bonner (R-Ala.) said his good friend Browder is on to something with regard to the future of the Democratic Party.

"He's saying something that Gov. Dean and

Bonner, "could have stayed in that seat as long as he wanted to."

Browder said that his years in the House only enhanced his love for democracy. Lawson Veasey, head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Jacksonville State, said Browder's insight and passion are invaluable to the university.

"What he brings to the university is immediate credibility," Veasey said. "Glen has a very good foundation in the institutions [of government] and, more than that, he's a very practical politician."

Veasey added that Browder's perspective has done wonders for his students. "We're so busy covering the basics of our government and politics that we don't consider the ramifications. Glen does that."

One of the students who said he benefited from Browder's guidance, both at Jacksonville State and on the campaign trail, is Rogers. While Rogers was earning his bachelor's and master's in public administration at Jacksonville State in the early 1980s, he studied under Browder. Rogers also worked on Browder's first campaign for the Alabama Legislature in 1982.

"I pretty much took every course he offered," Rogers said. "He's just one of the smartest people I know. I always enjoyed his classes. He had a very practical way of teaching."

Bonner said he is very pleased to see Browder challenging the future leaders of Alabama "to wave the banner and protect this experiment called democracy that we're 229 years into."

"He loves this country," added Bonner. "He is definitely someone who, either in an elected capacity, as a professor or as an adviser, is going to continue to speak out and be a voice of reason for all of us."

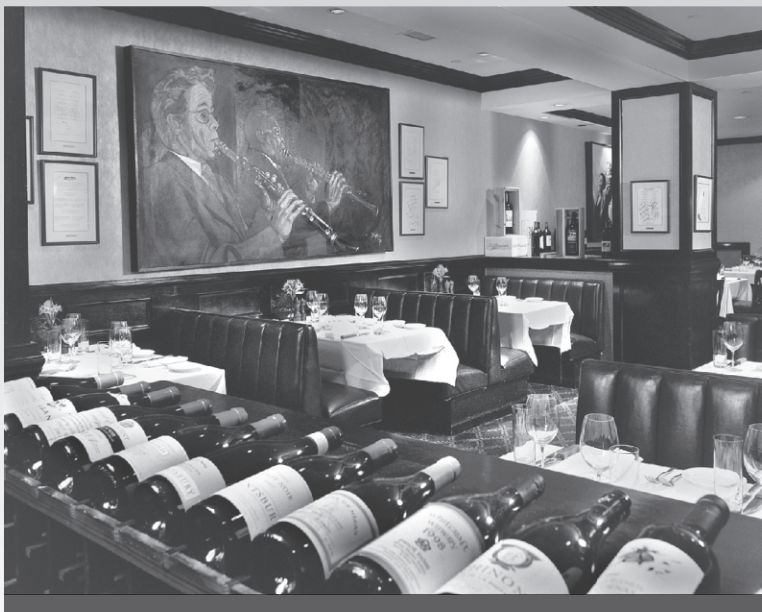
*'After sitting back and watching election after election go the way they did ... I needed to say something.'*

**Former Rep. Glen Browder**

the other national Democrats should listen to," Bonner said. "At least if they're smart, they'll listen. Otherwise it'll be an uphill battle for them for a very long time."

Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), who holds the seat Browder vacated, agreed. "I think Glen is conveying that point, that the national Democrats do not get it and, until they do, there's no sense in coming to Alabama."

Regardless of whether his party will embrace his strategy, Browder does not need to prove his credentials. Browder survived in a solidly Republican district and, according to



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