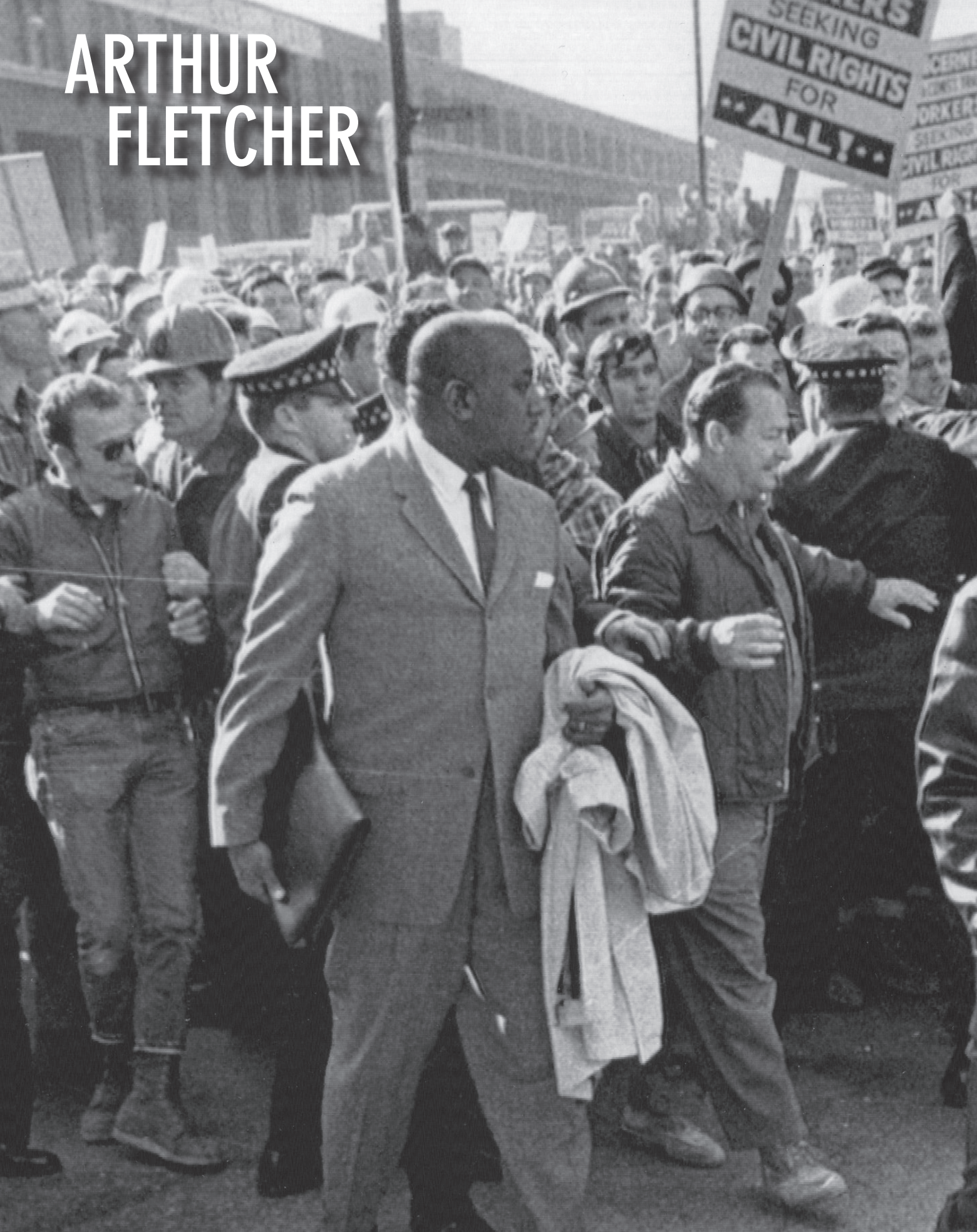
ARTHUR FLETCHER



Crossing the Color-Line

"The name of the game is to put some economic flesh and bones on Dr. King's dream."
—Arthur Fletcher

When Arthur Fletcher announced his candidacy for lieutenant governor on May 3, 1968, his race made him such an electoral novelty that practically every newspaper in the state used the same identifier. He was "the Negro Pasco city councilman." As the campaign progressed and Fletcher became less of a literal dark horse, other labels were applied, including "former pro football player," "ex-shoe shine boy," "ice man" and "one-time janitor." When a reporter covering his campaign quipped that things must be looking up because a political columnist had just called him "an articulate Negro," Fletcher nearly doubled over in delight. "And we're very musical and have shiny white teeth!" he declared, his laughter rocking the room.

In 1903, W.E.B. Du Bois, the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard, wrote a groundbreaking book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. It begins with an observation that sums up Art Fletcher's star-crossed life as a civil rights trailblazer. "The problem of the Twentieth Century," Du Bois wrote, "is the problem of the color-line."

We're now in the second decade of the 21st century, 50 years after Fletcher crossed the color-line to win the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor. Washington has yet to elect an African American to one of its nine statewide offices or Congress.*

Though what-might-have-beens are intriguing—Could Fletcher have gone on to become governor or a U.S. senator?—friends and historians view Fletcher's narrow loss here in 1968 as America's gain. Fletcher spearheaded landmark Affirmative Action efforts for the Nixon Administration, served two other presidents and headed the United Negro College Fund, where he helped craft its eloquent slogan: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

---

* The late Charles Z. Smith, the great-grandson of slaves, was elected three times to the Washington Supreme Court after his appointment in 1988. But Smith bristled at the racism he perceived, even among some judicial colleagues. In 1990, he told a forum on race relations in Washington, "Even though I am at the top of the judicial system, there are still people … who believe they can call me 'nigger' and get away with it."

Fletcher with Secretary of State Lud Kramer (standing), Slade Gorton, (left) the GOP candidate for attorney general, and Gov. Dan Evans. *Washington State Archives*

IN THE SPACE of one campaign stop in the fall of 1968 you could meet three different Art Fletchers: the arm-waving Baptist preacher, the spellbinding storyteller, punctuating his yarns with pauses that left listeners on the edge of their seats, and the persuasive politician who called himself "a practical militant."

Washington needed a full-time, activist lieutenant governor, Fletcher said. Rotary Club Republicans found him reassuringly, well … articulate. Moreover, he was nice.

Slade Gorton, the GOP's cerebral candidate for attorney general, was often paired with Fletcher on the campaign trail. The future U.S. senator marveled at Fletcher's ability to win over white audiences. "It was great because Art could draw 400 people where I could draw 40," Gorton remembers. "It was also awful because it didn't matter whether I spoke first or second because I was a complete after-thought to the wonderful orations Art would come through with."

His traveling companions delighted in the mirth—black humor, if you will—that tempered Fletcher's anger over the racism he had endured since childhood. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, a movie featuring Sidney Poitier as a handsome black doctor engaged to the lovely white daughter of a newspaper publisher, was a box office hit that year. Straightening his tie in a mirror, Fletcher once quipped, "Guess who's coming to lunch with the Elks?" Former Secretary of State Sam Reed, a young gubernatorial aide when he recruited Fletcher to run for lieutenant governor, remembers Art bounding out of a motel bed one morning. Stretching his big arms over his head, Fletcher bellowed that he felt so good he'd like to take on a lion.

If Fletcher sometimes seemed bigger than life—the former Kansas football star was 6-4, 250 pounds—some of his stories were, too, but never outright fabrications. Reporters and headline writers, fascinated by Fletcher's colorful life story, did most of the

embellishing, awarding him a law degree and Ph.D. he never earned or claimed. The truth was compelling enough. Fletcher's middle name should have been Resilient. Few knew all the troubles he'd seen.

BORN TO AN unwed mother in Phoenix three days before Christmas in 1924, Fletcher never knew his biological father. He was an adolescent flirting with trouble when his mother married Andrew Fletcher, a standup career Army man. "Cotton" Fletcher was a trooper with the U.S. 9th Cavalry, the storied black "Buffalo Soldier" outfit. He adopted Art. Sergeant Fletcher's rectitude became a powerful influence. When the family arrived at Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1938—the umpteenth move of Art's young life—he was a strapping eighth grader poised to become one of the best football players in Kansas history.

While colored troops at Fort Riley were separated from whites, the schools in Junction City adjacent to the post were integrated. The town began to bustle in 1939 as war erupted in Europe and America set out to resuscitate its military. "Onto this scene came Art Fletcher, a big, street-smart kid with a bright smile and very fast feet," wrote Mark A. Peterson, a professor at Washburn University in Topeka, Fletcher's alma mater.

At Junction City High School, Fletcher became a three-sport letterman. It was in football, however, that he achieved fame. He scored nine touchdowns in his senior year and became the first black player named to the *Topeka Daily Capital's* team of Kansas all-stars.

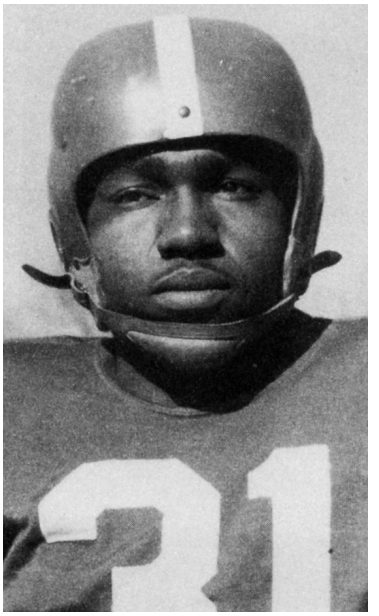
Kansas was enlightened compared to the intractable racism of the Jim Crow South, yet the color line was still clear. When North American Aviation opened a bomber assembly plant in Kansas City, the company stated that no Negroes need apply. Fletcher said his indignation at inequality was heightened in junior high when Mary McLeod Bethune, a nationally known civil rights leader, spoke at a school assembly.

Energized by his celebrity as a football star, Fletcher rallied other black students to protest the practice of placing the yearbook portraits of black seniors in a section separate from the white graduates. The following year, the senior portraits were integrated alphabetically.

IN 1943, a few weeks after marrying his 17-year-old high school sweetheart, Mary Harden, Fletcher was inducted into the segregated U.S. Army. A year later he was a military policeman in Europe after the Allies fanned out from the Normandy beachheads to conquer the Third Reich. Fletcher was attached to the celebrated Red Ball Express, a 6,000-vehicle convoy tasked with ensuring George Patton's Third Army didn't grind to a halt for lack of supplies. Three-quarters of the truck drivers were African Americans, preferable perhaps to being a "mess boy" steward or cook on a ship or the back-breaking, dangerous work of loading ammunition. But being black in a white army replete with Southerners was a dicey proposition, Fletcher said. He often recounted the resentment he experienced as an MP because he was "big and mean and didn't take any shit." Black and white soldiers brawled

constantly, he said. If you were black you always watched your back. Even some of the blacks "didn't like the fact" he had authority.

Sometimes Fletcher said it was "a German sniper" who fired the shot that nearly killed him on the night of March 21, 1945, as he walked alone down a dark street in a newly overrun village. Sometimes he said it could have been friendly fire because "you didn't know if you were going to get hit by the enemy or hit by your own."* There's no debate over the extent of the injury. Shrapnel or bullet fragments cracked Fletcher's ribcage, tore through his liver, spleen and small intestine before exiting above his left hip. A less robust man might have died then and there. He endured several surgeries and months of recuperation. Decades later when he related his close call Fletcher sometimes pulled up his shirt to show the jagged scars.



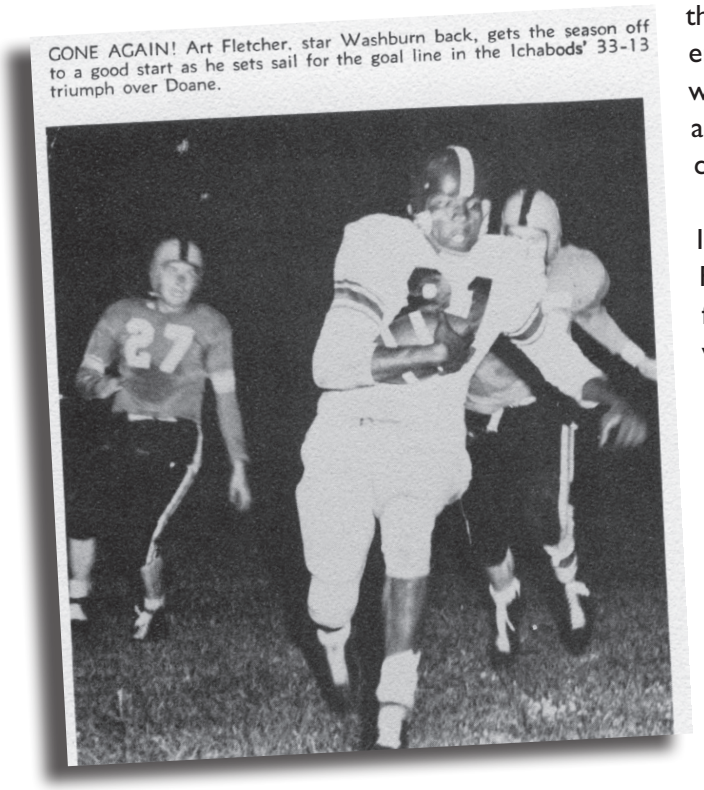
Fletcher as a star tailback at Topeka's Washburn University in 1947. *University Archives, Mabee Library, Washburn University*

After his discharge from the Army, Fletcher hoped to play football at a "big-time" university like Kansas, Oklahoma or Missouri. But they barred blacks from their squads. Other major-conference programs also refused to play schools with integrated teams. Fletcher was admitted to Indiana University, only to discover racism there was even worse. He couldn't even find housing for his growing family. Mary was pregnant with their third child. Fletcher enrolled at Washburn, which was founded in 1865 by Congregational churchmen. The university's namesake benefactor, Ichabod Washburn, was a church deacon and fervent abolitionist. He believed all God's children were entitled to an education.

For Fletcher, the GI Bill and a welcoming faculty added up to a life-changing experience. "Going to Washburn was the greatest decision I ever made," he always said.

Fletcher landed a variety of janitorial jobs to help support his family. "In spite of the load he was carrying, I never heard him complain about being underprivileged or overworked," Washburn's former football coach, Dick Godlove, wrote in 1966. "He had a tremendous ability to make and keep friends," including the president of the university. "Those of us who have known him will contend that Art Fletcher can do more good for so called civil rights than thousands of marchers and demonstrators simply because he is the type of man who proves by example that a negro can be a first class citizen." A good man, the coach was paying Fletcher a high compliment. Yet his words italicize the fact

*The Army's official report characterized Fletcher's wounds as "non-battle injury" due to "artillery shell fragments."


GONE AGAIN! Art Fletcher, star Washburn back, gets the season off to a good start as he sets sail for the goal line in the Ichabods' 33-13 triumph over Doane.

that in 1966 millions of Southerners still believed most "negroes" would never amount to much—and that marchers for "so called" civil rights were obstreperous.

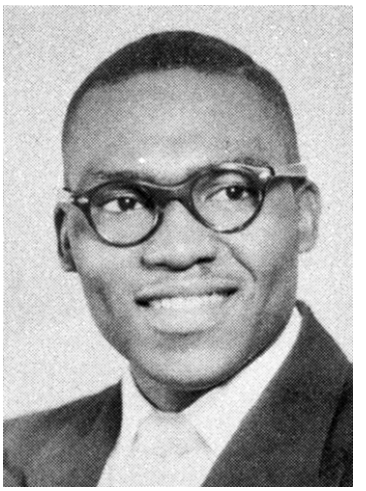
IN 1947, his sophomore year, Fletcher emerged as a powerful tailback for the Ichabods. He was "harder to stop than a Santa Fe Streamliner," the Washburn yearbook boasted. Now unquestionably one of the top small-college players in America, Fletcher was reviled when the Ichabods invaded racist strongholds, even burned in effigy at opponents' pep rallies. But he was steadily winning the respect of opposing players and coaches, wrote Godlove, who doubled as Washburn's athletic director. "Art was all 'everything' in football during a time when negroes were just beginning to break into college athletics in these parts. A predominantly white football squad accepted his leadership and he ranked far above any team captain I've ever had. This was a time of great prejudice, particularly in hotels and eating places in Kansas. [But Art] was obviously such a fine person that over a period of four years, hotel and café managers did a complete about face as far as their accommodations were concerned."

By his junior year, Fletcher was also excelling in the classroom and emerging as a statewide political activist with the College Republicans. "For most African Americans in Kansas, the Democratic Party …was the party of segregation, Jim Crow, and white Southern bigotry, while the Republican Party was the party of abolition and Lincoln," Professor Peterson wrote in a profile documenting Fletcher's Kansas roots.

During the 1947 session of the Kansas Legislature, Fletcher worked as a doorman and messenger. He landed a second job as a waiter at a Topeka hotel frequented by lawmakers and lobbyists. Like an attentive fly on the wall in dining rooms and capitol hallways, he observed the horse-trading that wins votes to pass laws. Fletcher always said that experience taught him more about practical politics than any poly-sci course. He participated in meetings aimed at forcing integration of Topeka's schools and later donated what he could

to the cause. The eventual outcome was the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1954 ruling that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional.

Fletcher also met future Kansas governor Fred Hall, a young lawyer with a strong social conscience. In 1950, the year Fletcher graduated from Washburn with a degree in sociology, Hall was elected lieutenant governor—the stepping-stone office Fletcher aspired to in Washington State 18 years later.



Fletcher as a Washburn University student in 1949. *University Archives, Mabee Library, Washburn University*

FLETCHER'S CAMPAIGN in the summer of 1950 was for a spot on a pro-football roster. He and Mary now had five children, ages 1 to 6. He was a walk-on with the Los Angeles Rams, but cut from the team before the start of the regular season. He was jubilant when the Baltimore Colts called.

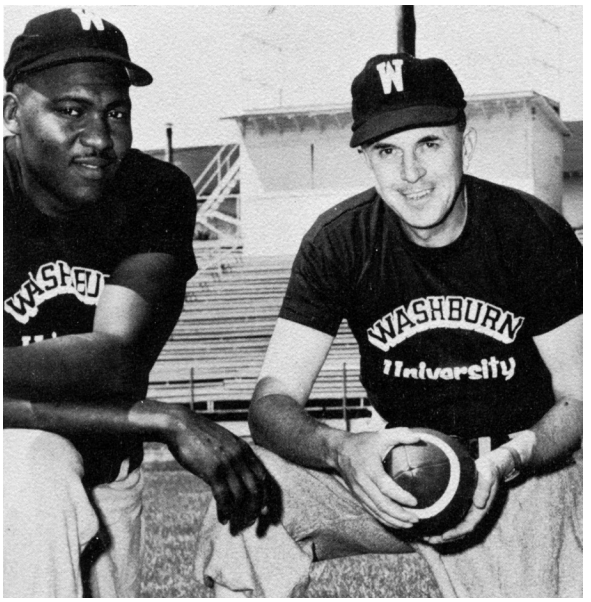
The 1950 incarnation of Baltimore's NFL team was a far cry from the legendary franchise that revived the Colts name a few years later. The team Fletcher joined lasted only one season in the National Football League before folding. He has the distinction—rarely remembered—of being the first black athlete to represent any Baltimore major-league franchise.*

Fletcher joined the Colts only three days before a home game against the Philadelphia Eagles and saw action as a defensive end in a relatively close loss. "He didn't set the world on fire," his coach told the Baltimore *Afro-American*, "but I suppose he did as well as could be expected. He had not practiced for some time. …We have very high hopes for him, though, and he seems to have great possibilities."

A week later, back in L.A. against the Rams, Fletcher caught two passes for a total of 18 yards in a 70-28 debacle. His great possibilities—a journeyman's job in the NFL to provide for his young family—ended that night in the lobby of a Beverly Hills hotel when the coach tersely informed him he was being released. Fletcher stood in a corner and wept as the coach walked away.

Some speculate that his wartime wounds—plus four rough-and-tumble years of college football—contributed to his failure to catch on in the NFL. An opportunity with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats in the Canadian Football League didn't pan out either. Fletcher had a succession of menial jobs—delivering ice and working in a tire factory. But he persevered, always striving for a breakthrough to work commensurate with his education, his

* Fletcher's Baltimore teammates included future Hall of Fame quarterback Y.A. Tittle and a big Oklahoman named Jim Owens, who coached the University of Washington Huskies to consecutive Rose Bowl victories in 1959 and '60, but later in the decade was accused of showing favoritism to white players.



Fletcher, an assistant coach with the Washburn University football team, and head coach Dick Godlove in 1958. *University Archives, Mabee Library, Washburn University*

people skills and dreams.

Fletcher became active in the Kansas Republican State Central Committee, rising to vice chairman. In 1954 Fred Hall asked Fletcher to help rally black voters to his campaign for governor. Fletcher boasted he registered some 10,000. Come November the maverick Republican from Dodge City became the state's 33rd governor. Fletcher's reward was a job as assistant communications director for the State Highway Commission. On the side, as he traveled around the state, he sold used cars and became a booking agent for black musicians touring the Midwest.

AS SOON AS things were looking up, they always seemed to come crashing down. When Hall lost his bid for re-election in 1956, Fletcher was booted from his state job. His other enterprises went under, too. Deep in debt, he resorted to janitorial work and delivering coal. At one point he was also an elevator operator. A part-time coaching job at Washburn helped put food on the table. It was a depressing time.

Then, out of the blue, another opportunity. Fred Hall decamped to California to become an executive with a jet propulsion company in Sacramento. He saw to it that Fletcher was hired as an efficiency analyst, a job that proved to be "more show than substance." The racism the family encountered was also daunting.

In Berkeley in 1960, Art found a job with a tire company, and was soon offered a teaching job at the high school, only to have it fall through. The setbacks took their toll on Mary Fletcher, who suffered from clinical depression. On a fine fall day, Art was doing some typing when Mary said she was going to the grocery store. All five kids were in the living room. The radio was on. When the announcer interrupted regular programming to report someone had just jumped off the San Francisco Bay Bridge a palpable sense of dread filled the room.

"Daddy, where's Mama?" Art's oldest daughter asked.

Before long, two policemen arrived at the door.

"Mr. Fletcher, can you step out for a minute?" they said.

"Oh, no!" he cried.

For a while, Fletcher remembered, he just "walked around in a fog."

It was his undaunted optimism that pulled him through, says David H. Golland, a leading civil rights historian. His biography of Fletcher, *A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste: Arthur Fletcher and the Conundrum of the Black Republican,* is set for publication in 2019. "He always believed things would get better. And if Mary's suicide was a far worse experience than most people face, Fletcher determined to make an equally extraordinary recovery … one might even call it a rebirth. …Out of the ashes of tragedy, the 35-year-old single parent found better employment, remarried and constructed a new family."

FLETCHER'S WORK on a steering committee promoting a school bond led to a job as the "special needs" teacher at an all-black middle school in Berkeley. He developed a self-help curriculum and volunteered for an after-school YMCA program for at-risk youth. By 1962, Fletcher was back on his feet financially and a candidate for the California State Assembly. He won the Republican nomination with ease and captured 25 percent of the vote against the longtime Democratic incumbent in the general election. It was an impressive showing, Golland says, given the fact that Republicans were a distinct minority in the district.

Richard Nixon, attempting a political comeback by running for governor—a disastrous decision as things turned out—dispatched his trusted advance man, H.R. "Bob" Haldeman, to enlist Fletcher's help in boosting his authentic civil rights bona fides with black Californians.

Fletcher's civil rights philosophy was now fully developed. It was all about self-help. "He did not oppose government assistance for the needy …but he wanted such assistance to be used only as a stopgap measure and worried that too much bred dependence and sapped the will to work."

Fletcher, his new wife, Bernyce, and two youngest children left California in 1965 for the Tri-Cities of Eastern Washington. There, as the first director of Higher Horizons, a jobs program funded in part by the Johnson Administration's War on Poverty, he became "a unique hybrid of civil rights leader, politician and white-collar professional," Golland writes.

EAST PASCO, the Fletchers' new home, was the dusty, de facto ghetto of the sun-drenched Tri-Cities. An estimated 1,500 Negroes had been recruited to Richland, Kennewick and Pasco during World War II to construct the Hanford facilities that secretly produced plutonium for atomic bombs. They joined a few hundred old-timers who worked for the railroad. By war's end 1,200 African Americans were congregated in East Pasco, east of the tracks. The East Side Neighborhood Improvement Club and the NAACP pushed for paved streets and other utility improvements. The City Council and Public Utility District dragged their heels.

Tri-Cities lore has it that as late as the 1950s there was a sign on the Pasco/Kenne-

wick Bridge warning black folks "Don't let the sun set on your back in Kennewick." There were, in fact, thousands of "sundown towns" across America, especially in the Jim Crow South, where the signs often told Negroes they'd best be out of town before dark. Art Fletcher's friend Jack Briggs, a retired investigative reporter and columnist at *The Tri-City Herald,* says he tried for years to document that the sign actually existed. "But sign or no sign," Briggs says, "there certainly was a racial divide there." One that lingered for decades. Briggs covered an "anti-cop riot in 1970 when blacks burned down the 60-foot fir trees that flanked the old Franklin County Courthouse."

Vanis Daniels, a longtime Pasco resident, recalled in a 2011 interview that one of his cousins ended up "chained to a pole like a dog" on a Kennewick street corner in 1948 when police discovered him waiting for co-workers to come out of an all-white tavern with some beer. Jack Tanner, a Tacoma civil rights leader who went on to become one of the West's first black federal judges, led a march through downtown Pasco in 1963 to protest discrimination. He dubbed Kennewick "the Birmingham of Washington."

When Art Fletcher arrived, Pasco's 1,400 blacks represented 10 percent of the citizenry. Fletcher's ambitious agenda for Higher Horizons included a skills bank, on-the-job training programs and a neighborhood watch committee that combined crime prevention with mentorship programs for jobless youth. But some local state agency officials, whom Fletcher characterized as unreconstructed Southerners, thwarted his efforts. Members of the John Birch Society, poised to found their own weekly newspaper in Yakima, attacked Higher Horizons as communistic. Further, he'd been hired with the understanding it was a three-year project. He was misinformed. And out of a job within a year.

Fletcher found work as a minority recruiter for several Hanford contractors, secured a correspondence-course preacher's license and founded the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative. The co-op's first success was a service station that "quickly became the automotive shop of choice for local motorists." In his Fletcher biography, David Golland writes:

"The profits from the first year of the service station's operation led to the co-op's most remarkable achievement. The $4,000 was used as a down payment for an eight-acre, $37,500 commercial site, on which the co-op planned to construct 'a number of businesses, such as a laundromat, barber shop, branch bank, hardware store and drugstore… and education center and [co-op] offices.' "

The road blocks to success included the widening schism between impatient young black firebrands and old-guard civil rights leaders. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached non-violent resistance; Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panthers, was an unabashed revolutionary out to destroy "both racism and capitalism." Sometimes, Newton said, "If you want to get rid of the gun, you have to pick the gun up."

Fletcher worried that diplomacy was losing ground to radicalism. He proudly claimed to be a militant himself. "The difference between a militant and extremist," he told the *Tri-City Herald* in the fall of 1967, "is the militant wants a share in developing a

neighborhood while extremists are trying to burn them up. …The longer nothing is done, the more extremists are able to convince persons to their points of view… [T]his force must be converted to technical militancy—the training of minorities with the know-how to fill these jobs."

An "Uncle Tom" to *militant* militants and a spellbinding leader to older, more conservative blacks, Fletcher told reporters in 1968 that only 15 to 20 percent of the black folks in East Pasco trusted him. "I'm a great guy if they have problems I can solve. …I'm great until the next problem I can't solve."

When he ran for the Pasco City Council in 1967, Fletcher expected problems, if not death threats. Sometimes the midnight callers sounded white, sometimes black. "I'm a color-blind lightning rod," he told a reporter with a shrug and a smile the following year when the political stakes were a lot higher.

FLETCHER'S CITY COUNCIL campaign boasted two influential friends: Governor Daniel J. Evans and Secretary of State A. Ludlow Kramer. They were two of the West's leading civil rights Republicans. Elected to the Seattle City Council at 29 in 1961, "Lud" Kramer pushed for an open housing law, while Evans was emerging as the leader of GOP reformers in the state Legislature. In 1964, Evans and Kramer bucked a Democratic riptide to win statewide office. By 1966, they were exploring ways to head off urban upheaval and create more humane conditions for migrant farm workers.

At Kramer's urging, Governor Evans visited Pasco that year to learn more about the Self-Help Cooperative. "It was impossible not to be impressed with Art Fletcher," Evans remembers. "Here was this imposing African American man who radiated charisma and intelligence and preached the importance of a 'hand-up, not a handout.' He was an apostle of the power of education to build self-esteem and change lives. I was thoroughly impressed with Art, his work and everything he stood for. I recruited him for our new Urban Affairs Advisory Council. That first meeting was just the beginning of a lifelong friendship. He should have been our state's first African American governor."

On November 7, 1967, with 59 percent of the vote, Fletcher was elected Pasco's first black councilman. In Seattle, Sam Smith, the persistent son of a Louisiana preacher, also won a City Council seat. The five-term state representative had just pushed through a state open housing law. In Tacoma, Jack Tanner, another former standout athlete and World War II veteran, got to thinking 1968 could be a banner year for Washington Negroes.

WITH EVANS AND KRAMER facing re-election in 1968, two enterprising young Republicans—Sam Reed and Chris Bayley—began brainstorming ways to mobilize college students for the campaign. Governor Evans was in a running battle with right-wingers in King County, the epicenter of Puget Sound politics. Kramer's civil rights work made him even more suspect. Birchers denounced both as soft on communism.

Reed, who had received a master's degree in political science from Washington State University the year before, was the 26-year-old staff director for the governor's Urban Affairs Council. Bayley, 29, was back home in Seattle to size up future prospects after his graduation from Harvard Law School.* They dubbed their brainchild "Action for Washington" and set out to recruit political activists on campuses across the state. "Before long," Reed remembers with a satisfied smile, "we had attracted upwards of 2,500 bright, idealistic young people." By the summer of '68 "the kids" were churning out yard signs, mimeographing fliers and staging doorbell blitzkriegs for "The Action Team for an action time."

Action for Washington's notable innovation was to field the first, and to date only, four-candidate statewide ticket in Washington history. Evans and Kramer already had their hats in the ring. When Slade Gorton, the transplanted Ivy Leaguer who became Evans' point man in the Legislature, resolved to run for attorney general, all Reed needed was a candidate for lieutenant governor. After watching Fletcher in action with the Urban Affairs Council—"all that energy and charisma and track record as a civil rights leader"—Reed saw Fletcher as their man. His life story ("good copy" in the parlance of the media) was fascinating. If they were going to stand a chance of defeating the entrenched incumbent, 58-year-old Democrat

* Reed would become a three-term secretary of state, Bayley a boat-rocking King County prosecutor.

John Cherberg, why not make a bold stroke? If anyone had the moxie to break the color barrier in Washington electoral politics, Reed figured, "it was Art."*

Art needed convincing.

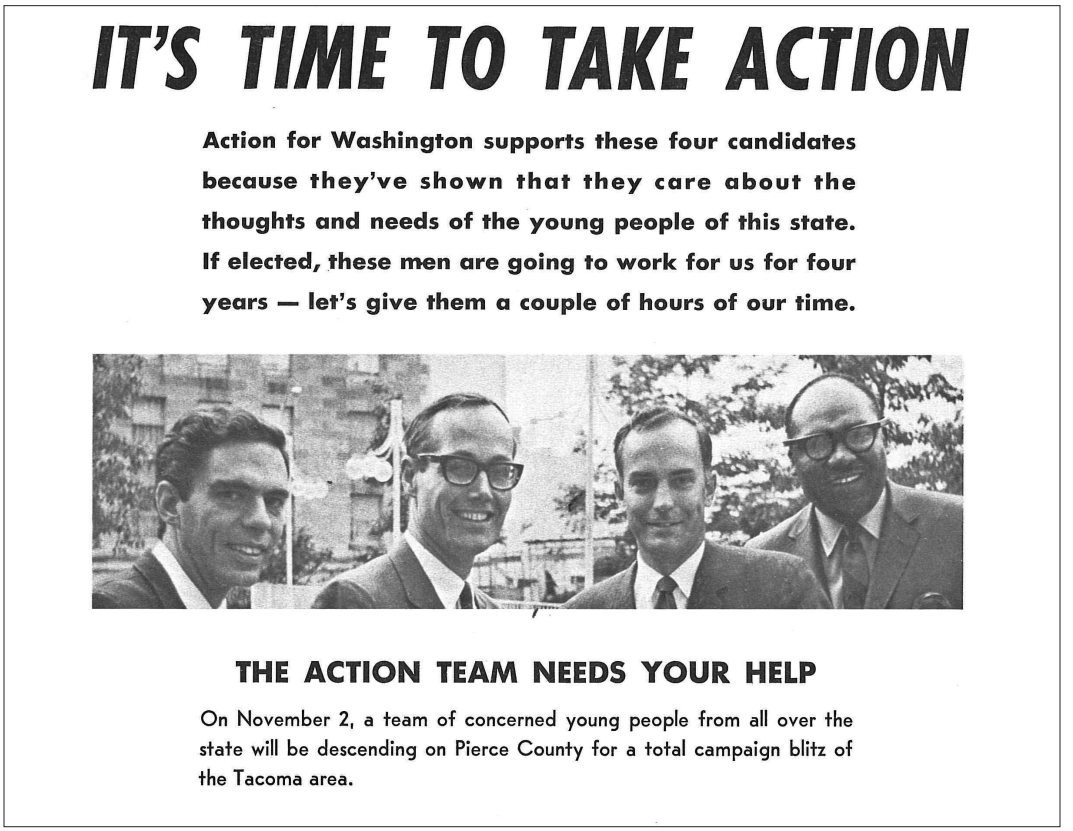
"His first reaction was to laugh heartily—that big, booming, infectious laugh of his," Reed remembers. "It took me a while to convince him I was serious. I assured him that his race likely would be more of an advantage than a handicap with younger voters. And with his speaking ability he could win over older white voters, too. Besides, I said, his whole career had focused on advancing opportunities for Negroes. Then, I got Dan Evans and Lud Kramer to talk to him. That did it."

THAT 1968 was a leap year somehow fit. It was as if the furies had extracted an extra day of fear and loathing because 365 simply weren't enough. The Pentagon upped the draft by 72,000 two weeks before the Tet Offensive; George Wallace announced his third-party bid for president; Walter Cronkite told America the Vietnam war was unwinnable; the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders pointed to racism and economic hopelessness as the root cause of ghetto riots; Eugene McCarthy won a remarkable 42 percent of the vote in the New Hampshire primary, demonstrating that Lyndon Johnson was vulnerable. When Robert Kennedy jumped in, LBJ dropped out. Four days later, the Rev. Martin Luther King was assassinated on a Memphis motel balcony. Riots raged across the nation as Governor Evans, Fletcher and 9,000 other mourners marched to Memorial Stadium in Seattle to honor Dr. King's ideals. "Violence is the way of the coward," Evans told the crowd, his voice choked with emotion. "Nonviolence is the way of the hero." Fletcher told The Associated Press he planned to run for lieutenant governor to try and do his part to keep Dr. King's dream alive.

King County Councilman Larry Gossett, who helped found the Black Student Union at the University of Washington, and Nat Jackson, who succeeded Fletcher as head of the East Pasco Self-Help Cooperative and became a key aide to Governor Evans, remember 1968 as the year "Negroes" became "blacks." By year's end, in fact, "*Negro* had become a pejorative applied to those who would not stand up for themselves," historian Mark Kurlansky wrote. That October, *The Seattle Times* used "Afro-Americans" and "black people" for the first time. It was in a story about a new black-owned Seattle clothing store featuring Dashiki blouses and other "colorful African designs." Fletcher officiated at the ribbon-cutting.

IN MAY, with Bernyce at his side, Fletcher made his candidacy official. Touting the East

* Fletcher was not the first African American—or transplanted Kansan for that matter—to run for lieutenant governor. Charles M. Stokes, King County's first black legislator and a tireless civil rights advocate, was soundly defeated by a former Supreme Court judge in the 1960 Republican primary. Stokes was a 1931 graduate of the University of Kansas Law School. In 1988, another black star football player-turned politician, George Fleming, won the primary election for lieutenant governor. That November he lost to popular Republican Joel Pritchard.



IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

Action for Washington supports these four candidates because they've shown that they care about the thoughts and needs of the young people of this state. If elected, these men are going to work for us for four years — let's give them a couple of hours of our time.

A handbill for an Action Team rally. *Washington State Archives*

Pasco Self-Help Cooperative, he hoped to use "the power and prestige" of the lieutenant governor's office to take the program statewide. In that regard, he foresaw no conflict in fulfilling the lieutenant governor's duties as presiding officer for the State Senate, even if it were to meet every year, as Governor Evans advocated, rather than every other year. "If elected, I would demonstrate for the first two years how this could be made a meaningful office. Then I would submit a bill to the Legislature to expand its functions"—with no expectation of an increase in the office's $10,000-a-year salary. Pressed by reporters to address racial strife, Fletcher said there were two problems involved: "The Negroes' Negro problem, mainly poverty and lack of education. And the white man's Negro problem—the willingness to accept the Negro once he is ready to make his contribution. I've solved the Negro problem, and I'm ready to make my contribution. … I'm a practical militant," he said. "I want change as fast as we can get it, but I am mature enough to realize that you don't get it overnight."

Jack Tanner, now a declared Democratic candidate for governor, lit a cigar and

scoffed that the Republicans—white do-gooders like Evans and misguided blacks like Fletcher—didn't get it: "They want people to help themselves with that which they have not got."

The next four months were a blur. Momentum was so elusive that Fletcher thought about dropping out. But when Nelson Rockefeller, Richard Nixon's leading opponent for the GOP presidential nomination, visited Seattle in July he met with Fletcher and Evans and all but endorsed Art's economic self-help program as a plank in the 1968 GOP national platform. The nation's Republican governors, with Evans leading the way, had already signaled their support. Impressed by the East Pasco project, Congresswoman Catherine May, the Republican from Fletcher's Eastern Washington district, introduced a "Community Development Corporation" bill that was gaining traction, with House Republicans at least.

Fletcher was unopposed for the GOP nomination until August 1, when Bill Muncey, the greatest unlimited hydroplane racer in history, entered his first dry-land race. With his boyish grin and bold driving style at the wheel of *Miss Thriftway,* Muncey was the hero of the summertime Seafair crowds lining Lake Washington. Well-heeled conservative Republicans earlier had failed to entice Pat O'Day, Seattle's legendary disc jockey and concert promoter, to challenge Fletcher. But Muncey was not having a good year. He had finished only three of nine races, his marriage was in trouble and his political acumen was highly suspect. Asked if he had discussed his chances with C. Montgomery Johnson, the shrewd chairman of the State Republican Party, Muncey breezily replied, "Yes, we had a talk the other day. By the way, just what is his position in the party?"

Bill was going to need a bigger boat.

THE IMAGE of a mortally wounded Robert F. Kennedy splayed on the floor of a hotel pantry, clutching a string of Rosary beads, was a metaphor for the summer of '68. When the fractured Democrats assembled in Chicago 12 weeks later, their convention hall was encircled by barbed wire fencing. "The National Guard had been mobilized and ordered to shoot to kill, if necessary," Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Haynes Johnson wrote.

It was a miracle no one was killed on the convention's third day when Mayor Richard J. Daley's police, reinforced by the soldiers, clashed yet again with war protesters. The Yippies, hippies and members of Students for a Democratic Society resisted vociferously, throwing rocks and screaming epithets. Live network TV captured a throbbing melee of nightsticks, rifle butts and tear gas, bloodied heads and broken noses. "Pigs!" the crowd chanted. "The whole world is watching!" Livid, the police were swinging their clubs with abandon. They smashed cameras and beat journalists and bystanders, even elderly onlookers and children. Connecticut Senator Abe Ribicoff, at the podium to make a nominating speech for George McGovern, denounced the "Gestapo tactics on the streets of Chicago." Mayor Daley, his fleshy face flushed with anger, cupped his hands and shouted, "You Jew son-of-a-bitch!"—apparently oblivious to how Gestapo-like that sounded.

Miami Beach, where the Republicans gathered to celebrate the virtues of "Law and Order," was by contrast Kumbaya—at least on the surface. Keynoter Dan Evans told delegates it was "time now to reach inward—to reach down and touch the troubled spirit of America." He challenged them to adopt "a new agenda" focused on minorities, the poor and the nation's restless youth: "The problems of environment, of congestion, of urban decay and rural stagnation did not suddenly occur. They are the residue of years—even of decades—in which we devoted too much of ourselves to size and quantity and too little to shape and quality."

Fletcher pitched his self-help program to a panel of platform writers, noting that he had helped launch similar projects in Seattle and Spokane. It would take only relatively modest federal financing to jump-start neighborhood-owned corporations nationally and help blacks break the cycle of poverty, Fletcher said. He described self-help as the equivalent of "a foreign aid program to our own depressed neighborhoods, which are nothing but underdeveloped countries within our country." The self-help plank adopted by the committee "relied almost verbatim" on Fletcher's testimony.

Rockefeller's patchy presidential campaign and a Ronald Reagan boomlet were scuttled by Nixon's last-ditch "Southern Strategy" to secure a first-ballot victory. It included the selection of the largely unknown archconservative Maryland Governor Spiro T. Agnew as his running-mate. In so doing, Nixon kept Strom Thurmond and his band of unrepentant former Dixiecrat segregationists in the fold. Nixon also hoped to undercut George Wallace's strength in the South. Striving to simultaneously placate Goldwaterites and woo liberals, the "New" Nixon was his masterfully duplicitous old self. In his acceptance speech he co-opted Martin Luther King's cadences, repeatedly intoning "I see a day," before declaring, "The time has come to … climb the mountain so that we may see the glory of the dawn of a new day for America…"

Nixon invited Fletcher to San Diego to brief him and Agnew on self-help programs in black communities. The result was Fletcher's appointment to the campaign's Committee on Urban Problems and Minority Affairs. It was an important development, Fletcher said, "because it means that they were listening to our advice in San Diego" and poised to make "an all-out appeal" to minority voters. In a quote he likely came to regret, Fletcher characterized Agnew as "a master technician."

MUNCEY, meantime, was proving so inept at politics that Lieutenant Governor Cherberg made it clear he considered Fletcher the opposition. Barnstorming the Tri-Cities, the Seattle Democrat sidestepped Fletcher's call for debates and told reporters the duties of the office had been "greatly expanded" during his three terms to include membership on the State Finance Committee and State Patrol Retirement Board.

By Labor Day Fletcher had campaigned in 23 of the state's 39 counties, buoyed by the energy of Action for Washington volunteers. Teaming Fletcher with Slade Gorton,

the collegians scheduled "fly-in's" at a dozen campuses. The youthful secretary of state, Lud Kramer, sometimes made it a threesome. Gorton remembers being moved by Fletcher's eloquence, especially the day he eviscerated George Wallace, calling him "the little corporal from Alabama." When Wallace talked about "states rights," Fletcher said, "he really means the federal government took from him the right to exclude me from the human race."

Though virtually unopposed for the Republican nomination, Gorton had five formidable Democratic opponents, including John G. McCutcheon, a former Pierce County prosecutor, and Fred Dore, a veteran legislator. They seemed intent on out law-and-ordering Nixon and Agnew. McCutcheon declared he'd "heard the voices" of those who'd had enough of "violence in the ghettos, riots in the schools and colleges and crime in the streets." Gorton's rejoinder was one of the year's most riveting quotes. "I have always been for law and order," he told the Associated Press, "but too many people today use the phrase when they really mean 'keep the niggers in their place.' "

ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1968, Arthur A. Fletcher made political history. He swamped Muncey in every county to become the first black candidate to win a major-party nomination for statewide office. Evans, Kramer and Gorton also advanced.* There were fewer than 100,000 blacks in the state, Fletcher noted, adding that he hoped his campaign would give "other Negroes hope" and "free the white community of fears of the Negro."

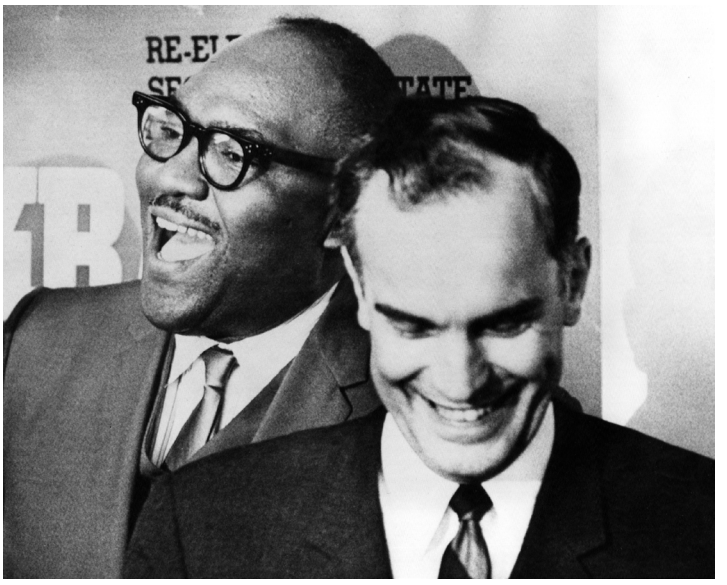
Polling data—it would prove accurate—indicated Humphrey was leading Nixon in Washington State and Democrats were on the upswing up and down the ballot. Republicans stepped up their fundraising and set out to harness the youth vote. Every Action Team flier, full-page ad and TV spot featured Evans, Kramer, Gorton and Fletcher, striding forward side by side with clean-cut confidence. Fletcher was touted as "The Man With a Plan"—"tall, fluent, with a grasp of problems as broad as his hands"—a college-educated, ex-NFL player who could "transform the office of lieutenant governor just as he transformed the ghetto of Pasco. Not because he is black … But because he seeks the office on the basis of brains, leadership and personal ability. And he'll work full time."

Lieutenant Governor Cherberg—"Cowboy Johnny" in his coaching days—still said he could see "no useful purpose" to a debate—especially after reporters contrasted his yawn-inducing appearances on campuses with Fletcher's charisma.

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY fielded its own candidate—Donald J. Tait, editor of *The Yakima Eagle*, the weekly newspaper funded by the John Birch Society. Tait, a former radio announcer and ad salesman, told a George Wallace rally in Pasco that Fletcher's self-help program was "aimed at providing bases for Communist revolution." Asserting that Fletcher was "far too heavyweight for Pasco," Tait added, "I think poor Mr. Fletcher is being used.

* Jack Tanner received only 2.43 percent of the vote in the 1968 gubernatorial primary. The 1970 Census found only 71,300 blacks in Washington State. The most recent estimate is 304,000.

I don't know by whom, but by someone pretty high up." There was a new "Manchurian Candidate" twist to the conspiracy theory. Tait reminded conservatives that Dan Evans had been considered for Nixon's running-mate and could be in line for a cabinet post should Nixon be elected. "Then we'll wind up with Mr. Fletcher as governor."



Fletcher and Gov. Evans celebrate their primary election victories in 1968. *Washington State Archives*

Fletcher punctuated his indignation with sarcasm. "I'm gratified to find that a poor and insignificant black boy who once shined shoes …has managed to attract the attention of such an important conservative gentleman," he said. Then, with clenched fists, Fletcher said it was an insult to black Americans to suggest that the only way they could rise in a democracy was to become communists. By "painting red any black who says he is equal," the Birchers were just giving the Black Panthers more ammunition, he said.

The notion that Fletcher was part of a "plot" would pop up repeatedly during the campaign. The Teamsters echoed the theme in their own weekly. *The Washington Teamster* enjoyed a wide readership thanks to the biting wit of its editor, Ed Donohoe, who needled the governor "and his vassals" by anointing them with sarcastic nicknames. Evans, an Eagle Scout, was "Straight Arrow"; Kramer "Lud the Dud," and Gorton "Slippery Slade." Fletcher never earned a moniker of his own but they hit him hard and often. One front-page column featured a photo that made Fletcher appear uber-dark and shadowy. If Fletcher was elected lieutenant governor, Donohoe warned, "he is practically governor, according to future strategy in high GOP echelons. The blueprint calls for Evans to take a 'free run' at Sen. Henry M. Jackson's seat in 1970—and if he is successful—Fletcher becomes the first Negro governor in the United States. …The plan looks air-tight if the voters are sucker enough to buy it. …Meanwhile, good old Art Fletcher knocks the constituency dead with a lot of pious palaver about the need for 'self-help, not hand-outs'—which is all fine and good—if his record in establishing ghetto co-ops in Pasco would back him up. To date, none are in operation."

"I had no intention of running against Scoop Jackson in 1970," Evans says. "And the notion that there was a plot to advance Art [to governor] was also preposterous. But we heard it with increasing frequency in the last weeks of the campaign. That was the real 'plot'—the effort to derail Art's chances at becoming lieutenant governor by spreading lies."

The Action Team countered with a paid, half-hour documentary, "The Fletcher Story," which aired on two Seattle TV stations, and a fund-raising luncheon at Seattle's landmark Olympic Hotel. The special guest was Massachusetts Senator Edward Brooke, the first African American elected to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction.

The *Post-Intelligencer*, Seattle's lively morning daily, endorsed the whole Action Team. *The Seattle Times* endorsed Evans, Gorton and Kramer but opined that Cherberg (the publisher's old friend) should be retained. *The Tri-City Herald* endorsed Evans but was mum on Fletcher and the other members of the team. Glenn Lee, the paper's flinty publisher, was wary of black power, former longtime journalists at the paper remember.

ON NOVEMBER 4, 1968, Dan Evans and Lud Kramer were handily re-elected; Slade Gorton eked out a 5,300-vote victory for attorney general—his election teetering on the absentee ballots for nine days. And Art Fletcher fell 48,000 votes short of becoming Washington's first black statewide elected official. In all, 1.23 million votes had been cast in the race. For two days Fletcher crossed his fingers that he might pull out victory in what he called "sudden death overtime." Cherberg's margin declined by only a whisker to 51.40 percent when all the absentees were tallied. Fletcher won East Pasco, but the rest of Franklin County voted Democratic as usual. The lieutenant governor thumped Fletcher in the Democratic strongholds of Pierce and Grays Harbor counties and even carried staunchly Republican Lewis County. Fletcher ran close races in King County, the state's most populous, and Spokane County, Eastern Washington's population center.

If a landmark election was a terrible thing to lose, Fletcher was upbeat, publicly at least. He cited the 79.5 percent voter turnout. "I had expected to lose by 150,000 votes if there were a big vote. Anything less than 100,000 is a moral victory," he said after graciously conceding to Cherberg via telegram.

For Fletcher, carrying conservative Yakima County by 184 votes amounted to a genuine moral victory. Donald Tait, the Conservative Party's standard bearer, scored only 785 votes in Yakima County, his home base—and some 11,000 statewide. But the damage inflicted by a mass mailing of the red-baiting newspaper edited by Tait, including an estimated 50,000 copies in Spokane County, may have cost Fletcher the election. The *Yakima Eagle's* front page featured a photo of Fletcher mowing his lawn. Not only was he big and black, his T-shirt was soaked with sweat. "Meet Your New Governor," the caption said. The *Eagle* was distributed at high school and college football games in the days before the general election, Fletcher said. "I ran into it wherever I went." So did Gorton. "It was appalling,"

the former U.S. senator says. When Gorton studied the final returns he was struck by the fact that he had outpaced Fletcher significantly in key Eastern Washington districts.

Dan Evans sees King County as the difference maker. The former three-term governor has been parsing King County election returns for 70 years. In 1968, when King was still fertile ground for mainstream Republicans, he outpolled his Democratic opponent, John J. O'Connell, by nearly 93,000 there. Gorton's margin in King was 40,000. Kramer, a former Seattle councilman, rolled up a 166,000-vote margin. "Granted, Lud had a weak opponent," Evans says, "but look at John Cherberg's King County vote: He beat Art by 2,100 votes." Race and anxiety about race clearly were factors in the King County vote, Evans says. "People would tell me, 'I'm sorry about Art Fletcher, but it was a really tough choice.' An elderly Republican woman said to me, 'Governor, I just couldn't vote for Mr. Fletcher because I was afraid some radical Negro group would assassinate you to make him governor!' Some people voted against Art because he was black, but some who were inclined to vote for him bought into the Black Panther/communist plot story and were worried about me."

Fletcher's sense of humor was intact when he visited the governor's office shortly after the election. He encountered Ralph Munro, a young Evans volunteer carrying a tray of coffee cups. Informed that the governor was meeting with a dozen black clergymen from around the state, Fletcher relieved Munro of the tray, placed a towel over his arm, burst into the room and proceeded to perform a perfect parody of a fawning Negro waiter. "The room convulsed in laughter," says Munro, Washington's former longtime secretary of state. "It was classic Art."

"WATCH WHAT we do, not what we say," Nixon's first attorney general, John Mitchell, famously told reporters at his first press conference when asked if the administration actually planned to roll back or soft-pedal civil rights laws, as some of its Southern supporters were claiming. The signals certainly were mixed: Back-room promises vs. soaring rhetoric. At Miami Beach, Nixon vowed his administration would:

> … build bridges to human dignity across that gulf that separates black America from white America. Black Americans, no more than white Americans, do not want more government programs that perpetuate dependency. They don't want to be a colony in a nation. They want the pride, and the self-respect, and the dignity that can only come if they have an equal chance to own their own homes, to own their own businesses, to be managers and executives as well as workers, to have a piece of the action in the exciting ventures of private enterprise. I pledge to you tonight that we shall have new programs which will provide that equal chance.

It was everything Art Fletcher espoused. Whether Nixon actually meant what he said remained to be seen.

In Miami and during post-convention strategy sessions, Nixon and Fletcher developed a genuine rapport, according to Fletcher biographer David Golland. The president-elect and George P. Shultz, the incoming Secretary of Labor, settled on Fletcher as their pick for Assistant Secretary of Labor. Shultz was an Affirmative Action supporter, much to the disdain of Strom Thurmond and hardnose conservatives like Agnew and Patrick J. Buchanan, the presidential speechwriter who maintained that racial preferences for black workers meant discriminating against white applicants "who had discriminated against no one."

Fletcher told Shultz he'd take the job on one condition—a bold move for an under-employed 43-year-old family man being offered a $38,750 federal job. Fletcher wanted the Office of Federal Contract Compliance added to the assistant secretary's purview. "Tasked with enforcing the non-discrimination clause in federal contracts as a means to enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the OFCC had the frankly awesome power to revoke federal contracts," Golland notes. It could also disqualify contractors from bidding on future work.

Shultz agreed, placing Contract Compliance in Fletcher's portfolio. In the months to come the nation watched as Fletcher placed himself in risky situations to advance minority hiring in the construction trades.

Nixon told aides that if the South came to see him as "the goddamnest integrationist there is" so be it—as long, at least, as the political calculus favored his re-election. John Ehrlichman, the Seattle lawyer who became a key Nixon aide and ended up serving 18 months in prison for his role in the Watergate cover-up, wrote in a 1982 memoir that Nixon championed the Affirmative Action plan to split the labor/civil rights coalition.

THE "REVISED PHILADELPHIA PLAN" presented to Nixon by Shultz and Fletcher revamped an executive order signed by President Johnson in an effort to force federal contractors in Philadelphia to hire more blacks. The revisions infused it with more power to impose minority-hiring goals and timetables on building trades unions and other federal contractors. Nixon gave it his imprimatur and Fletcher pushed ahead, even as the attorney general and comptroller general set to squabbling over the plan's legality.

The blowback came quickly. Protests erupted at construction sites in Pittsburgh, Chicago and other major cities in the fall of 1969. In Pittsburgh, blacks accounted for fully 16 percent of the population but only 1 percent of the skilled building trades workforce. The white contractors' organization, claiming it had made a good faith effort to recruit black apprentices, refused to do more. In Seattle, frustrated black contractors and their workers shut down work on King County's new Administration Building and a research facility at Harborview Medical Center. The 15 building trades unions in the state had only

Fletcher, the Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Nixon Administration, wades into a crowd of angry white construction workers in Chicago in 1969 for a hearing on Affirmative Action. *AP photo*

seven non-white apprentices among their 29,000 members. Governor Evans and King County's new executive, John Spellman, pronounced it appalling and jawboned the unions to open their ranks to minority workers.

Fletcher endured a number of death threats in his life. His closest call may have been in Chicago on September 24, 1969, when he arrived to hold hearings on implementation of Affirmative Action in the local building trades. Upwards of 3,000 angry white construction workers blocked the entrance to the Federal Building, "pummeling a black motorist's car" and menacing a cluster of brave white women lobbying for union and job-site integration. Fletcher moved the hearings to a better-secured location, the U.S. Customs House, having received assurances from the White House it would send in federal troops if necessary. He shouldered his way through another cursing crowd of hard hats as some 200 helmeted policemen and U.S. marshals stationed themselves at entrances. A very large target, Fletcher

was a profile in courage. Friends feared he wouldn't get out of Chicago alive.

When the shouting finally stopped, inside at least, contractors, unions and community groups agreed "to a voluntary plan to admit as many as 4,000 more blacks into the construction unions by the end of 1971." Fletcher described the experience as transformative—a moment when he "faced the elementary forces of life, racism and fear of loss of jobs," resulting in a battle of "naked power."

Fletcher talks with President Nixon in 1971 as he departs the administration to head the United Negro College Fund. *UPI photo*

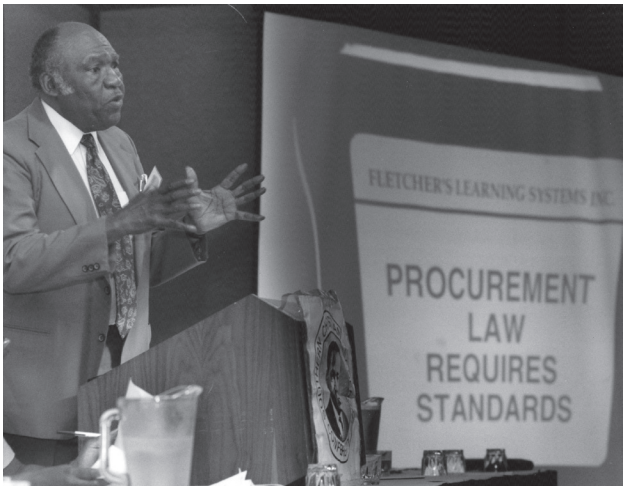
A year later, the number of blacks employed as skilled workers on Revised Philadelphia Plan projects nationwide had jumped from 2 percent to 22.7 percent. By 1971, however, it was abundantly clear voluntary plans weren't working. And mandatory plans were now, to use the vernacular of the Nixon White House, "in variance with the administration's goals at this point in time"—chief among them securing the re-election of the president. Fletcher was disheartened. The Oval Office Watergate tapes document Nixon's visceral determination to "screw" his enemies and win four more years. Whatever it took included opposing minority-hiring quotas. In a Labor Day speech to an audience of cheering construction workers Nixon all but abandoned the Philadelphia Plan.

Fletcher was now expendable. "They were concerned that every day Fletcher remained as assistant secretary of labor they were losing percentage points in swing states," says Golland. "The Oval Office tapes captured either George Meany, the president of the AFL-CIO, or Peter Brennan, head of the Building and Construction Trades Council, telling Nixon that Fletcher wanted 'to be another Dr. King.' What's fascinating to our ears in the second decade of the 21st century is that they meant that as a bad thing! They basically convinced Nixon to get rid of Fletcher." Because Nixon genuinely liked Fletcher, they created a post for him at the United Nations working for Ambassador George H.W. Bush and couched it as a promotion. Bush and Fletcher would become close friends.

IN 1972, Fletcher became executive director of the United Negro College Fund. He helped elevate its slogan to greatness by insisting that one word had to be changed. Summoned to the offices of the Young & Rubicam ad agency, Fletcher was shown an ad with the tagline "A mind is a hell of a thing to waste." A licensed preacher himself, Fletcher observed that "hell" would be offensive to black ministers and their flocks. They tossed around "awful," "sad," "horrible" and "a pity" before they arrived at "terrible"—a Eureka moment if there ever was one.

A former Labor Department lawyer in the Johnson Administration bristled when Fletcher began being hailed as "The Father of Affirmative Action." The title Fletcher preferred was "The father of Affirmative Action enforcements"—a qualifier no headline writer would embrace.

From 1973 to 1989, Fletcher headed a Washington, D.C., consulting firm that focused on helping companies implement Affirmative Action plans. In 1976, President Gerald R. Ford appointed him as his deputy assistant for urban affairs. Two years later, he unsuccessfully challenged D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, well aware that a Republican stood little chance in the heavily Democratic district. For Fletcher, the issues were what mattered.



Seeking the GOP presidential nomination, Fletcher addresses the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1995. *Ellis Lucia photo, Washington State Archives*

In 1989, Fletcher was appointed chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission by President Bush, serving in that post through 1993.

Two heart attacks and bypass surgery slowed the old civil rights warrior. But he was energized by anger in 1995 after Kansas Senator Bob Dole, an old friend, and other Republican conservatives reversed course on Affirmative Action. Fletcher wrote a

blistering letter to every Republican in the 104th Congress before declaring his candidacy for the 1996 GOP presidential nomination. With the slogan "Send five and keep affirmative action alive," he set out to finance his campaign through $5 contributions. Fletcher delighted at being back in the fight. "People are saying, *'The original source is alive?* My goodness, let's hear what you've got to say." At 71, he acknowledged the campaign was a crusade to "save my legacy."

Arthur Allen Fletcher, an original source, died in Washington, D.C., on July 12, 2005, at the age of 80. His legacy as one of the 20th century's civil rights pioneers is alive. The color-line is dimmer but still bright. In a book he wrote in 1974 to express his frustration over backsliding in the war against discrimination, Fletcher wrote that he wasn't defeated, just seeking new ways "to carry forward the quest for justice and dignity."

John C. Hughes
Legacy Washington
Office of the Secretary of State

Source Notes

Fletcher with President George H.W. Bush at the White House in 1990. *AP, University Archives, Mabee Library, Washburn University*

"ex-shoe shine boy" and "ice man," "Fletcher makes history," AP, 9-18-1968

"And we're very musical," Fletcher to author, 9-15-1968

"the problem of the color-line," *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois, p. 12

"believe they can call me 'nigger', " quoted in *Charles Z. Smith: Trailblazer*, John C. Hughes, Legacy Washington, 2009, www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/stories/charles-z-smith/

"a practical militant," "Fletcher makes history"

"Art could draw 400," quoted in *Slade Gorton, A Half Century in Politics*, John C. Hughes, p. 85

"Guess who's coming to lunch?" Gorton to author, 2011

like to take on a lion, Reed to author, 2-28-2018

"a big, street-smart kid," "The Kansas Roots of Arthur Allen Fletcher: Football All-Star to the 'Father of Affirmative Action,' " Mark A. Peterson, *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains*, (V.34 #3, pp. 224-241), 2011, p. 227

first black named to Kansas all-stars, "The Kansas Roots," p. 229

Fletcher heard Mary McLeod Bethune, "The Kansas Roots," p. 226

no Negroes need apply, "The Kansas Roots," p. 228

senior portraits integrated alphabetically, David H. Golland to author, 2-28-2018

"big and mean," quoted in "Arthur Fletcher" profile, Donna St. George, *Philadelphia*

Inquirer, 11-12-1995

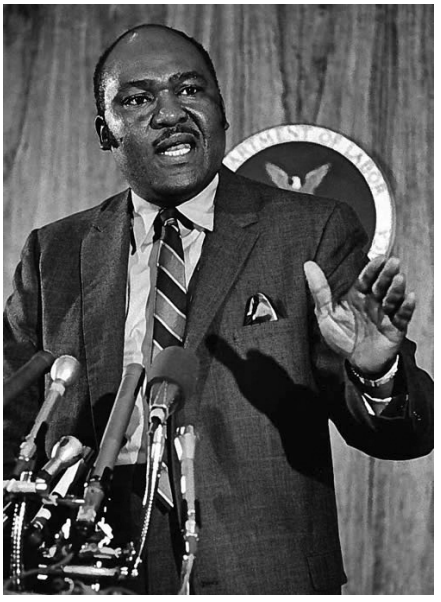
"didn't like the fact" he had authority, "Colts' cut unkind," John Steadman, *Baltimore Sun* , 2-1-1998

"hit by the enemy or hit by your own," "Arthur Fletcher" profile

extent of injuries, "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"non-battle injury," Golland to author

pulled up shirt to show scars, "Colts' cut unkind"



Fletcher as Assistant Secretary of Labor.
U.S. Department of Labor

barred blacks from their squads, "The Kansas Roots," p. 231

"the greatest decision I ever made," quoted in "The Kansas Roots," p. 232

"In spite of the load," Richard M. Godlove letter to R.S. Himmelright, Kennewick, 12-30-1966, Washburn University Archives

"proves by example that a negro," Godlove letter

"harder to stop than a Santa Fe Streamliner," quoted in "The Kansas Roots"

"Art was all 'everything,' " Godlove letter

"obviously such a fine person," Godlove letter

"the party of abolition and Lincoln," "The Kansas Roots"

"didn't set the world on fire," quoted in "Colts' cut unkind"

Fletcher stood in a corner and wept, "Colts' cut unkind"

"more show than substance," "The Kansas Roots," p. 239

"Daddy, where's Mama," "Arthur Fletcher" profile, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

"Oh, no!" "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"walking around in a fog," "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"always believed things would get better," Fletcher biography, *A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste: Arthur Fletcher and the Conundrum of the Black Republican,* Golland, Chapter 3

"out of the ashes of tragedy," Fletcher biography

"only as a stopgap measure," Fletcher biography

"a unique hybrid," Fletcher biography

1,200 African Americans in East Pasco, *Railroads, Reclamation and the River*, Walter A. Oberst, p. 127

thousands of "sundown towns," cited in "The Green Book: The First Travel Guide for African-Americans Dates to the 1930s," Kate Kelly, Huffpost, 3-8-2014, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/kate-kelly/the-green-book-the-first_b_4549962.html

"But sign or no sign," Briggs to author, 1-30-2018

"anti-cop riot," Briggs to author, 3-21-2018

"chained to a pole like a dog," quoted in "Black Tri-Citians reflect on struggles, progress," Kristi Pihl, *Tri-City Herald*, 2-14-2011

"the Birmingham of Washington," quoted in "Black Tri-Citians reflect"

pushed for paved streets, *Railroads, Reclamation and the River*, p. 165

"the automotive shop of choice," Fletcher biography, Chapter 3

"The profits from the first year," Fletcher biography

"if you want to get rid of the gun," Newton quotes collected at https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/huey_newton

"The difference between a militant and extremist," quoted in "Negro Racial Diplomats Lose to Militants, Fletcher Warns," *Tri-City Herald*, 10-19-1967

"I'm a great guy," quoted in "Negroes Feel Insecure On New Job, Says Fletcher," *Seattle P-I,* 7-2-1968

"A color-blind lightning rod," Fletcher to author, September 1968

"impossible not to be impressed," quoted from Chapter 29, Evans work-in-progress autobiography

"Before long," Reed to author, 2-2-2018

"all that energy and charisma," Reed to author

"it was Art," Reed to author

"His first reaction was to laugh," Reed to author

"Nonviolence is the way of the hero," "Crowd Honors Dr. King," Don Hannula, *Seattle Times*, 4-7-1968

to keep Dr. King's dream alive, "State Mourns Slain Negro," *The Daily Chronicle*, Centralia, 5-5-1968

"*Negro* had become a pejorative," *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, Mark

Kurlansky, p. 6

"Afro-Americans" and "black people," "New Clothing Store to Accent Fashions for Afro-Americans," *Seattle Times*, 10-11-1968, p. 26

"colorful African designs," "New Clothing Store to Accent Fashions"

"the power and prestige," quoted in "Pasco Negro In Race for Lieutenant Governor," Lyle Burt, *Seattle Times*, 5-3-1968, p. 8

"I would demonstrate," "Pasco Negro In Race"

"The Negroes' Negro problem," "Pasco Negro In Race"

"I'm a practical militant," "Pasco Negro In Race"

"They want people to help themselves," quoted in "First Negro Seeks Governor's Office," AP, *The Daily Chronicle*, Centralia, 5-18-1968, p. 7

Rockefeller visits Seattle, "Fletcher to Meet Rocky Tomorrow," *Tri-City Herald*, 7-1-1968

finishing only three out of nine races, "Bill Muncey—The First Golden Age, Prologue," http://thunderboats.ning.com/page/bill-muncey-the-first-golden-age-prologue

marriage on the rocks, "Bill Muncey—The First Golden Age"

"just what is his position?" "GOP Lt. Governor's Race Pits Bill Muncey, Fletcher," AP, *The Daily Chronicle*, Centralia, 9-11-1968

"ordered to shoot to kill," "1968 Democratic Convention," Haynes Johnson, *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 2008

"The whole world is watching!" *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, p. 279-282

smashed cameras and beat journalists, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*

"Gestapo tactics" and "You Jew son-of-a-bitch!" quoted in *1968: The Year That Rocked the World*, p. 283, and "The Craziest Conventions in U.S. History," Josh Zeitz, *Politico Magazine*, 3-12-2016

"The troubled spirit of America," Evans 1968 keynote address, Washington State Archives

"a foreign aid program," quoted in "Fletcher makes history in state primary vote," AP, *Port Angeles Evening News*, 9-18-1968

"relied almost verbatim," Fletcher biography, Chapter 3

"I see a day," Nixon acceptance speech, 8-8-1968, The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968

"listening to our advice," quoted in "Fletcher Named to Nixon Group of Minorities," Lyle Burt, *Seattle Times*, 9-5-1968

"a master technician," quoted in "Agnew Favorably Impresses Notables at Dinner," *Seattle Times*, 8-20-1968

duties "greatly expanded," "Cherberg Enters Fletcher Lair," *Tri-City Herald*, 9-6-1968, p. 1

"by Labor Day," "GOP Lt. Governor's Race Pits Bill Muncey, Fletcher"

"the little corporal from Alabama," quoted in "GOP Candidates Team Up For Campaign Fly-in Series," *Seattle Times*, Val Varney, 10-5-1968, p. 5

"to exclude me from the human race," "GOP Candidates Team Up"

" 'keep the niggers in their place.' " quoted in "Law and Order Is Top Demo Issue," AP, Dale Nelson, *Tri-City Herald*, 9-11-1968, p. 22

"give other Negroes hope," quoted in "Fletcher makes history in state primary vote," AP, *Port Angeles Evening News*, 9-18-1968

Fewer than 100,000 blacks, HistoryLink.org 1970 Census demographics, www.historylink.org/File/9426; 2017 Census Quick Facts, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/WA

"The Man With a Plan," quoted from Action Team newspaper ad, *Seattle Times*, 11-3-1968, Washington State Archives

"no useful purpose," quoted in "Cherberg Won't Debate Fletcher," *Seattle Times*, 10-1-1968 **"bases for Communist revolution,"** quoted in "Wallaceite Says Reds Use Fletcher," *Tri-City Herald*, November 1968

"far too heavyweight for Pasco," "Wallaceite Says Reds Use Fletcher"

"we'll wind up with Mr. Fletcher as governor," "Wallaceite Says Reds Use Fletcher"

"I'm gratified to find," "Wallaceite Says Reds Use Fletcher"

"he is practically governor," "Is Evans pulling the sneak on his running mate?" *The Washington Teamster*, Ed Donohoe, 10-11-1968, p. 1

"I had no intention," Evans to author, 1-27-2018

"The Fletcher Story" and Brooke visit, "TV Programs, U.S. Senator Boost Fletcher, *Seattle Times*, Lyle Burt, 10-23-1968

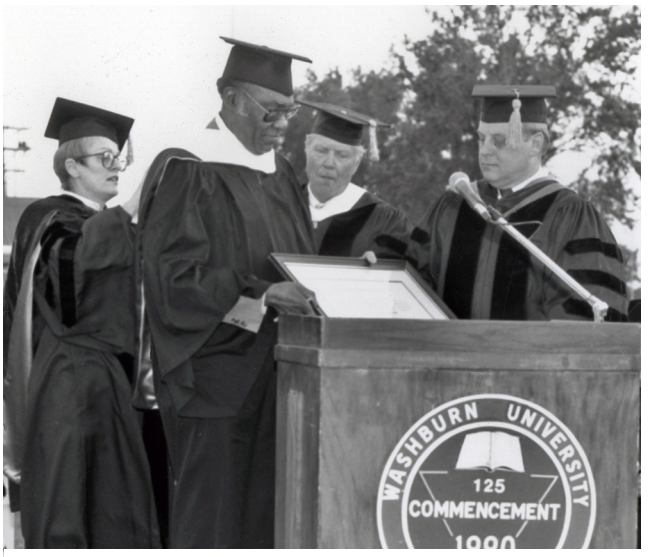
Endorsement details, "The P-I's Election Recommendations," *Post-Intelligencer*, 11-3-1968; "Weighing the Candidates," *Seattle Times*, 11-3-1968; "Re-Elect Governor Evans," *Tri-City Herald*, 11-1-1968, p. 4

Glenn Lee wary of black power, Jack Briggs to author 3-20-2018

"Sudden death overtime," "Fletcher Close Behind Cherberg," *Tri-City Herald*, 11-6-1968, p. 1

Fletcher won East Pasco, "Fletcher Close Behind Cherberg"

79.5 percent voter turnout, https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voter-participation.aspx
"expected to lose by 150,000 votes," "Fletcher Loses, To Leave Pasco," *Tri-City Herald*, 11-7-1968, p. 1
50,000 copies in Spokane, "Fletcher Loses, To Leave Pasco"
"Meet Your New Governor," "His loss was turned into a win," AP, Nicholas Geranios, *Yakima Herald-Republic*, 12-26-1989
"I ran into it wherever I went," quoted in "His loss was turned into a win"
"It was appalling," quoted in *Slade Gorton, A Half Century in Politics*, p. 86
Evans' analysis of King County, Evans to author, 1-19-2018
"I just couldn't vote for Mr. Fletcher," Evans to author
"The room convulsed in laughter," Munro to author, 1-17-2018
"Watch what we do," quoted in "Watch What We Do," William Safire, *The New York Times*, 11-14-1988
"build bridges to human dignity," Nixon acceptance speech, 8-8-1968, The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25968
"who had discriminated against no one," *Nixon's White House Wars*, Patrick J. Buchanan, p. 86
"Tasked with enforcing," *A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste,* Chapter 3
"the goddamnest integrationist there is," quoted in *Richard Nixon, The Life*, John A. Farrell, p. 395
to split the labor/civil rights coalition, *Constructing Affirmative Action,* David H. Golland, p. 136
16 percent of the population, *Constructing Affirmative Action,* pp. 132-133
only seven non-white apprentices, *John Spellman, Politics Never Broke His Heart*, pp. 101-102
"pummeling a black motorist's car, *Constructing Affirmative Action,* p. 134
assurances from White House, *Black Power at Work*, pp. 125-126
helmeted policemen and federal marshals, *Black Power at Work*, pp. 125-126
Friends feared for his safety, "Beyond the Rhetoric," Harry C. Alford, https://www.nationalbcc.org/news/beyond-the-rhetoric/253-beyond-the-rhetoric-42
"a voluntary plan to admit as many as 4,000, *Constructing Affirmative Action,* David H. Golland, p. 134



Fletcher receives an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from Washburn University, his alma mater, in 1990. *University Archives, Mabee Library, Washburn University*

"faced the elementary forces of life," quoted in *Black Power at Work*, pp. 140-141

jumped from 2 percent to 22.7 percent, *Constructing Affirmative Action*, p. 160

In a Labor Day speech, *Constructing Affirmative Action*, p. 156

wanted "to be another Dr. King," Golland to author, 3-5-2018

"a hell of a thing to waste," Golland to author

former Labor Department lawyer bristled, "Arthur Fletcher" profile, Donna St. George, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 11-12-1995

The title Fletcher preferred, Golland to author

wrote a blistering letter, "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"Send five and keep affirmative action alive," "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"The original source is alive?" Arthur Fletcher" profile

to "save my legacy," "Arthur Fletcher" profile

"To carry forward the quest," *The Silent Sellout*, p. 81