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Bush Urges Va. GOP To Unite

Mood Conciliatory At Fund-Raiser

By R.H. Melton
Washington Post Staff Writer

RICHMOND, June 21—President Bush called on Virginia Republicans tonight to unite quickly after last week's divisive gubernatorial primary and urged the party to recruit blacks and other minority voters for the fall election against Democratic nominee L. Douglas Wilder.

Bush, appearing at a fund-raising dinner at the request of state party leaders, told 1,600 Republican activists that it was "absolutely essential" and "terribly important" for them to heal the wounds caused by the three-way primary fight that ended last Tuesday with the nomination of J. Marshall Coleman for governor.

"It's up to you people in this room," Bush said. "It doesn't matter who you were for in the primary—come together."

Coleman defeated 8th District Rep. Stan Parris and former U.S. senator Paul S. Trible Jr. in a primary characterized by sharply negative rhetoric and television commercials. The primary campaign drained \$10 million from the pocketbooks of Republican contributors and left some supporters of the two losers, especially Trible, who finished second, feeling bitter about the final outcome.

Tonight, members of all three candidates' camps sought in interviews to put the best face on the divisions that persist eight days after the party's first statewide primary in 40 years.



President Bush clasps hands with J. Marshall Coleman and state Sen. Edwina P. Dalton at fund-raiser in Richmond.

"I think Paul's campaign staff, and perhaps some of his other supporters, are still upset about the result," said Charles Garber, a party official from Richmond who supported Trible. "But that's politics. We will heal and be ready to go."

"I was very disappointed and still haven't gotten over it," said Parris supporter Don Moseley, another party official. But, he added, "There won't be any problem with unity . . . Rest is what the hell we need."

Bush, who described the three primary election contestants as "gladiators," made light of the rancor in the campaign, saying he had told his wife, Barbara, that he wanted to visit some of Virginia's historic battlefield sites.

"She said she didn't know if I was referring to the Civil War or to the Republican gubernatorial primary,"

Bush said to laughter from the crowd.

"Yes, there was rough and tumble competition," Bush added a moment later. "Now that the dust has settled, we are still Republicans."

Wilder, the state's lieutenant governor, would be the nation's first elected black governor if he wins the Nov. 7 general election. Bush did not mention him by name during his brief address, but did make a point of telling the GOP leaders to "take our Republican message—a message of hope and opportunity—to the black and other minority voters of Virginia."

"We will not concede a community, a precinct or a single voter to the opposition," Bush said to his strongest applause of the evening.

Parris and Trible, who sat at the head table tonight with Coleman, received standing ovations from the

crowd for their warm words for the man who defeated them.

"Let the word go out, Marshall Coleman, this Republican Party of Virginia is alive and well and united and headed for victory in November," said Trible, who later presented to Coleman a framed print of the Executive Mansion where Virginia governors reside.

"This is Marshall's new home," Trible said.

Coleman, whose media consultant had three camera crews filming the speeches tonight for use in later television spots, thanked Trible and Parris for their pledges of support, saying, "I cannot think of two men I would rather have at my side in the tough contest that lies ahead."

"We are united by a bond," Coleman added, "that transcends personal differences and the effects of our competitive struggles."

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