

'TEN COMMANDMENTS' JUDGE WINS ALABAMA PRIMARY

Judge Roy Moore, dubbed Alabama's "Ten Commandments Judge" because of his winning battle to post the sacred scripture on his courtroom wall, cruised to the Republican nomination for chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court in the state's June primary. Moore received nearly 60 percent of the vote, almost doubling the vote total of the closest of his three challengers.

Moore rose to national prominence in 1995, after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued him over his display of the Ten Commandments and his custom of asking Christian ministers to open court sessions with prayer. The Alabama Supreme Court eventually dismissed the case, but the court let Judge Moore have the plaque and the prayers.

"I do believe God's blessing has been upon us," Moore told cheering supporters on election night. "We've been very successful in this campaign so far because of the issue of morality. People recognize that. We've had the people's support rather than the other kind."

Moore's strongest opponent in the primary was sitting state Supreme Court Justice Harold See, who had the backing of the powerful Business Council of Alabama and had amassed a campaign war chest of more than \$1 million. Moore had raised just over \$250,000 dollars.

William Stewart, Ph.D., chair of the political science

department at the University of Alabama, said Moore is a unique phenomenon and that the campaign has become more like a crusade because of Moore's stand on the Bible.

"I think anyone who is up against him in the fall is up against a tough struggle," Stewart said. "People feel we've moved too far, and he's taking us back to the way our country used to be."

John Giles, president of the Christian Coalition of Alabama, said Moore's victory was not only a win for the judge, but for conservatives as a group. "The majority of Alabamians are economic, moral and social conservatives," he said. "The primary election communicated to the average person sitting in the pew in Alabama that you can make a difference."

Since Moore's Ten Commandments battles, legislatures in Indiana, Kentucky and South Dakota have approved public displays of the laws given to Moses from God. Moore said that if he wins the chief justice position, he will take his plaque of the Ten Commandments with him to the judicial building in Montgomery. With the victory, Moore will face Democrat Sharon Yates in the Nov. 7 general election.

—David Lamb in Birmingham, Ala.