

Scott Walker Plays Up Humble Roots, Contrasting With Bush

Republican Scott Walker played up his humble roots on Wednesday on his first trip to largely rural South Carolina since announcing a bid for his party's 2016 presidential nomination, subtly drawing the contrast between him and rival Jeb Bush.

In the opening days of his official campaign, the 47-year-old Wisconsin governor is projecting a down-home image as the Harley-riding son of a preacher as he seeks to stand out in a pack of 15 Republican candidates.

"Looking back over the years, my brother and I, we did not inherit fame or fortune," he said. "What we got was the belief that if you worked hard and played by the rules, you could do and be anything."

Asked about his comment later, Walker told reporters he did not intend his remark as a slap at Bush, the former Florida governor who hails from one of America's great political dynasties and who leads many polls of Republican voters. Bush reported his total net worth earlier this month as being as much as \$22 million.

"It's just who I am. You can contrast it with anybody you want, Democrat or Republican alike," Walker said. "That's just something that tells my narrative."

Still, his remarks, plus his insistence that the Republican Party needs "new, fresh" leadership and his opposition to the Common Core education policy that Bush supports, are a way of differentiating himself as the Republicans gird for their first debate on Aug. 6 in Cleveland.

His approach is drawing support in South Carolina, whose

nominating contest early next year comes third after Iowa and New Hampshire. Walker is the solid poll leader in Iowa but is not doing as well in New Hampshire, which means South Carolina could serve as an important buffer for him.

Crowds were big at all his events. Supporter Ray Morris said he heard about Walker's 8 a.m. event at Low Country Harley-Davidson in North Charleston shortly before it was to start and had to rush to get there.

"I grabbed a couple moon pies and jumped on my Honda and here I am," Morris said, referring to a popular Southern confection involving chocolate, graham crackers and marshmallow.

Walker's early days as a candidate have not been without controversy. In South Carolina, he was pressed to explain comments that he made in Las Vegas on Tuesday in which he said the Boy Scouts' former policy banning gay troop leaders had "protected children."

What he meant, he said, was that children were protected from "political and media discussion about it, instead of just focusing on what Scouts are about, which is about camping and citizenship and things of that nature."

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