



Catalyst: Jim Martin and the Rise of North Carolina Republicans

John Hood

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In 1985, newly elected North Carolina governor Jim Martin met with Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander, U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and six other Republican leaders to map out a strategy for making the GOP competitive in state and local elections, particularly in the South. That the strategy this group developed has succeeded shows Martin's under-appreciated role as a catalyst for political change in North Carolina and beyond.

This book chronicles the life and political career of Martin, North Carolina's first two-term Republican governor. Before his election to that job in 1984, Martin served 12 years in Congress and six years on the Mecklenburg County Commission. He began his professional career as a professor of chemistry at Davidson College. During his long political career, Martin often led the way in showing his fellow Republicans that political pragmatism could work hand-in-hand with fiscal conservatism. Along the way, his career has intersected with such notable figures as Richard Nixon, Jesse Helms, Jim Hunt, Ralph Nader, Ronald Reagan and Elizabeth Dole.

In *Catalyst*, we follow Martin from his days in the 1960s as chairman of the first Republican-majority commission in North Carolina's most-populous county to his 2012 role in investigating scandals at the University of North Carolina.

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