



# Getting Into the Game: The Pre-Presidential Rhetoric of Ronald Reagan

*Mary E. Stuckey*

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Why did Ronald Reagan have such a strong impact on the political scene when he first ran for the presidency? Politics as practiced by Reagan is examined through analysis of Reagan's rhetoric from his days as the governor of California to his campaign for the presidency in 1980. The author contends that Reagan's approach is a new phenomenon and will outlast his presidency by impacting the way future candidates run for office. Candidates in the past used symbols of our national identity to achieve and articulate substantive, policy-oriented goals. Modern political rhetoric is seen as increasingly personalistic and individually oriented. When rhetoric becomes dissociated from the policies and programs of national government, there is a danger that the symbols, devoid of substance, become meaningless. The author suggests that Reagan's rhetoric has accelerated the movement towards more style with less substance. This incisive book defines Reagan's impact, examines the conditions which enabled him to create such an impression on contemporary politics, and discusses the implications of his pre-presidential rhetoric and campaign style. Students and scholars of political science and communications, will find *Getting Into The Game* a thought provoking study.

*Getting Into The Game* begins with an analysis of the role played by rhetoric in our national politics and American political culture from 1960 to 1980. Further chapters provide detailed analysis of Reagan's rhetoric during his term as governor and his bid for the presidency. Reagan's communication is put into the context of the political culture and personal aspects of his rhetoric. A summary of the major arguments and themes of Reagan's presidency and the far reaching significance of his pre-presidential campaign rhetoric complete the study.

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