

FERENCY, Zoltan

1967

Michigan Party Chief Quits Over LBJ

By Glenn Engle

Special to The Washington Post

LANSING, Mich., Nov. 28—An admitted maverick from the state and national Democratic fold for refusing to endorse the renomination of President Johnson, Zoltan A. Ferency today resigned, effective Jan. 15, as Michigan Party chairman.

He said he could not "in good conscience" be a part of a "power-brokered convention" next year that would choose Mr. Johnson by acclamation.

"If the convention is going to be wired for sound and that sound is 'Happy birthday, LBJ,' then count me out," Ferency told a press conference.

Over strong protests from other Michigan Democratic leaders, Ferency has been saying for weeks that he would like to see a "free, open and unshackled" convention in

which delegates would weigh the President's foreign and domestic record against the promise of other potential nominees.

Mr. Johnson's unchallenged renomination, he said, today, would cause serious Democratic defections in the 1968 election among "liberals, intellectuals, academicians, young people, Negroes and women."

A Vietnam war dove, Ferency called Sen. Eugene F. McCarthy of Minnesota a "worthy challenger." He said McCarthy, a frequent Administration critic, would have only a "remote" chance of defeating an incumbent President. But, he added, the Senator has received a "better than expected" response to his statement that he is considering a trial run in presidential primaries.

"I will do whatever I can to help him if he becomes a candidate," Ferency asserted.

Ferency, 45, has held the



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ZOLTAN A. FERENCY

... "count me out"

State chairmanship for nearly five years. He intends to return to fulltime law practice in Flint, where he already is practicing part time.

Doubling as the Democratic nominee for Governor last

year, Ferency was swamped by incumbent George Romney by a record margin of more than half a million votes. As a result of the candidacy, he will remain titular head of the State party.

Ferency also included Democratic National Chairman John M. Bailey in his blast. He called Bailey "just a puppet," oriented to political patronage, not to issues as are Michigan Democrats.

But he made it clear also that his differences with other Michigan party leaders are just as sharply drawn as with Bailey.

He said that despite long arguments with them, they are virtually unanimously committed to the President's renomination and re-election.

Ferency said he would step down sooner than Jan. 15 if a successor is picked by the Democratic State Central Committee before then.

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