

TWO FLORIDA DAILIES' TREATMENT OF CANDIDATES DURING
THE DEMOCRATIC SENATE PRIMARY OF 1950:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF
THE *TAMPA TRIBUNE* AND THE *ST. PETERSBURG TIMES*

By

Colleen J. Birch

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate Council
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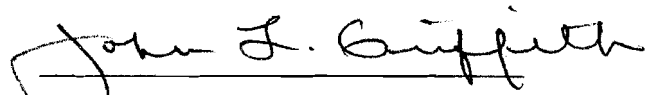
Chairperson: John L. Griffith, Ed.D.
Major Department: Journalism and Communications

The almost solid editorial support of challenger George Smathers by the Florida press became a campaign issue during the Democratic senate primary of 1950. The relationship between editorial endorsement and news coverage of Smathers and incumbent Claude Pepper was investigated through evaluative assertion analysis of the *St. Petersburg Times*, the only major daily to endorse Pepper, and the *Tampa Tribune*, a leader among Smathers' backers.

All nonadvertising content of a random sample of issues published during the campaign period was analyzed. Assertions were categorized for direction, source, and placement.

The hypothesis that a positive proportional relation-

ship existed between the amount of negative assertions made about a candidate and the quantity of overall coverage he received was supported. Also it was discovered that no significant relationship existed between the direction of editorial notice a candidate received and bias in the nature of assertions made about him in a publications news column.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John L. Griffith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

John L. Griffith, Ed.D.
Chairperson