

The Red & Black

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ELECTION PREVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Democratic incumbent Sen. Raphael Warnock at UGA Chapel on Oct. 20. JESSICA GRATIGNY/STAFF



Former UGA and professional football player Herschel Walker is running as the Republican candidate against Sen. Warnock. SYDNEY FORDICES/STAFF

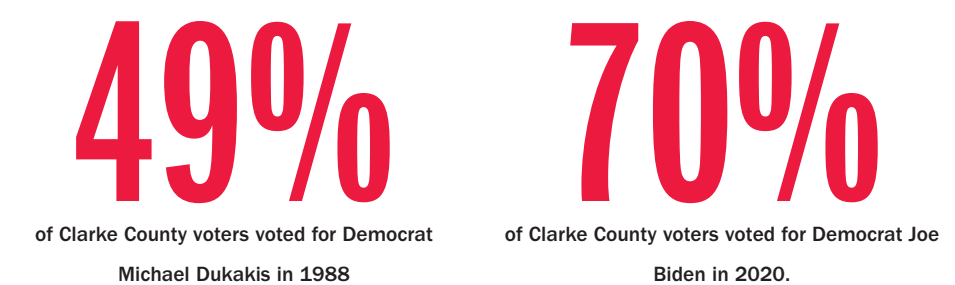
No voters taken for granted

Why state politicians campaign in historically-blue Athens

Julia Walkup

Athens hasn't always been this blue. In the 1988 presidential election, the races were virtually tied in Clarke County — there were only four more votes for the Democratic candidate, Michael Dukakis, than the Republican candidate, George H. W. Bush. Thirty-two years later in 2020, 70% of Clarke County voted for Joe Biden. Trey Hood, a political science professor at the University of Georgia, expects this trend to continue for the 2022 election. Athens is a blue hot spot — an urban area with a large population of college students and minority groups. However, despite Clarke County residents being almost guaranteed to vote for the Democratic senator and governor candidates in the upcoming election, both Republican and Democratic candidates make it a habit to visit UGA and Athens to campaign.

Candidate influence
Katy Gates, a sophomore public relations major at UGA, is the social media chair for Dawgs for Warnock, the digital director for Students for Stacey, the director of local



government relations for the UGA Student Government Association and the vice president of the College Democrats of Georgia. She said turnout is important for Democrats, and candidates campaign in Athens to rally the votes of young people. “Because of the presence of the University of Georgia, there are, for eight months out of the year, a very, very large population of young voters in Athens-Clarke County,” Gates said. “Even though they might not be registered to vote in Athens, odds are a lot of them are in-state and are registered to vote somewhere else in Georgia. So you can reach all of these young voters from all across the state of Georgia on the University of Georgia’s campus.” Gates clarified that she does not speak

on behalf of SGA and that her political opinions are separate from her SGA involvement. Hood said the fight for the vote is mostly in the suburbs surrounding Atlanta, so a lot of candidates spend their time battling there. Gates said, however, that just because Athens is almost guaranteed to vote blue, that voters shouldn't be taken for granted. “It's cliché, but really, every vote counts,” Gates said. With that in mind, it's important to note that Republican politicians also find themselves at UGA and in Athens. Josh Gregory, chairman of the College Republicans at UGA and a senior finance and political science major, said the College Republicans

host conservative candidates to engage directly with students. He said the group intends to offer this space as both a platform for conservative candidates and a place for students to engage with conservative ideas. Gregory also said it's a great way for conservative candidates to recruit people to work on their campaigns. Despite Athens being a “blue dot in a red sea,” Gregory said UGA isn't necessarily as liberal as the county it's located in. He said there are a lot of students who are conservative, moderate or politically disengaged. “The University of Georgia and her student body is very split,” Gregory said.

Between the hedges again
Like the concept behind Democratic candidates coming to UGA to speak with young people, Hood said there are other opportunities for the diverse UGA community to come together — football games. Both Gov. Brian Kemp and Senatorial candidate Herschel Walker have visited Georgia football games this season, with Walker attending the game and Kemp at a tailgate. Hood said this is a great opportunity for Republican politicians to engage with people from all over the state.

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Former Georgia football coach Vince Dooley dies at 90

Stuart Steele

Legendary former Georgia football head coach Vince Dooley died peacefully in his home on Friday afternoon, according to University of Georgia officials. He was 90 years old. He is survived by his wife and four children, who were present at the time of his passing. Dooley was hospitalized earlier this month with a case of COVID-19, but had returned to his home in Athens on Oct. 10. Dooley, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame, was the head coach for Georgia's 1980 run to a national championship victory and won a program record 201 games in his 25 seasons as head coach. He also served as athletic director from 1979 to 2004. Current Georgia football head coach Kirby Smart posted about Dooley's passing on Twitter on Oct. 28. “Our family is heartbroken by the death of Coach Dooley,” Smart wrote. “He was one of a kind with an unmatched love for UGA! He and Barbara embraced my family from day one. He will be missed in our community, university, and in college athletics.” Josh Brooks, UGA's current athletic director, also released a statement following the news. “We are heartbroken to hear of Coach Dooley's passing,” Brooks said. “Georgia Athletics is what it is today because of Vince Dooley. He was a role model, mentor and friend. My thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and his entire family. Vince Dooley was one of the greatest coaches and athletics administrators of all time, and I am humbled and honored to serve in a role that he built. All of us at the University of Georgia will continue to honor his legacy for years to come.” Before Georgia's annual matchup against Florida, both teams observed a moment of silence in honor of the historic coach.



Georgia head coach Vince Dooley during the 1980-1981 football season when the Bulldogs won a national championship. COURTESY/UGA ATHLETICS

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