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Turning Points: A Memoir. By George A. "Bud" Sinner and Bob Jansen. Foreword by Clay S. Jenkinson. Washburn, ND: Dakota Institute Press of the Lewis & Clark Fort Mandan Foundation, 2011. xix + 359 pp. Photographs, appendix, notes, index. \$29.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Turning Points focuses on the political career of George Sinner from the 1960s to his two terms as a Democratic governor of North Dakota from 1984 to 1992. His legacy, however, is felt beyond North Dakota and was influential on the national scene as well. Many of the governor's reflections on his early life provide insight into the seminal events that influenced him as an adult. Sinner's reflections on his experience after politics focus on his family and on what his life has taught him.

The character that emerges from the memoir exemplifies virtues often associated with the Great Plains: frugal living, family-centeredness, honesty, integrity, faith, practicality, cooperation, and service. Sinner's integrity as governor was much admired, even among those who disagreed with his policies. He aimed at seeing the good in people, even his opponents. His political backbone was not particularly partisan but practical, allowing for an approach to governing that served him well in dealing with difficult issues during a pessimistic period in North Dakota's history: taxes and deep budget cuts resulting from a severe recession, outmigration of young people, water shortages, and farm foreclosures. Although a devout Catholic, he was undogmatic and more than once found himself admonished by the Church for less than orthodox positions, particularly on abortion.

Though his policies and appointments did not always win the endorsement of more partisan Democrats, the governor stood his ground on what he believed to be good for North Dakotans. He resisted letting the power of his position distort his purpose of service and refused to take advantage of several perks and privileges that come with being governor. He understood that truth and integrity mattered to his constituents and demonstrated being a man of the people throughout his political career. In a Republican-dominated state, Sinner won a second term with nearly 60% of the vote. His policies and reorganizations, particularly in the Economic Development Commission, helped turn the state's economy around and laid the groundwork

on which succeeding governors have built. Today, with the state's robust economy, North Dakotans are more optimistic about the future than they have been in the last 40 years.

Turning Points is a collection of stories and events from the Heartland, some humorous, others tragic, some life changing, all of them shedding light on the life and character of "Bud" Sinner.

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