

Cuomo stresses need for Democratic ideals

BY HENRY GOMEZ
The Jambar

Former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo wants a quick war with Iraq and said President Bush must set forth a domestic agenda to help the U.S. survive economically once military action ends.

Cuomo voiced these and other core Democratic beliefs Wednesday as he addressed a Chestnut Room crowded with students, professors, administrators and local political officials. Cuomo, the longest-serving governor in modern New York history, was this year's Skeggs lecturer.

In his speech, Cuomo focused heavily on foreign relations and economics and the need to return to more Democratic policymaking.

"You need to work as hard as you can," he urged audience members. "And then, they will try as hard as they can to help you."

Cuomo talked about his childhood and the quirky relationships he shared with his mother and father. Mom was stubbornly resistant when it came to complimenting her son. Dad underestimated Cuomo's financial needs when he learned his son was going into politics.

"I told him I would need money to run for office," Cuomo recalled. His father thought it over for a day, called him back and brought out an old savings account Cuomo's parents had kept. There was about \$700 saved.

"There

you go,' he told me with a smile. 'Now you don't have to ask anyone else for money.'"

Many of Cuomo's stories brought laughter from the large crowd, but as the almost two-hour speech continued, the former governor took a serious tone when chastising Bush's policies.

"You told us: 'Leave no child behind,'" Cuomo said in reference to a 2000 Republican campaign theme. "Then you left them behind."

Education, Cuomo said, is the key component toward rebuilding an economy that has turned sour since President Clinton left office. Cuomo blamed Republicans in the House and Senate and Bush for the fast digression.

"You know what tough shape the economy is in here in Youngstown," Cuomo said. "When Clinton left, we had the biggest surplus in history. Now, we have the biggest deficit in history — two years later! And the biggest debt!"

Cuomo contended that the \$450 billion tax plan put forth by Bush would be better spent on individual states, health care and education.

One topic on which Cuomo agreed with Bush was the war in Iraq.

"Saddam's tyrannical regime will be

ended," he said. "And then, we'll turn to a new chapter in the book of history. It will be a hopeful new chapter."

That new chapter, Cuomo said, must be fueled by different tax and spend programs. He blamed Bush for looking out for America's upper-crust of wealth with tax cuts and encouraged more breaks for the middle-, working-class.

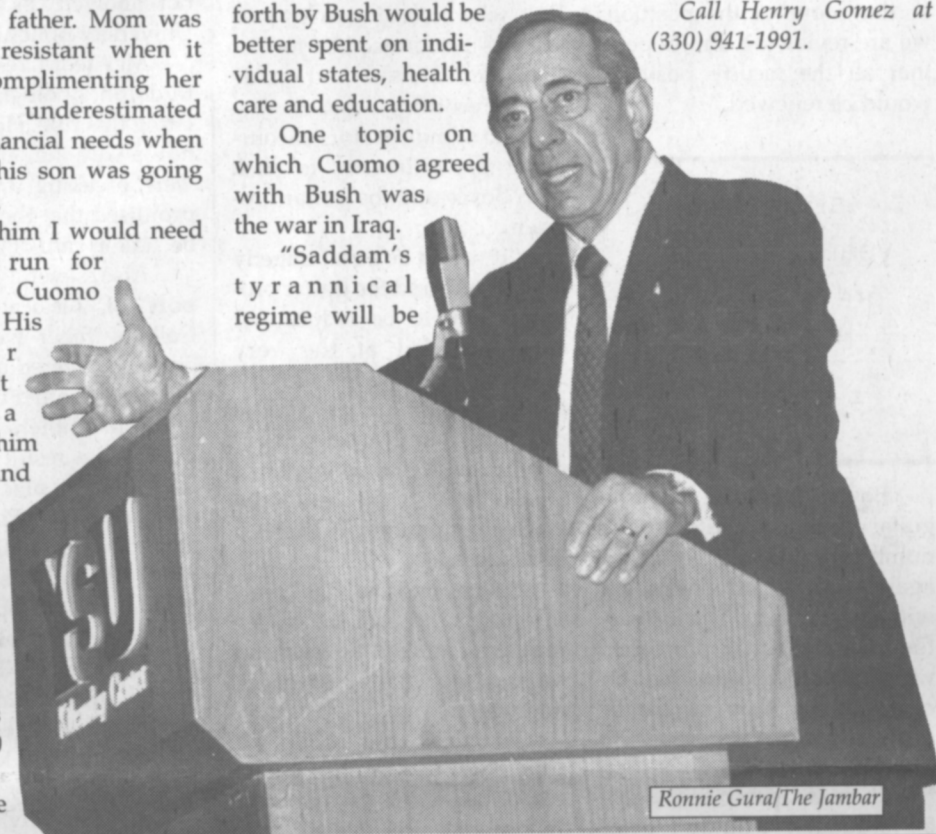
The consumers, he said, are those who work — not those who play the stock market.

"Seventy percent of our economy is consumption," he said.

Audience questions ranged from the war to why Cuomo would not run for president. A high school student in the crowd, Ben Clayman of Liberty, asked Cuomo what advice he had for young people interested in politics.

"It depends on what your passion is," Cuomo responded. "I never thought I'd be a politician. But this is what my passion is."

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