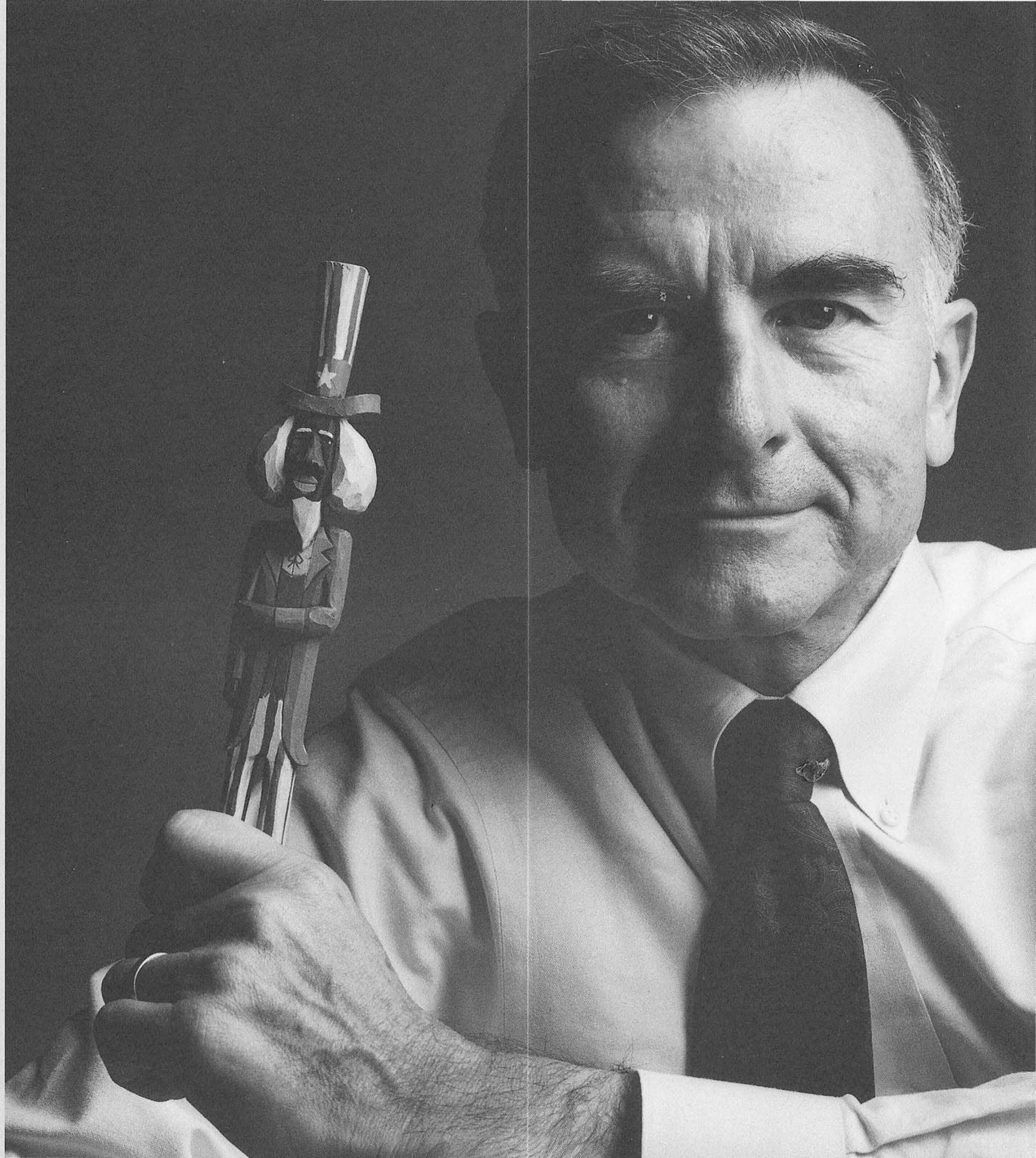




"I want to provoke students into confronting their own pre-conceptions about their political principles. I use the Macintosh® to test their assumptions and to stimulate their spirit of investigation."



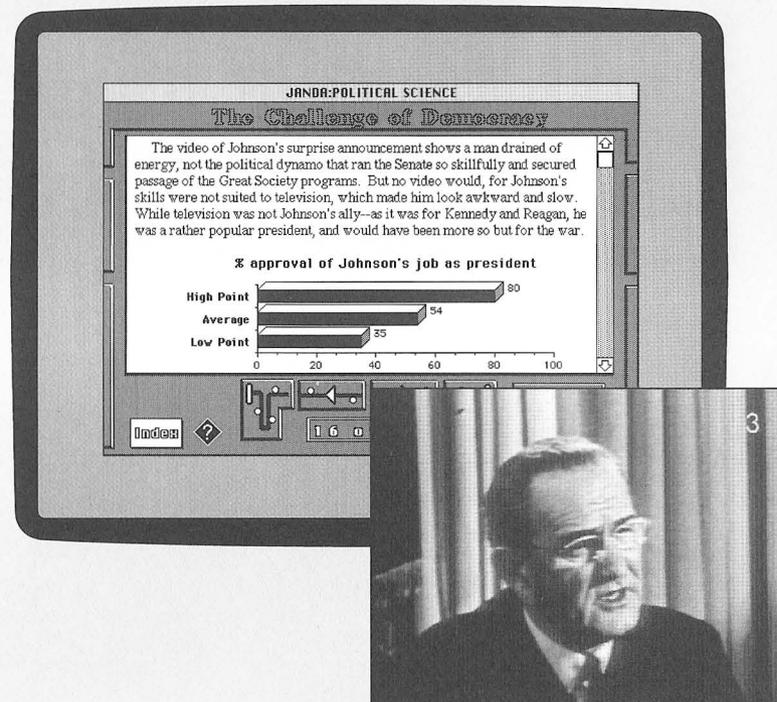
**What do you do?** “I teach courses in American government, computer methods, and political parties. I’ve cowritten an American government textbook, and I develop computer courseware. Crosstabs is a program that allows students to test hypotheses about the political attitudes and behavior of voters and politicians. I created Idealog because I want to provoke students into confronting their own preconceptions about their political principles. Videopaths to American Government is a multimedia resource that lets students witness history-making events—from the Roosevelt to the Reagan era.”

**What led you to Macintosh?** “I’ve been involved with computing for 35 years. In that time, I’ve used everything from mainframes to DOS computers, and I’ve never found anything to match the Macintosh for sheer ease of use. The Macintosh inspired me to develop courseware, because I knew that, finally, here was a tool for transmitting sophisticated ideas in a way that was quick and easy to learn. You simply set your students down, show them how to use the mouse, and they’re off.”

**How has it changed what you do?** “Macintosh has permeated every aspect of my work—especially the task of helping students become more comfortable with quantitative research. Most freshmen have no concept of how to take data and reanalyze it. Crosstabs provides an engaging way to interact with sample survey data. For example, students can examine variables such as party membership, media consumption, religion, attitudes toward various issues—and how all of this affects people’s voting patterns. I use the Macintosh to test their assumptions and to stimulate their spirit of investigation.

“Idealog, on the other hand, is more concerned with self-examination. It has students classify themselves on the

*Videopaths to American Government uses HyperCard and a videodisc to explore seminal events in recent American history. For example, students can read about a particular president’s popularity rating...*



*...then, with the click of a button, see and hear actual video clips—in this case a speech given by former President Lyndon Johnson.*

liberal/conservative continuum. Then it asks a series of questions about various issues—affirmative action, redistribution of wealth, government censorship, and so on. Then, based on the students' responses, the computer analyzes their values and classifies them in comparison with people all across the country. Often, students are quite surprised at the results. It starts a real inquiry into their own political beliefs.

“Videopaths to American Government uses HyperCard® and a videodisc to explore key political events in recent American history. By viewing and comparing video clips of actual events—from the helicopters retreating from the American Embassy in Saigon, to Martin Luther King's ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, to the unfolding of the Watergate affair—students get a much more vivid perspective than they could from only reading the textbook.”

**What about the future?** “I think Macintosh will play an increasing role in the teaching of political science—from presentations and lectures to courseware. But, from my standpoint, the greatest benefit is the way it stimulates students to do creative research on their own. Because the most important thing I can do as a professor is to inspire people to keep on learning once the course is over.”

**Kenneth Janda**

Payson S. Wild Professor  
of Political Science  
Northwestern University

P O L I T I C A L   S C I E N C E

