

Retirement Not For McKeldin

Sun

Likely Candidate For Mayor Feels Challenge Is Offered In Baltimore

By HENRY L. TREWHITT

"Politics has been very good to me," said Theodore R. McKeldin. He leaned back in the paneled office in the Mathieson Building and contemplated the prospect of private life.

It was clear he didn't think very favorably of it. Mr. McKeldin has not committed himself, but the likelihood is that he will ask to become mayor of Baltimore again after his second term as governor ends in January.

Public life, at least as he lives it, is "physically exhausting," he conceded, "but I thoroughly enjoy myself. And I think my services could still be useful."

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"Challenging" Job In City
He leaned forward suddenly and waved a finger to emphasize his point: "There is a challenging and difficult job to be done in Baltimore, as in all Eastern cities."

At 57—he will be 58 in November—Mr. McKeldin still radiates the great reserve of energy that has carried him through several campaigns, extensive travels, and hundreds of speeches since he became a creature of politics in 1926.

He has a false front tooth which he wiggles with his tongue in moments of reflection. He wiggled it as he looked back on his career and agreed that future opponents are likely to



"When you become Governor you are no longer partisan"

make an issue of his travels outside the State during his eight years as governor.

"I think I have been a good-will salesman for the State, which I think is good," he said. He has extolled the virtues of Maryland from Istanbul to San Francisco, he recalled.

"I think it is a compliment to Maryland that international or-

ganizations want her Governor as a speaker," he said.

And on the job back home, Mr. McKeldin is in his offices in Baltimore or Annapolis, or traveling throughout the State, fifteen hours a day right through the week.

He has covered the State at least as well, and probably more

thoroughly, than any governor in history. He chortled as he recalled the day a man in a community near Hagerstown identified him as "the first live governor who has ever spoken in our town."

Mrs. McKeldin and their two children are used to it, the Governor said, but being away from his family is still the most painful result of his schedule.

The political career of the Governor really got under way in 1927, when he became executive secretary of the late Mayor William F. Broening.

Defeated Jackson For Mayor

It included unsuccessful campaigns for mayor in 1939 and for governor in 1942 and eventual success when he defeated the Democratic incumbent, Howard Jackson, to become Mayor in 1943.

He was beaten for governor by William Preston Lane, Jr., in 1946 but defeated Mr. Lane in 1950 by a majority of more than 93,000 to become the third Republican governor in Maryland's history. SEP 1 1958
Roads And Parks

The greatest moments? Mr. McKeldin lists them as his election to the governorship, his election as mayor and the speech of nomination for Dwight D. Eisenhower at the Republican National Convention in 1952.

The Governor quickly cited the development of the long-range highway construction program as the foremost accomplishment of his two terms. And he spoke with firm pride of expansion in the park system, the State teachers colleges, the construction of chronic-disease hospitals—"We have done a magnificent job with those."

Mr. McKeldin credits Mrs. McKeldin, the former Honolulu Clair Manzer, with the decision that made him a candidate for governor in 1950.

Mrs. McKeldin's View

He was reluctant, he recalled, citing his previous two defeats, when Mrs. McKeldin stepped in.

"She told me," he laughed, "You know very well if you don't run you will be going all over the State making speeches for whoever does. So I ran."

The low points? The Governor appeared to have difficulty recalling any. "A rational Republican knows the chances are he's not going to make it because of the tremendous Democratic majority," he observed.

Voters "Cross Party Lines"

But, himself a Republican who has on occasion bucked against his own party leadership, he quickly offered hope for GOP candidates in November: "The Democrats have demonstrated they will cross party lines—and they should."

For that matter, Mr. McKeldin said, the governor should cease to be a partisan as soon as he is elected.

His record, he elaborated, will show that he has "appointed as many Democrats as Republicans."

Nondrinking Toastmaster

The Governor's reputation as an orator is international. Although he doesn't drink, he has served as toastmaster for a

meeting of liquor dealers. And he has won votes by speaking the language of gestures of the deaf mute.

But he firmly refuses to expound upon his own plans for the future.

"I don't propose to do anything about that until after this next election in November," he said. "Then I'll make up my mind very promptly."

Eligibility Issue

Several law firms already have offered to file a suit to determine his eligibility to run again for mayor, he reported.

Opponents have served notice they intend to make the most of the possibility that his tenure as governor, with official residence in Annapolis, has ruled him out of another term in the City Hall.

At any rate, there is little possibility that voters in Maryland have seen his name on a ballot for the last time.