



Mandel freed; won't rule out political future

By Allegra Bennett

Former Governor Marvin Mandel was finally released yesterday from federal custody after 18 months in prison and two weeks in a prerelease center. He continued to protest his innocence and said he has not ruled out a future in politics.

"I have no intention of walking away from politics," Mr. Mandel told reporters at a press conference he called after his early morning release from the Volunteers of America.

"It's been my life. I am not ruling out seeking political office," he said, adding that he would consider seeking any public office that "I think I could win."

At the office of one of his lawyers, Mr. Mandel held court for 30 minutes early yesterday morning, patiently answering questions that have been asked over and over by reporters during the last 18 months.

He said he called the press conference because he and his wife, Jeanne, want some time to themselves and do not wish to be "hounded over the weekend."

Mr. Mandel was convicted of mail-fraud and racketeering charges. The jury found that while governor he accepted \$350,000 in gifts from friends to arrange favorable racing dates at the now-defunct Marlboro race-track.

Yesterday, Mr. Mandel said that he may have been guilty of bad judgment, but otherwise did nothing wrong.

"I did not do what I was supposed to have done," he said of the federal charges of which he was convicted, adding that even the U.S. Parole Board had difficulty establishing exactly what he had done wrong.

"I am convinced that what I did or did not do was not a crime," he said.

President Reagan commuted the sentences of the 61-year-old Mr. Mandel and W. Dale Hess, one of five code-

See MANDEL, C2, Col. 3

Marvin Mandel, with his lawyer, Bruce Bereano, says at press conference that he hasn't ruled out a reentry into politics.

Sun photo—William Hotz

Sun, 19 Dec. 1981

Mandel freed; won't rule out politics

MANDEL, from CI

fendants, December 3.

The two left the Boston street prerelease center together. The other four codefendants were freed earlier.

Mr. Mandel said that if he regretted anything, it was that codefendant Irv Kovens, his long-time friend and financial backer, had to get caught up in "my problems."

"Kovens and I were friends," Mr. Mandel said. "His problem was caused because he was my friend. The only thing he did was lend me some money . . . I am sorry my friend got in trouble because he was my friend."

Mr. Mandel said that a large part of his problem may have stemmed from his not having dispelled "an illusion created" about himself. The illusion was that "I knew everything about what happened in the state of Maryland, that I had my fingers on everything that happened here."