

# Maryland's Modern-Day Medici

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All this time we thought Bruce Bereano was a mere lobbyist, narrowly focused on plying the corridors of the State House to help his corporate clients. Now it turns out Mr. Bereano has a second calling: Maryland's modern-day Medici. He's a patron of the arts, commissioning a portrait for the state's once-disgraced and now-exonerated former governor, Marvin Mandel.

It so happens that Mr. Mandel owes much of his own recent success in the lobbying trade to Mr. Bereano. It was also Mr. Bereano who took the lead in having Mr. Mandel released from federal prison and then winning his exoneration.

So it shouldn't come as a surprise that Mr. Bereano has arranged for the Mandel portrait to be painted by Southern Maryland artist Peter Egell. Since the state wasn't willing to fork over the dough for a portrait in these economically trying times, Mr. Bereano volunteered; actually, he volunteered to raise the money from the governor's friends and their lobbying clients.

Once the Mandel portrait is finished, Gov. William Donald Schaefer plans to hang it in the second-floor reception room in the State House along with paintings of other former chief executives. Conspicuously missing, of course, is Mr. Mandel's

still-disgraced predecessor, Spiro T. Agnew.

We hope other six-figure lobbyists (Mr. Bereano earned nearly \$700,000 last year) follow the lead of this groundbreaking Medici. Maryland needs private-sector supporters of the arts. What better way for these peddlers of influence to peddle their wares: they could create a Hall of Heroes in the State House with commissioned portraits of Maryland's top elected leaders. Lobbyists, of course, would pick up the tab.

Perhaps Mr. Mandel might donate an earlier work commissioned by Sen. Roy N. Staten, the legislature's arts patron of the 1970s: a splendid sculpture of the then governor (sans pipe). This bust could take its place of honor in the Hall of Heroes and lay the groundwork for other, similar commissioned sculptures.

Lobbying is one of Maryland's biggest growth industries. The top practitioners bring home enormous sums of money. Now it is time they give something back to society. Just as the Medici family of Italy became major backers of the arts and letters in Florence and Tuscany during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, the lobbyists of Maryland can do the same for 20th century Annapolis. Mr. Bereano is showing them the way.