

# Strange career of No. 2

**Role:** Maryland's lieutenant governors have mostly toiled in obscurity. Now Kathleen Kennedy Townsend has a chance to become the first in the office to be elected governor.

*There shall be a lieutenant governor, who shall have only the duties delegated to him by the governor ...*

Section 1A, Maryland Constitution

By MICHAEL DRESSER  
SUN STAFF

**C**HRISTOPHER C. COX must have done one heck of a job as Maryland's lieutenant governor. When he was finished in 1868, nobody had to redo it for more than 100 years.

The office that House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. is apparently aspiring to has had a curious history — in its brief 19th-century incarnation and since its reappearance in 1970.

For one of its occupants, it led to the office of governor — albeit in an acting capacity — and not for long. For another, it led to the sad demise of a distinguished political career. A third was elected in obscurity, served in exile and was dumped unceremoniously by the man who chose him.

This year, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who has been anything but an obscurity in her two terms in the office, is hoping to become the first sitting lieutenant governor to be elected to the top spot.

With the backing of Gov. Parris N. Glendening and top Democratic leaders in a state where no Republican has won the State House since 1966, she appears to have a good shot. Taylor, who recently passed on the chance to succeed Richard N. Dixon as state treasurer, is apparently under consideration as a possible No. 2.

Some people question whether the office is a worthy goal for a man who has served effectively in one of state government's three most powerful jobs for almost a decade. For Taylor, history could provide a guide to his possible future.

Maryland's first lieutenant governor since Colonial times was Cox, a distinguished physician and former Union general. He won the office in 1864 — the year Maryland rewrote its constitution at a convention dominated by pro-Northern forces.

The 1864 constitution, which among other things abolished slavery in Maryland, was in many ways patterned after the U.S. Constitution. [See Office, 4F]



J.H. YOUNG: 1862

**First:** Christopher C. Cox, a former Union general, won the office of lieutenant governor in 1864.



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**Kathleen Kennedy Townsend**



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**Blair Lee III:**  
1971-1979



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**Samuel W. Bogley III:**  
1979-1982



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**J. Joseph Curran Jr.:**  
1983-1987



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**Melvin A. Steinberg:**  
1987-1995

# Civil War, Agnew shaped history of No. 2

[Office, from Page 1F]

State archivist Edward Papenfuss said convention delegates were operating under a quite real threat that in a state close to the front lines, a Confederate raid could seize the governor. They wanted a lieutenant governor who could step in — just in case.

Within three years, however, Southern sympathizers had seized political control of the state. Calling a convention in 1867, they rewrote the Constitution and jettisoned almost every federal-style innovation of the 1864 document, including the No. 2 office.

Flash forward to 1968: Republican Richard M. Nixon surprises the political world by picking Spiro T. Agnew, Maryland governor for only two years as his running mate. They win, leaving Maryland without a governor or a statewide official chosen by the people to take Agnew's place. The General Assembly elects the Speaker of the House, Marvin Mandel of Baltimore.

The realization that a little-known (outside Annapolis) Baltimore politician had become governor without facing the statewide electorate spurred new interest in restoring the office of lieutenant governor.

Melvin A. "Mickey" Steinberg, then a senator but later the state's fourth modern lieutenant governor, said the committee that crafted the constitutional amendment re-establishing the office studied the models in many other states.

Steinberg said the panel decided to have the governor and lieutenant governor elected as a ticket after observing that many states had elected a Republican to one office and a Democrat to the other. That, he said, was not the way to harmonious government.

The amendment's authors decided to leave the definition of the lieutenant governor's role — besides that of designated successor — up to the governor.

Each governor comes from a different background and should be free to tailor the lieutenant governor's role to complement his or her strengths, Steinberg said.

In 1970, the amendment went to the voters, who were counseled by *The Sun* and *The Evening Sun* to reject what the afternoon paper called an "unnecessary frill." Voters responded by passing the measure by almost a 2-1 margin.

The procession of politicians who revolved through the modern office began with state Sen. Blair Lee III, a patrician Montgomery Countian. Mandel accorded Lee broad influence, particularly over budget policy. Lee remained a loyal ally and the two were re-elected in 1974.

Lee became the only Maryland lieutenant governor to exercise the full powers of the boss when Mandel was convicted of federal mail fraud charges in 1977. The acting governor was not implicated in the scandal but was swept from office when Mandel-weary voters chose reformist long shot Harry Hughes in the 1978 Democratic primary.

Hughes' first lieutenant governor, Samuel W. Bogley III, provides any potential lieutenant governor a cautionary tale in how not to succeed in the No. 2 office.

Chosen in desperation, the former Prince George's County councilman gave Hughes little but exasperation as he openly opposed the governor's position in favor of abortion rights. Bogley quickly found himself with little to do and no perceptible influence on policy. Hughes dropped him from his ticket in 1982.

Hughes then turned to state Sen. J. Joseph Curran, Jr., who played a more conventional lieutenant governor role. He loyally supported the boss and played an advisory role in a few issues that deeply interested him — mental health, economic development and criminal justice.

Curran used the post as a springboard to a successful 1986 run for attorney general — a post he still holds. But he remembers his former job as four good years.

"A lot of it is largely ceremonial, to be honest with you," he said. "One thing I did learn is there's only one governor."

Steinberg learned the same lesson, painfully.

When William Donald Schaefer asked the Senate president to be his ticket-mate in 1986, Steinberg became the highest-ranking officeholder to accept the position.

The plan was that Steinberg would fill a gap in the former Baltimore mayor's resume by acting as chief emissary to the legislature.

For four years, the arrangement worked smoothly, and the administration chalked up many a victory on the road to re-election in 1990. But Steinberg refused to openly support a Schaefer tax plan and quickly went from powerful deputy to the second coming of Sam Bogley.

Without Schaefer's support, the office provided a poor base



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR: SUN STAFF

**At the board:** Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kenney Townsend presents a plaque to former Treasurer Richard N. Dixon.

from which to launch a campaign for governor. Steinberg lost badly in the 1994 primary and has been out of politics ever since.

Townsend, plucked from the Justice Department by Glendening in 1994, has been perhaps the most influential lieutenant governor. Glendening delegated important policy areas to her — including criminal justice, economic development, and youth and family issues. "I've been very fortunate to have as a partner a governor with whom I agree on many issues and who treated me as a partner," she said.

Townsend said that she and Glendening had a solid agreement

on her role and that he has delivered on his promises.

Asked what a potential governor should look for in a lieutenant, Townsend said "loyalty, competency and wisdom."

Steinberg said he has talked about the No. 2 job with Taylor and thinks the House speaker would bring a lot to a Townsend administration.

In spite of his falling-out with the boss, Steinberg said, he has no regrets about the experience. Besides the former lieutenant said, he and Schaefer are pals again.

"If he wants to run again, you get the word to him that I'll run with him again," Steinberg said.