

James Declines Judgeship, Wants Party Job

Annapolis Bureau of The Sun

Annapolis, March 18—Senator William S. James (D., Harford), the president of the Senate, turned down today an offer from Governor Mandel to become chief judge of the new District Court.

Mr. James said that instead of taking the "tempting" offer of the chief judgeship of the court system he helped create, he would rather remain as head of the Senate and run for the chairmanship of the state Democratic party.

Harry R. Hughes, the former state senator and the Governor's secretary of transportation-designate, is expected to resign the party chairmanship this spring when he assumes his cabinet post in the Mandel administration.

Mr. James, 57, said he will run for the party chairmanship at the spring party meeting in late April or early May.

A uniform, statewide district court system, replacing the magistrates courts and taking over the existing Municipal Court in Baltimore city and People's Courts in Montgomery, Prince Georges and Anne Arundel counties, comes into effect this July.

Twelve district courts with 78 lawyer judges will be estab-

lished. A chief judge for the unified state lower court system will be appointed to administer the system from Annapolis.

Mr. James said he considered taking the judicial post which "would present a tremendous challenge in court administration as the system starts up and during its first few years."

Chance At Chairmanship

But he said, such considerations as having to move from his Harford county home to Annapolis full time, having to leave the Legislature after 25 years, 8 of them as Senate president, and having to forego a chance at becoming party chairman, led him to decide against taking the chief judgeship.

Mr. James, who describes himself as a "moderate-progressive" and who has built up an impeccable reputation for honesty, fairness and ability during his years in the legislature, said he considers the party chairmanship particularly important at this time because of the presidential nominating convention coming up in 1972.

He has been an active member of the state Democratic group studying party reform and said that Maryland's convention Democrats, under the new elective system, "might prove a group with several

points of view on the issues."

His experience as moderator of the Senate, he said, "could prove useful" if, as party chairman, he was to lead the state delegation to the national Democratic convention.



WILLIAM S. JAMES