

Senate Boss Settles In

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Having abandoned whatever gubernatorial aspirations he once harbored, state Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. has set a new goal: becoming the longest-serving Senate president in Maryland history.

Miller (D-Prince George's) has scheduled a \$250-a-person fund-raising reception in Baltimore for Dec. 14. He said it signals his intent to run in 1998 for a sixth Senate term and to seek a fourth term as the chamber's presiding officer. If he is successful, his tenure would surpass the 12 years that William S. James, a Harford County Democrat, served as Senate president.

Miller, entering his 10th year as Senate president, already has presided over more legislative days than James, who was Senate president from 1963 to 1975,

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Miller Vying to Break a Senate Record

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because the General Assembly now meets for 90 days a year. In James's time, annual sessions lasted 30 or 60 days.

"There's been lots of speculation about my future," Miller, 52, said recently. "Will I run for governor, retire, become a judge? I plan to run for reelection. I'm energized."

Miller said his Baltimore event—a high-priced affair by state legislative standards—will be his major fund-raising effort of the current four-year election cycle. Invited guests include former Baltimore Colts quarterback John Unitas and current Redskins quarterback Gus Frerotte. President Clinton will send the audience a videotaped greeting, Miller said.

Miller raises money not so much to ensure his own reelection (he's a virtual cinch in his Clinton-based district) but to have plenty of cash to influence other senatorial races and secure his reelection as the chamber's president. His campaign war chest has a hefty \$211,000 on hand, and the Dec. 14 event could add thousands more.

In the 1994 elections, Miller spent \$370,000, much of it in donations to help his favorite colleagues win their elections.

Miller's longtime Prince George's County rival, Gov. Parris N. Glendening (D), has been raising money, too. According to campaign finance reports filed Nov. 28, Glendening's campaign organization raised more than \$340,000 in 1995. After paying expenses for salaries, office rent and other items, the campaign had more than \$221,000 in cash.