

1987 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

President Avoids Labels

Has Supported Wide Scope of Legislation

SENATOR THOMAS V. MIKE MILLER, JR.
Democrat — District 27 — Prince George's County
President of the Senate

General Assembly Service: Beginning fourth term in Senate. First elected to Senate in 1974. Served one term in House, 1971-75.

Positions Held at 1986 Session: Senate Judicial Proceedings Comm. (Chairman); Senate Executive Nominations Comm. (Member); Jt. Comm. on Investigation (Member); Jt. Task Fc. on Catastrophic Liability Insurance (Member); Legislative Policy Comm. (Member); PG Co. Senators (Chairman); Senate

Comm. on the Savings & Loan Industry (Member); Senate Deputy Majority Leader; Senate Rules Comm. (Member).

Other Positions, 1983-85 Sessions: 1983-Jt. Comm. on Juvenile Facilities (Chairman).

Other Political/Governmental Positions: MD Task Fc. on Victims' Services (Member 1985-86); MD Highway Safety Coordinating Comm. (Member 1985-86); Gov.'s Commsn. to Revise Domestic Relations Laws (Member).

Other Biographical Notes: Miller's family has a long connection with southern PG Co. His grandfather in 1913 opened "B.K. Miller's Store" which still operates in Clinton under the management of Miller's father. While only a 10-year old Miller began working in the family business. He is the eldest of 10 children. Reading is a mainstay hobby for Miller, with a special emphasis on history. He cites his all-time favorite book as the novel "All The King's Men" by Robert Penn Warren.

A key influence in his career was his mother, Esther, who prodded him away from making a career in the family store and urged him first to obtain a college degree



The General Assembly returns to work with new leadership in both the Senate and the House of Delegates.

and later to pursue a law career. With a life-long interest in politics, Miller's active political work began at the age of 18, when in 1962 he worked as a chauffeur-aide for the Republican candidate for Governor, who happened to be a family friend and

next-door neighbor. His entry into elected PG Co. politics came in 1970, when PG Democratic leaders Steny Hoyer and Peter O'Malley were searching for a strong candidate to add to their ticket from the South
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County area, and they picked up Miller for a Delegate position. Miller had previously worked from 1966-70 as a bill-drafter and administrative aide to the PG Co. Delegation in Annapolis.

Voting Ratings: MD Business for Responsive Govt. — 78% (83-86); MD League of Conservation Voters — 36% (83-86), 14% (79-82), 75% (75-78); MD Conservative Union — 43% (86), 0% (85), 48% (Avg since 80); Family Protection Lobby — 50% (83-86); Natl. Fedtn. Independent Business — 67% (83-86).

1986 Campaign Notes: Miller faced only nominal opposition in both the 1986 primary and general, although his two primary opponents were the first he has had to face since he initially ran for the Senate in 1974. Opposing Miller in the primary were J. Leslie Goodier, age 65, an environmental consultant who endorsed Sachs for Governor, and Sharon B. Miller, age 36, a former Republican and a "name's the same" spoiler candidate. PG Co. Council member Sue V. Mills had considered challenging Miller, but decided against it. Miller was opposed by Republican Ronald R. Austin in the general. Miller won both matches with 78% and 82% of the vote respectively.

Miller led a ticket in the primary titled the "27th District Democratic Team" with incumbents Gary Alexander, William McCaffrey and Joseph Vallario for Delegate; and William B.C. Addison, Jr., Marcy C. Canavan and Patricia A. Williamson for Democratic Central Committee. Walter Meinhardt, a life-long friend, was Treasurer. The ticket's slogan was "Responsible Government Doesn't Just Happen! It Takes Knowledge, Experience and Leadership!" Miller was endorsed for re-election by the Fraternal Order of Police; the AFL-CIO; the Stephanie Roper Committee; Med-Chi; MD Nurses Assoc.; Right to Life of MD PAC; PG Co. Firefighters Assoc.; and the MD Classified Employees Assoc.

Miller was an early and prominent supporter of Baltimore Mayor Schaefer for Governor, and led the formation of a county-wide pro-Schaefer ticket in PG Co. Miller notes that ultimately all incumbent PG Senators, Congressman Steny Hoyer, PG County Executive Parris Glendening, all incumbent courthouse officials and a majority of the County Council and House of Delegates joined him in endorsing Schaefer.

In 1978, Miller filled a leadership vacuum among the PG Co. Democratic organization when both dominant party leaders, Steny Hoyer and Winfield Kelly lost in their races for Lt. Governor and PG Co. Executive respectively. His prominence was fairly complete by 1982, when he was the key

leader in a successful coup to oust Senate President James Clark and replace him with Senator Melvin Steinberg. The bloc of seven votes of PG Co. Senators led by Miller was a cornerstone of Steinberg's victory. Miller was named Chairman of the Judicial Proceedings Committee and became a widely acknowledged "right hand man" for Steinberg, who once dubbed Miller "my enforcer" and also named him Deputy Majority Leader. Other PG Senators advanced under the Steinberg-Miller leadership, with Senators Art Dorman, Thomas O'Reilly, and Frank Komenda also assuming leadership positions in the Senate.

Miller was the driving force behind the Senate's Oct. 1985 opposition to Gov. Hughes' Chase Bank buyout plan.

As soon as it was announced in June, 1986 that Steinberg would vacate the Senate Presidency to run for Lt. Governor with Schaefer, Miller was viewed by most press commentators as the leading candidate to succeed him. By July 1986, press accounts reported that Miller had a firm hold on the votes he needed to be named President by the Senate's Democratic caucus. Senators earlier named as possible contenders, Larry Levitan, Norman Stone, Victor Cushwa and Clarence Blount, withdrew from consideration and in September, 1986 Miller began announcing his picks to become committee chairmen.

Issues & Style: Newspaper commentators have alternatively described Miller as conservative, liberal and moderate. Miller says he refuses to be labeled and that he tries to consider issues on their merits because "if I'm right I can't be too liberal and if I'm wrong I can't be too conservative." He describes himself as "practical, pragmatic and a hard worker."

On issues, Miller's stands have included opposition to abortion and gun control, support for tuition tax credits for parochial schools, support for the death penalty and support for raising the drinking age to 21. He was the driving force behind the Senate's brinkmanship stand in October, 1985 against Governor Hughes' plan for Chase Manhattan Bank to buy bankrupt MD savings and loans, a bailout which Miller denounced as too generous to those individuals who caused the crisis.

In 1986, Miller strongly denounced a House-passed bill to ban sale to minors of allegedly obscene rock-and-roll, saying the bill ran counter to free speech principles. He has led support for victims' rights legislation for crime victims and mandatory sentences for drug dealers. The much publicized 1982 torture and murder of college coed Stephanie Ann Roper occurred in Miller's district. He has supported an end to contested elections for circuit court judges, arguing the current process is demeaning for members of the bench. Miller has also supported switching MD tort law from the 19th century "contributive negligence" doctrine to a more modern "comparative negligence" basis.

Miller is also known for his frankness in speaking to the press and his not subtle criticisms of those who oppose him. Press commentators have termed Miller "up front . . . like the Green Bay Packers sweeping around the end . . . someone I'd want right next to me if I was storming Omaha Beach . . . an Irish humor . . . doesn't blink easily, a tough politician . . . extremely candid . . . volatile . . . an Irish temper . . . demands mindless political discipline for his loyalists . . ."

District Address: 8808 Old Branch Ave., Clinton, MD 20735. Tele. 868-6931.

Annapolis Address: State House, Annapolis, MD 21401. Tele. 858-3700.

Born: Dec. 3, 1942 in Clinton, MD

Spouse: Patricia

Religion: Roman Catholic

Children: Five (Tommy - 20; Melissa - 19; Melanie and Michelle, twins - 18; Amanda - 8).

Occupation: Self-employed attorney with firm of Miller & Webster, P.A.

Education: Univ. MD School of Law, LL.B. 1967; Univ. MD, B.S. 1964; Surrattsville High School, 1960.

Business & Financial Interests: (as per 4/18/86 financial disclosure) Owns family home jointly with wife. Owns 15 other properties. Owner: Miller & Webster, P.A.

Association Memberships: American Bar Assoc.; PG Co. Bar Assoc.; MD State Bar Assoc.; Surratts Democratic Club; Brandywine Democratic Club; Nottingham Democratic Club; Ft. Washington Democratic Club; Upper Marlboro Democratic Club; Clinton Dad's Club; Knights of Columbus; Clinton Boys and Girls Club; MD Historical Trust; Southern MD Society; Clinton-Camp Springs Coop; Southern PG Co. Bd of Trade; St. John's Church (Clinton).