

Ex-Delegate John S. White Dies at 64; Once Staged Sit-Down in Legislature

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Staff Reporter

John S. White, 64, former Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates who once staged a "sit down strike" in the General Assembly, died of a heart attack Sunday while vacationing at Nassau in the Bahamas.



Mr. White
ave., Colmar Manor.

Mr. White was an attorney in Prince Georges County for 37 years. He lived at 3602 41st

A short, stubby Irishman who believed in the direct approach, he broke into politics in 1927 when he didn't like the candidates for mayor of Colmar Manor and decided to run himself. He won.

He was elected a Prince Georges delegate to the Maryland legislature in 1935 on a platform that made use of his fondness for singing.

The legislators in Annapolis were studying various versions of "Maryland, My Maryland" for adoption as

the State song and Mr. White promised to sing the official version if and when he reached Annapolis.

In his first term, he drew attention by leading delegates of 18 border counties in a fight on a proposed sales tax. He was assigned to the Ways and Means Committee during his second term and battled for an increased state police force.

For his support of Herbert R. O'Connor in the race for Governor in 1938, Mr. White was named chairman of the Ways and Means committee. He fought to defeat a bill that proposed a ban on promiscuous use of fireworks but sponsored a measure that would have permanently licensed pinball machines.

He gained considerable publicity when he charged that communism had broken into the country's universities. "Even our Maryland colleges could stand a little investigation," he said.

His bill that would have required teachers to take an oath of allegiance to the United States to protect students from "hostile doctrines" was defeated.

The "sit down strike" took place in 1943. Perturbed because the Senate would not pass a bill he backed, Mr.

White pigeonholed all Senate bills in the Ways and Means Committee files until a compromise was reached. He became Speaker of the House in 1945 and served until he left the legislature two years later.

Mr. White, who once described himself as "active and aggressive by instinct and disposition," ran unsuccessfully for State Attorney General in 1946 and for Congress in 1952.

Born in Philadelphia, he attended the Wharton School of Finance and came to Washington with the Navy during World War I. He received a law degree from Georgetown University in 1923. He was a member of the Elks, Moose and Kiwanis Club.

He is survived by his wife, Mary, and a daughter, Mrs. Calhoun J. Killeen, both of the home address, and two sons, John S. White Jr., of New York City, and Thomas P., a student at the University of Mexico.