

Sen. Malkus dies at 86

• Public servant
spent 48 years in
General Assembly

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CAMBRIDGE — Sen. Frederick C. Malkus Jr. of Cambridge died Tuesday, Nov. 9, 1999, at Dorchester General Hospital. He was 86.

Malkus spent more than 50 years in public service, including six years in the U.S. Army during World War II and 48 years in the Maryland General Assembly.

Born July 1, 1913, in Baltimore, he was the son of the late Frederick C. and Louisa Rheinisch Malkus.

Sen. Malkus moved to Dorchester County at the age of 3, where he attended public schools. In 1934, he graduated from Western Maryland College, and in 1938 graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law. He financed his college education by trapping muskrats.

He served as supervisor of the Farm Security Administration for Dorchester, Talbot, Wicomico, Somerset and Worcester counties. From 1941 to 1946, he served in the U.S. Army with the 1st Division in Europe. He entered the Army as a private and was discharged as a major, earning five major battle stars in the European theater.

Sen. Malkus was a member of the Maryland House of Delegates from 1947 to 1951, and the Maryland Senate from 1951 to 1994. Upon his retirement at the end of the 1994 General Assembly session, he was the longest-serving state legislator in the United States.

During his tenure, he served on the Senate's Legislative Policy Committee from 1955 to 1994 and chaired its Judicial Proceedings Committee from 1955 to 1966. He served as President Pro Tem of the State Senate from 1975 to 1994.

For all that service, Malkus became respected both state-wide and locally and a friend to many who knew him.

Sen. Walter M. Baker, who served 16 years in the Senate with Malkus, called Malkus one of the most intelligent persons and compassionate persons with whom he's served.

"I have a great deal of respect for Fred," Baker said. "I learned an awful lot from him even though I chaired the committee he was on."

For many years, Baker chaired the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee of which Malkus was a member.

Baker said Malkus was a "hard worker" and always questioned people about the need for proposed legislation. He noted Malkus's "care for the 'little man,' the guy who didn't have anything."

Sen. Richard Colburn, saying the term is often over-used, called Malkus a "legend in his own time" and the "ultimate politician."

When Malkus declined to run for re-election to the 37th district Senate seat in 1994, Colburn, who served two terms in the House of Delegates, was elected to it. Colburn's house terms were while Malkus was in the Senate.

"As far as the workings of state government and being a good politician, I couldn't have had a better teacher," Colburn said.

"Certainly, it's a sad time, not just for Dorchester County and the Mid-Shore, but also for the state," Colburn added. "It's impossible to replace a legend. There will never be another Fred Malkus."

Malkus was also a "role model to Senate President Thomas V. 'Mike' Miller Jr.

"I considered him a good friend and a good advisor," Miller said. "He was a wonderful, thoughtful, unbought person who cared very much for Mother Nature and ordinary people and trying to help people get a step up in life."

"The Senate thought very, very highly of him," Miller said. "I don't know of anyone who served

his constituents better or longer than Fred Malkus. He meant so much to our state and the history of our state."

Miller pointed out that Malkus never lost a state legislative race, saying "Dorchester County never turned its back on him and he never turned his back on Dorchester County."

Miller, who will deliver the eulogy at Saturday's funeral service, recalled a day he spent campaigning in Cambridge with Malkus and the late Louis Goldstein.

"These two great World War II veterans ..., it was like the king of France and the King of England walking down the street," he said. "Shopkeepers were coming out of their shops, everyone knew who was walking down the street."

Miller elaborated on Malkus' World War II service, saying he "stepped up and quickly rose through the ranks." Malkus was a major when his service ended and was a decorated soldier.

And that service in World War II was a factor in a 1975 vote for President Pro Tem of the Maryland State Senate, Miller said. The president pro tem presides over the state senate in the absence of the senate president.

The contested election was decided in favor of Malkus, a conservative from the Eastern Shore, by the vote of Sen. Clarence W. Blount, a liberal African-American legislator from Baltimore City.

Miller said afterward Blount, also a World War II veteran, said he voted for Malkus thinking he could trust him because of his wartime service.

Blount, D-Baltimore, who served with Malkus from 1971 until Malkus' retirement in 1995, called Malkus the "Cal Ripken of the Senate"

"There probably won't be anybody anytime soon or maybe not ever that will challenge his record of longevity in the Senate," Blount said.

"Fred was a unique man and therefore a unique Senator... He was the most vocal of any of the members of the Eastern Shore Delegation. He challenged the Senate on almost every issue related to the Eastern Shore."

"He was a super Senator in representing his constituents on the Eastern Shore and Dorchester County. He worked hard to make sure the area he represented got its share of the budget, its share of funding for highways and other

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projects."

"He would fight environmentalists for the rights of the farmers to develop their land and the rights of the watermen... I remember him as a fighter for his constituents."

"Nobody was more meticulous in the Senate in terms of making sure he was doing his job in representing his constituents. He represented them with zest, zeal, colorful language and style. When you add it all up it made him a colorful person."

"He was very theatrical. You'd see him get up out of his seat, put his head back, ask you a question and then he'd say something back to you. He was very direct and normally didn't pull any punches. Though many times we were not together on the issues, I have the greatest respect for him. He was a good friend."

"If he told you something he meant it: If he was with you, he was with you. If he was against you, he was really against you. But it was upfront and honest and you appreciate that."

"He was a barometer of a good Senator. He linked the passage of time. As the younger Senators came into office, here was this big Eastern Shore Senator with all of the color and characteristics of that area for them to see."

Blount said if Malkus hadn't served all that time he did, younger Senators would only have been able to read about the type of Senator he was in a book.

"He was a living icon and a living legend," Blount said. "Those of us fortunate enough to serve with him are better Senators for it. He's one of the greats of the Senate."

Del. Kenneth D. Schisler served with Malkus during the senator's eleventh and final term in the Maryland Senate.

Schisler recalled that Malkus always ate lunch in his office. Schisler would frequently join him, to hear his stories or seek his guidance on bills in the General Assembly.

"Although I was a Republican and he was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, he was always willing and took the time to share his wisdom and lead me in the right direction," Schisler said. "I will always cherish those memories. To this day, I keep a newspaper clipping in my office of he and I together at a legislative hearing from my first year in office."

He recalled one occasion when

he rode with Malkus from Cambridge to Hoopers Island for a meeting concerning the construction of the Fishing Creek Bridge. Along the ride, Malkus recited his experiences in Dorchester County from his days working for the Roosevelt administration to present day.

"Sen. Malkus was an encyclopedia on the life, history and lore of Dorchester County," Schisler said. "He knew the county's history, he had hunted or trapped just about every marsh and woods in the county and he knew the families and the citizens of Dorchester County like no one could imagine."

Schisler said there was never any doubt in Annapolis that Malkus' heart and soul were dedicated to Dorchester County and the Eastern Shore.

"We were his people and he was our man," Schisler said.

Del. Adelaide Eckardt, R-37B-Dorchester, said "He will be missed but ... will still be with us especially when it comes to a number of issues he was concerned about: bridges, Chesapeake Bay, hunting."

"I think he will be remembered for all of the things he worked on, making sure that the Eastern Shore was included and just his presence," Eckardt said.

"Just his being in the Senate made sure the Eastern Shore had a presence in Annapolis and all of us [in the Eastern Shore Delegation] have tried to carry that forward."

Former Del. Robert Thornton served one term in the General Assembly with Malkus. It was the senator's last term in office.

"He was a terrific mentor," Thornton said. "He not only opened doors for me on the Senate side — Senators would say, 'Who's your Senator?' and I'd say 'Malkus' and I'd be instantly accepted — but he was a source of a tremendous amount of knowledge and information. He had the whole history."

"He was real funny," Thornton said. "When he needed you for legislation over there (in the Senate), he'd call and say I need you here at 1 o'clock. And you'd look at your watch and it was 10 of one. And you would drop whatever you were doing, grab the files you needed and run over there."

"He was just a terrific fellow, I'll certainly miss him," he said. "My family and I will miss him

terribly. I know everybody will miss him."

Talbot Circuit Court Judge William S. Horne served four terms in the House of Delegates while Malkus was in the Senate.

"He was my senator for the entire 16 years I was in the House of Delegates," Horne said. "He was the leader of the 37th district delegation."

Horne said Malkus was "a man who was deeply committed to his legislative district and the people he served. He was a great senator."

When Horne first went to Annapolis, he said Malkus told him, "Don't worry about the big, statewide issues; the big boys will take care of it. Worry about your constituents."

Clint Bradley, a longtime member of the Talbot County Council, said Malkus "did many, many things for this area."

"He certainly was a friend of the citizens of the Mid-Shore and this county. He represented the people who sent him there," Bradley said.

Bradley remembered that Malkus had the nickname "the Silver Fox."

He said he and Talbot Councilman Gen. Andy Anderson had gone to Annapolis on one occasion to get some state money that Gov. Schaefer was holding up.

They met with several officials and went to Sen. Malkus as a last resort, Bradley said. Ten minutes later, the county had the funds.

"He knew his way around Annapolis like nobody did."

Talbot Council Vice President Philip Carey Foster had served as a delegate when Malkus was a senator.

Foster said Malkus was "courteous to a fault, a preeminent legislator well-respected by his colleagues in Annapolis."

Sen. Paul S. Sarbanes extended his sympathies to Malkus's family calling him a "legislator of strong convictions, who enjoyed the give and take of the legislative process."

"His presence was strongly felt in the Maryland legislature where he enjoyed universal respect from all his colleagues," Sarbanes said. "Born, bred and educated in Maryland, he had a deep and consuming commitment to the people of his state and the Eastern Shore."

Dorchester County Register of Wills, Doris K. Lewis, said Malkus will "definitely be missed", adding that he was definitely a friend to Dorchester

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County.

"The people's interest in Dorchester County was always foremost in his decision making while he was in Annapolis," Lewis said.

"He was always interested in legislation that promoted the natural resources of our county and the shore. He was a friend to farmers, watermen and the lovers of wildlife. He didn't mind standing his ground on any issue he believed he would benefit them."

Lewis remembered Malkus as fighting very hard against Critical Areas Legislation.

"He thought the lower shore would be effected by it more than the rest of the state," Lewis said. "He believed pollution began at the top of the bay and we would suffer more from the legislation than the rest of the counties."

Malkus also led a filibuster against funding Baltimore's subway system.

But he favored and worked for development of a proposed Hyatt golf resort and housing community in Cambridge.

"He strongly believed Hyatt would serve as a big source of revenue for our county," Lewis said. "Even in the last two or three months when his health was declining rapidly, he was writing letters to the governor and anyone else that could help the project."

"Even though he didn't run for re-election, he stayed very active in the political arena," Lewis added. "He had lots of contacts who respected his judgement."

Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend said Gov. Parris Glendening and she were deeply saddened by word of Malkus' death.

She called his legacy of public service to the Eastern Shore and state "an inspiration to us all."

"Sen. Malkus was an articulate and effective spokesman not only for the people of Dorchester County but for all of rural Maryland," Townsend said. "He embodied the fines qualities of a legislator — the ability to persuade, high intellect, integrity, respect for others and working for the general welfare of the citizens."

"He continued to give advice to the Glendening Administration until his last days," she added. "The governor and Frances Anne join David and I in offering our condolences to Sen. Malkus' wife, Margaret, as well as his son and two daughters."

Malkus' secretary of 23 years,

Terry Wheatley, also spoke of Malkus' continued influence.

Wheatley said even after becoming ill and closing his law office in June 1996, Malkus stayed very active. She said Malkus talked to Gov. Glendening regularly by phone and would have her type a letter "if he wanted to emphasize something."

"For him to be connected right up to the end I think is great," Wheatley said. "It really tells you something about the man."

"When he went to Annapolis for 3 months in energized him for the other 9 months of the year ... he loved a fight."

And when Malkus fought, other Senators in the chamber stopped to listen because he had their respect, Wheatley said. "That respect came because he always knew what he was talking about. He was prepared," she said.

"He could take a bill and read between the lines," Wheatley said. "From top to bottom he knew what it would do, the long range effects of it."

And if others weren't paying attention, particularly when Malkus was presiding as President Pro Tem, "he called them to attention," Wheatley added. "There wasn't any fooling around when he was presiding."

Wheatley recalled that Malkus "was terrific to work for," she said. "He was a very kind and considerate person. He used to tell everyone 'he went through five pregnancies with me' and once I had the children my time with them was my own."

In the office, Malkus had one rule for his staff, Wheatley said.

"You are a public servant and you will treat the public accordingly. If there is a problem with a constituent, I will take care of it. And he did," she said. "To this day I still abide by that where I work."

Comptroller William Donald Schaefer called Malkus a friend to him and "special friend" to the Eastern Shore.

"He was a great Marylander," Schaefer said. "For nearly 50 years Sen. Malkus proudly served ... helping to improve life on the Eastern shore and the rest of the state. While we didn't always

agree on the issues, he always had my respect."

"I think of him often, especially as I cross the Frederick C. Malkus Bridge in Cambridge on my way to and from Ocean City. It was a privilege seeing that project through when I was governor and I felt then as I do now that it is a fitting monument to this colorful man who helped to bring the Eastern Shore a little closer to us all."

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