

# Malkus to retire? They can't believe it

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CAMBRIDGE — The first retirement party for Fred Malkus, the ruddy-faced, Baltimore-born farmer who became the quintessential Eastern Shoreman and one of the most colorful of the state Senate patriarchs, took place nine years ago.

Grateful citizens gave their leader a proper send-off.

"They sold the place out, gave him a rifle and plane tickets to Alaska," says Rich Colburn, the town manager in Federalsburg.

Even then, no one could imagine a Senate without Fred Malkus — and apparently neither could he. The party was a testimonial, he says.

Now, though, he insists his 48-year career is over. "Everybody is replaceable," he says.

That maxim will be proved next year all over Maryland. Many Senate incumbents will retire or be retired in races forced by redistricting that left two colleagues in the same district. Thus, 1994 will provide a natural limiting of terms. The replacement of Frederick C. Malkus Jr., however, will be institutional change. He has been a Democratic delegate or senator from Dorchester as long as many in the county have been alive. He has been in the General Assembly even longer than the 45 years that chicken festivals have been held in this broiler-rich region.

Many will miss him. Many others will agree with him that it is time for him to write his book.

Del. Samuel G. Johnson — known here as "G" or "G Johnson" — says the district will miss Mr. Malkus' cache. What the senator could do in Annapolis with a phone call will take another man or woman days to accomplish.

He was and remains a power at home as well. For construction bond bills, members of the boards of education have to see him for approval. On state liquor law changes — every city and town has a different spin on liquor control — petitioners must go to him.

"If you couldn't persuade the senator," Mr. Johnson says, "it didn't get done."

In recent years, he has railed against the incursions of environmentalists, assuming the shoreman's most resentful and outraged mien.

He invites a visitor to see the corn on his fields nine miles outside of Cambridge — every acre a government-declared nontidal wetland. Using what he calls a "damn silly formula," federal agencies have set down a thousand-and-one restrictions against development, he says. Of such fulminations are obstructionist reputations made, and certainly there are those who regard the 79-year-old senator as a barrier to progress or to adequate protection of the land and the bay.

He has misgivings about Sallwinds, an Inner Harbor-like development now planned adjacent to the Dorchester General Hospital. But his concerns are pragmatic: "We need more than entertainment," more new employers.

The job of attracting them, though, will fall to others. He definitely is leaving, he says.

Republican Colburn knows why some still have doubts. After 48 years, a Malkus re-election is like the tides. Mr. Colburn first heard about "the silver fox of Dorchester" from his sixth-grade teacher. A former two-term member of the House of Delegates, Mr. Colburn is one of those who will try to replace Mr. Malkus — if he actually leaves.

## Living the nightmare

At last summer's Democratic Convention, Rep. Kweisi Mfume found himself outside the mainstream of enthusiasm for candidate Bill Clinton. Mr. Mfume could not easily set aside his feeling that Mr. Clinton had deliberately humiliated the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson — to win points with white voters.

Mr. Mfume said he was tired of "addition by subtraction" — getting ahead with the electorate at large by sacrificing blacks. This could be done with political impunity, some said, because, "Where can black voters go?" To George Bush? Ross Perot?

If Mr. Clinton proved no friend to the cities or to the poor, Mr. Mfume said, "I will be his worst nightmare." One wondered if he could deliver on that vow. That was before he became chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

When the president withdrew his nomination of Lani Guinier as assistant attorney general for civil rights, Mr. Mfume heard people asking again, "Where can the caucus go?" It could vote against an aid package to the Russians, knowing the administration wants that measure passed, he says. "We'll have to trade horses in such a way that we get things that are important for our constituents, he says.