

Joseph Murphy named to county Circuit Court

By Richard H. P. Sia
Annapolis Bureau of The Sun

ANNAPOLIS — Joseph F. Murphy, Jr., a celebrated criminal defense lawyer from Towson, was named by Governor Hughes yesterday to the Baltimore County Circuit Court.

Mr. Murphy, 40, will occupy the vacancy left last month when Judge James H. Langrall retired because of poor health.

"I was surprised," Mr. Murphy said after Governor Hughes called him about the appointment yesterday afternoon. Mr. Hughes had interviewed him in Annapolis the day before, "and I was hopeful, but not confident I'd get it," Mr. Murphy said.

He had been recommended by a judicial nominating commission twice before for the Circuit Court, and twice for the Court of Special Appeals.

Other nominees for the Circuit Court vacancy were Donald Krach, of the Niles, Barton and Wilmer law firm, and William M. Nickerson, a partner in the firm of Whiteford, Taylor, Preston, Trimble and John-

ston.

A law partner with Russell J. White since 1976, Mr. Murphy has represented clients in many highly publicized criminal cases in the Baltimore area, including the federal trial in March of former Baltimore County District Judge David N. Bates. A jury found Mr. Bates innocent of charges that he lied to a federal grand jury about an effort to fix a bad-check case.

In late January, Mr. Murphy argued successfully in Baltimore County Circuit Court for the acquittal of Steven Mandell in a second trial on charges arising from an alleged arson-for-profit scheme involving the Spectrum restaurant in Pikesville. Mr. Murphy had petitioned the court for a new trial, offering sworn affidavits showing that members of a jury that earlier convicted Mr. Mandell had made anti-Semitic jokes and remarks among themselves during the trial.

A native of Fitchburg, Mass., Mr. Murphy received his law degree in 1969 from the University of Maryland. He served as a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Bureau and in the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, where he advanced from an assistant to a deputy prosecutor under William A. Swisher in 1975.

He helped organize the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorneys Association and is its current president.