

Louise Gore, Force in Md. GOP, Dies

By PAUL DUGGAN
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Louise Gore, 80, for years the grande dame of Maryland Republican politics and twice a candidate for governor in the 1970s, died Oct. 6 at the Washington Home hospice. She had cancer.

Miss Gore, a daughter of wealthy lawyer and real estate investor H. Grady Gore, built an extensive network of friends and political contacts through her years of work for numerous social, cultural and political causes. She served Montgomery County in the Maryland General Assembly from 1963 to 1969 — she was the first Republican woman elected to the state Senate, in 1966 — and ran unsuccessfully for what was then an at-large Maryland congressional seat in 1964.

In her first campaign for governor, Miss Gore scored a surprise GOP primary victory over U.S. Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan in 1974 but lost to incumbent Democrat Marvin Mandel. Four years later, in her second bid, she lost to primary opponent J. Glenn Beall Jr.

She remained a force in Maryland Republican politics, however, serving as the state's GOP National Committee member from 1972 to 1984.

Miss Gore introduced Richard M. Nixon, a longtime acquaintance, to Spiro T. Agnew, then governor of Maryland, at a fundraiser in 1966 and supported Nixon's presidential campaign two years later. Nixon rewarded her with an appointment as ambassador to the Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

As the Watergate affair unfolded and scandal tarnished Maryland's GOP, however, she returned from Paris in 1972, saying she felt obliged to help the party in its hour of need. She became chairman of the Maryland Bicentennial Commission and began looking ahead to the 1974 gubernatorial race.

"If I hadn't gone into politics, I'd have gone into fashion," Miss Gore, a Maryland history buff and a small-stakes poker player, told *The Washington Post* in 1970. "I'd been given a position on *Vogue*, sublet an apartment in New York and was ready to go to work when my father asked me to drive him to Baltimore for a political meeting in 1950. I've been in politics ever since."

She never married. "I was very much in love once, but he died," Miss Gore told *The Post*. "Falling in love as deeply as I did made it hard for me to have a lesser relationship."

Beatrice Louise Gore was born in Leesburg on March 6, 1925, and was raised in the District. She was a graduate of the Holton-Arms School, then in Washington, and attended Bennington College in Vermont and Georgetown University's foreign service school.

She worked for Dwight D. Eisenhower's presidential campaign and, by her own count, formed or helped form 2,000 Republican women's clubs after his election in 1952.

Despite several decades of GOP involvement, she was perhaps better known by some as a Washington society figure — a noted party hostess who, with family members, owned the Fairfax Hotel and opened the prestigious Jockey



BY LINDA WHEELER — THE WASHINGTON POST

Louise Gore leaves a voting booth in Potomac during her unsuccessful campaign for governor of Maryland in 1974. Eight years earlier, she became the first Republican woman elected to the state Senate.



BY HARRY NALTCHAVAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

Gore, right, attends a news conference at the Mayflower Hotel in 1974 with Nevada candidate for governor Shirley Crumpler (R), left, and Republican National Chairman Mary Louise Smith. That year, Gore lost to Marvin Mandel.

Club restaurant at the Fairfax Hotel in 1960. Two years later, *Holiday Magazine* described it as Washington's first elegant restaurant.

The family sold the hotel, restaurant and other property to Chicago industrialist John B. Coleman in 1977.

In the General Assembly, she rarely took aggressive stands on public issues and seemed uncomfortable with partisan debate, but legislators described her at the time as a quietly successful advocate for her constituents.

"She played it like a lady," a col-

league once said. "It was immensely effective in lobbying with powerful committee chairmen."

Political observers partly attributed Miss Gore's upset victory over Hogan in the 1974 gubernatorial primary to her genteel, low-key nature, which carried over to her campaign.

Hogan, a member of the House Judiciary Committee at the time, alienated many Republicans — but gained nationwide notice — by declaring before the start of impeachment proceedings that he would vote to oust Nixon. He undertook a risky, high-profile primary cam-

paign for governor, playing more to a general-election audience and giving less attention to Miss Gore than to the Democratic incumbent, Mandel.

By contrast, Miss Gore targeted small, select groups of Republicans, making the tea-party circuit of GOP women's clubs and withholding public comment on Nixon's imperiled presidency. She had come to admire Nixon after meeting him in the late 1950s.

She won her party's nomination but lost in a landslide to Mandel. Observers blamed the loss on her inability to meet the tougher organizational and financial demands of a general-election campaign.

In 1978, again seeking the nomination for governor, Miss Gore discovered that her traditional base of support had weakened. With more women taking full-time jobs or moving out of support roles to become candidates themselves, the strength of women's clubs had eroded. She failed to gain the backing of Maryland's GOP standard-bearers in Congress and the state legislature and lost the gubernatorial primary to Beall.

"There is absolutely nothing wrong with being defeated," Miss Gore said before the primary, acknowledging her uphill battle. "At least the public will have a choice."

Miss Gore, who lived in the District, was a second cousin to Al Gore Sr., the late Democratic senator from Tennessee and father of former vice president Al Gore.

Survivors include a brother, James Gore of Vienna.