

Dixon sworn in as state treasurer

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Carroll County

BALTIMORE — Placing his hand on his late mother's family Bible, Richard N. Dixon took the oath of office Thursday, becoming Maryland's 22nd treasurer — the state's first black constitutional officer and the first treasurer from Carroll County.

The oath was administered by Gov. Parris Glendening at Morgan State University, Dixon's alma mater.

Although it was Dixon's day, many of the stories people told about him centered on his late parents, Mamie and Thomas Dixon, and the close-knit, successful family they raised.

The Rev. R. S. Abernethy, retired minister of Dixon's church, Union Street United

'We had a very strong family. Everyone knew my father (and my mother) was a black woman way ahead of her time.'

Trudy Green
Dixon's sister

Methodist Church in Westminster, presented the invocation and benediction at Morgan's Murphy Fine Arts Auditorium.

"We thank thee for Thomas and Mamie who brought him into this world," Abernethy prayed. "We thank thee for his brothers and sisters, who helped fashion his understanding of family ties."

Abernethy also thanked Carroll countians for having the "collective wisdom" to send Dixon to Annapolis for four terms.

Dixon's and wife Grayson's extended family — aunts, uncles and cousins joining with friends and many Morgan State students — packed the auditorium.

"We had a very strong family," said sister Trudy Green of White Plains, N.Y. "Everyone knew my father [and my mother] was a black woman way ahead of her time."

All of Dixon's siblings attended the swearing in. They are: Green, Edith Davenport of New York, Twilla Mitchell of Maryland and William Dixon of Westminster. A brother, Thomas Dixon Jr., died in 1994.

"My mother would just be so proud," said Green. "She always told us that education was the key; she always told us to be proud.

Many Carroll countians traveled

to Morgan State to pay their respects to Dixon.

Mabel Lippy, wife of former Carroll Commissioner Elmer Lippy, said she came down with her husband because Dixon's been a good friend for years.

"I'm happy for him," said Mabel Lippy. "I'm happy for all of us because I know how hard he works."

The Lippys also brought friend Addie Leister of Hampstead. Leister has served for years on Dixon's scholarship committee.

"He gave me a sweet kiss when I came in today," said Leister with a huge grin.

"He was so happy to see her," Mabel Lippy said.

Dixon moved the crowd with a heartfelt 30-minute speech.

Dixon thanked those family members and mentors who have helped him throughout his political and professional careers.

He presented Morgan State with a \$5,000 check to be added to a scholarship fund he established in his mother's name a number of years ago.

"I would not be here today if it weren't for Morgan," Dixon said.

Then the Morgan State Choir filled the auditorium with song, as some people sang along, waved their arms or cried.

"I'm very, very moved by this ceremony," said Westminster resident Jackie Finch, Dixon's campaign treasurer for 18 years. "I knew it would be very poignant."

"This is history in the making," said Rosie Hutchinson, Dixon's aunt from Baltimore.

"I'm so proud of him," Grayson Dixon said.

Everyone said Dixon would make the state and Carroll proud as treasurer.

"He was always good with money," said sister Green. "Sometimes he hid it so well from the rest of us, he couldn't find it himself."

His son, Tim Dixon of Hampstead, silently smiled.

"I can't put [my feelings] into words," said Tim Dixon.

"I wouldn't be prouder if I was the one being sworn in as trea-

surer," former state Sen. Charles Smelser told the younger Dixon.

"I couldn't either," Tim Dixon replied.