

You are proof of the people's wisdom in the exercise of their franchise — and representative of their enlightened awareness that what is to be done *here, by you, for them*, will become the proud product of Marylanders in this century and the heritage of the next one hundred years.

As authors of the constitution, you are challenged to write for *free* men the *supreme* law — and to find in the *fewest* words the *fullest* expression of free government. In a sense you are like those who created the Mayflower Compact out of their imagination, or the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut out of their common sense, or the Articles of Confederation out of a compulsion for sudden independence, or the Constitution of the United States from the overpowering logic that thirteen separate sovereignties could not long endure untied to each other.

Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black described the Constitution as “the basic charter of our government written in few words to define governmental powers generally on the one hand and to define governmental limitations on the other.” Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes viewed the Constitution as “an experiment,” while Chief Justice John Marshall revered the Constitution as “*a design to approach immortality as nearly as human institutions can approach it.*”

Whichever concept, interpretation or definition you choose or reject, the worth of your work will be judged by history and tested by time.

*You are the forefathers of the future*, and while you may be privileged now to look ahead, you will not be privileged to look back once you have sealed the document and given it to the people for their approbation.

So look back *now* while you still may, for there is something to be learned and much to be remembered. Survey our national heritage for precedent that serves and tradition that inspires.

Remember the special genius of America for writing constitutions and calling its ablest delegates to convention for that purpose.

Remember the miracle at Philadelphia where independence gave birth to statesmanship, and where *thirteen* states united to create one nation and one people under one constitution.

Remember the *spirit* of that historic confrontation where political passion surrendered to logic and compromise.