NEWS CONFERENCE

December 6, 1967

I don't have any announcements or anything to venture forth with so I will open it up to your questions.

Q. Governor, it was announced officially this morning that Mayor D'Alesandro has asked Judge Russell to serve as his City Solicitor, and Mr. Russell said that he would give an answer as quickly as possible. If he says yes this means that you have a judgeship, and my question is, "Does it necessarily follow that this judgeship will go to a Negro since a precedent has been established?"

A. My procedures on judgeships have been that I await lists from the bar associations before I make any determination about whom to appoint to the vacancies. I will of course want lists from the Maryland State Bar, the Baltimore City Bar, the Monumental Bar and any other interested associations of lawyers and will make a determination of filling this vacancy from the lists and from my personal knowledge of the qualifications of the individuals. I don't think that the matter of race should enter into this question in any fashion and this does not presuppose that I will not appoint a qualified Negro judge to replace Judge Russell should he accept this appointment from the City administration. But I don't think when we're filling a job of this type we should start out on the premise that we are going to look for a person of a particular race or religion or belief. I think we should look for the most qualified lawyer, and that's what I intend to do.

Q. Governor, if the Constitution prescribes, as has been suggested, that you be authorized, that the Governor be authorized, to appoint his own personal counsel, would this lawyer, his opinions, have the same effect as the Attorney General's or would he have to go back to the Attorney General for final approval?

A. I haven't seen the provision in its total form so I'm really not qualified to answer the inquiry that you just made to me. Let me say this, that I haven't found it necessary to double check the Attorney General in this term of office nor do I expect to find it necessary. I'm not worried about the need for personal counsel to any appreciable extent with the incumbent Attorney General. Now, I can understand the reason for the provision, and it may so happen that a future governor may find himself not as advantageously situated in this respect as I am.

Q. Can we assume then that this is not your proposal that the Constitutional Convention is considering?