

Teddy McKeldin's Finest Ow-w-ah

See also 13



"IT IS WITH PRIDE that I place before this convention, for President of the United States, the name of Dwight David Eisenhow-w-wah!" Thunderous applause crashing through the Republican Convention on the hot night of July 11, 1952! The voice and the words were those of Theodore R. McKeldin, former Mayor of Baltimore and incumbent Governor of Maryland, nominating Eisenhower for his first term. Mildred Momberger, who was personal secretary to Mr. McKeldin for 37 years, was there in Chicago with the Maryland delegation during those memorable days. "Mr. McKeldin got a call very late Sunday evening from Herbert Brownell, who later became Ike's Attorney General," she recalls. "Mr. McKeldin was staying at the Hilton. Mr. Brownell said, 'Ted, the General wants to see you.' So at about midnight Mr. McKeldin got dressed and went over to the Blackstone and called on Ike." McKeldin told friends afterwards that when Ike asked him, "Would you nominate me for President?" favorite-son McKeldin responded, "General, I'm a candidate for President myself!" As he left the Blackstone, the first person he saw was Charles Whiteford of *The Sun*. When McKeldin told Whiteford the story, Whiteford said, "Call *The Sun* for me! They'll never believe it from me." First thing in the morning, McKeldin sent for Al Quinn, his press secretary, and Judge Simon Sobeloff to help with the speech. "But it had the McKeldin touch," Mrs. Momberger says, quoting from memory: "It is no detraction from the honor and the glory of our first President to say of this man in our generation what Lighthorse Harry Lee said of the immortal George Washington: He is first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." Mrs. Momberger remembers the words correctly. They had the McKeldin touch.

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