

A Day In The Life

Of The Mayor

By Michael Naver

14 Hours Of Meeting, Greeting, Speaking

To Theodore R. McKeldin, the act of being Mayor is a many-sided ritual which he performs zestfully about fourteen hours a day.

Eve. Sun

Overseer of a complex city administration; mender of political fences; impromptu raconteur and greeter of the city's visitors; preacher with a flock of voting "brothers" and "sisters"—these are his callings from the time he arises at 7 A.M. until he arrives home again about 10 P.M.

One such day, recorded from beginning to end by an eyewitness, went like this:

8 A.M.—The Mayor leaves his home in Homeland and rides down town in a chauffeur city limousine. On the way he recalls campaigning in his home ward in South Baltimore when he was first elected 21 years ago.

"I told the people there that Mayor Broening, a plumber's son, had been my inspiration, and that if I, the son of a South Baltimore policeman, could be elected mayor, then perhaps I could be an inspiration to any one of their sons who might be mayor some day. I won in my home ward, but I never ran well in that district. All Democrats 1964

8:25 A.M.—The limousine reaches Bickford's, also known as "No. 10 Downing street," on Calvert street, where the Mayor breakfasts about once a week. Inside he greets acquaintances, breakfasts on prunes, cereal, a banana and Sanka. A stranger sits down and says, "Mr. Mayor, I'm going to ask you for a favor. Our little church is having its fiftieth anniversary. Could you send us a letter mentioning it?"

The Mayor agrees instantly, then adds jokingly: "I'll be angry if you don't ask me to come over and say a few words." Told it is the Elderslie Methodist Church in Mount Washington, the Mayor exclaims: "I know it well. I've spoken there many times." The stranger goes away beaming.

8:45 A.M.—Outside the restaurant, the Mayor reaches in his

pocket to drop a coin in a blind man's cup, doffs his hat to a row of women waiting for a bus. He tells them, "Good morning, sisters." He takes a woolen yarmulke, or Jewish ceremonial skullcap, which he carries at all times, from his pocket. "I got it in Israel, at the Village of the Daughters of God. They have such beautiful names there," he said, stretching out the word "beautiful."

8:50 A.M.—Stops at Post Office to buy \$17.50 worth of Eleanor Roosevelt, Sam Houston and Audubon Society commemorative stamps for his collection. Stops briefly at construction trailer outside to inquire about progress toward Battle Monument plaza. Foreman tells him it should be completed by June.

9 A.M.—Mayor reaches his office at City Hall. He is greeted by Mrs. Mildred Mombberger, his personal secretary for 27 years. She briefs him on about a dozen items in the morning mail meriting his attention. One is a letter from Avraham Harman, Israeli Ambassador to the United States, enclosing a first-day cover of an Israeli commemorative stamp issued for the visit of Pope Paul VI.

The Mayor notes it will be valuable some day. Mrs. Mombberger reads a newspaper clipping reporting anti-civil defense speeches by Comptroller Hyman Pressman and Councilman Henry G. Parks, Jr. Then she reads a letter from a citizen praising the Mayor for his stand in favor of civil defense. The Mayor laughs.

9:15 A.M.—Reminded by Mrs. Mombberger of an appointment, the Mayor leaves his office and walks to the Courthouse, to confer with a committee of judges on what to do about the shortage of space in the Courthouse. After shaking hands with all the clerks in the marriage license bureau, he takes the elevator upstairs for the meeting.

9:45 A.M.—Leaves the meeting and walks down to the third floor to see a long line of women waiting on hallway benches to see probation officers, as the

judge had asked him to do. To get an idea of the space problem. On the way out of the building he shakes hands with several bail bondsmen, and walks back to City Hall, doffing his hat, shaking hands, and calling "good morning" as he goes.

10 A.M.—The Mayor has his picture taken at City Hall with a man whose starting a course in politics under a bank's sponsorship.

10:20 A.M.—The Mayor holds his daily news conference. A reporter asks for his reaction to Mr. Pressman's proposal for an auxiliary police force to fight crime. The Mayor replies: "I don't like vigilantes. I would rather that twenty guilty men go free than one innocent man go to jail." Another reporter asks, "How's the morgue?" referring to progress toward a new one.

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The Mayor says he will know more next week.

10:55 A.M.—Press conference over, more than 30 persons troop into his office, some urging him to sign, others to veto, an ordinance rezoning a piece of property on Harford road at the city line. Mr. McKeldin listens to about half a dozen impassioned speeches on both sides, then adjourns the hearing to make a decision later.

11:51 A.M.—Joseph Kaylor, of the National Park Service, drops in to give the Mayor a brief report on Assateague Island. He calls him "Governor." Others call him "Mayor," "Ted," "Mac" and "Teddy."

12:05 P.M.—Philip Darling and John Royster, of the Planning Commission, discuss problems of Jones Falls expressway with the Mayor.

12:20 P.M.—The meeting over, Mr. McKeldin lies down to rest on a sofa. Instead of attending a

Kiwanis luncheon, as scheduled, he stays at City Hall and has a grilled cheese sandwich, vanilla ice cream and Sanka brought in.

1 P.M.—Attends a meeting of city advisers to map a program on the city's position toward about 25 pieces of pending legislation at Annapolis. With him are Charles Benton, budget director; Joseph Allen, city solicitor; Mrs. Janet Hoffman, fiscal adviser; Edward Colgan, legislative adviser, and Richard Frank, administrative aide. The Mayor listens to recommendations, usually assents. At one point he leaves the meeting for a conference with Robert O. Bonnell, civil defense director. Returns to the larger meeting.

4:30 P.M.—Scheduled appointments are over for the day, and the Mayor holds a conference with his City Hall Staff. Stanley Mazer, aide, reads the Mayor a statement he has prepared on crime for the Mayor to issue to Sunday newspapers. The Mayor orders deletions of all references to headline-seeking by other officials. Solomon Liss, special assistant, and James Fansen, traffic adviser, discuss matters of interest to them with the Mayor.

6:30 P.M.—All conferences over, he shuffles through his briefcase, giving memos to Mrs. Mombberger. She reminds him of next day's schedule.

6:55 P.M.—Mayor leaves City Hall. Gets into limousine, has chauffeur stop for evening papers, which he scans in car. He talks of how the mayorality has grown as a job since his first term as a wartime mayor. "You didn't have urban renewal then, and you didn't have a lot of construction projects you have now."

He says the workload is greater than it was when he was Governor from 1950 to 1958. Speaks of his feeling about being mayor. "It would kill anyone who didn't love it. I love it. I love the sense of achievement, of seeing something come into being."

This line of thought leads him to produce a three-page typewritten list of more than 30 city projects. He expresses impatience

JAN 30 1964

JAN 30 1964

Eve. Sun

that many of them have not been settled.

Eye Sun

7.10 P.M.—Stops at home on Goodale road to deliver some medicine to his wife, Mrs. Honolulu McKeldin. Muses that the house has become too large for them now that their son and daughter have moved away.

7.40 P.M. — Arrives at Blue Crest. North banquet hall to be one of the speakers at the annual dinner of the Maryland Home Builders Association. When his turn comes, the Mayor disregards remarks on zoning prepared for him at City Hall and gives a three-minute talk praising Joseph Meyerhoff, builder, telling a joke and recounting a homily.

The homily concludes with: "Anyone who is anyone does not want to be taken for granted by anyone." The Mayor sits down to applause, then listens to other speakers for 1 hour and 40 minutes, including one who delivers an hour-long oration on how to sell houses.

9.40 P.M.—Banquet over. Mayor rides home in limousine after stopping to pick up the first edition of the morning paper. In the limousine he says he will read the 127th Psalm before retiring. He quotes from it: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."

10 P.M.—Arrives home. Discharges chauffeur after asking him to appear next day at 8 A.M. Door closes behind Mayor. He reads the 100th and 127th Psalms, goes to bed at 11.30 P.M.



BREAKFAST—Mayor McKeldin reads the paper and grabs a quick bite before going to City Hall.



LISTENER—The Mayor ponders the matter as a group of citizens complain about zoning at office.