

Theodore Roosevelt M'Keldin

THEODORE ROOSEVELT MCKELDIN made it where he is today on a gift for oratory and the spirit of a frustrated evangelist.

He literally talked his way up the political ladder and into the governorship.

And he came closer than most suspect to talking his way into the vice presidency of the United States when, in his shining hour at the Republican National Convention in 1952, he rolled out a homily-studded fifteen minutes of oratory placing Dwight D. Eisenhower into nomination.

In the end, Sen. Richard Nixon, of California, got the nod for the No. 2 spot on the Republican ticket.

But Governor McKeldin has been a fairly frequent visitor at the White House since the man he nominated became a resident there.

"An 80-Hour Work Week"

The Governor has been a fairly frequent

visitor to far-flung points west, north and south of Maryland, too, since he was swept into the governorship almost four years ago by the largest margin in Maryland history.

He and his speaking talents are in demand throughout the country, and he has filled out-of-State engagements regularly. However, helped by a deep well of energy, the Governor still spends as much time tending to State affairs as any two normal business executives spend at their desks. His staff members say that the Governor puts in an "80-hour work week."

The driving force behind the McKeldin rise from his South Baltimore beginnings to the governorship is the frustration engendered by unfulfilled ambitions for the ministry.

One of the big reasons he has stayed in politics is the opportunity it gives him to ascend the pulpit and preach.

Visitors to his office, if deemed worthy, may find a New Testament thrust in their hands, or perhaps a rosary blessed in Rome.

Termed Shrewd Politician

With it all, the Governor has played the shrewdest of politics—and to the hilt.

As a Republican with Democratic majorities in both houses of the Legislature, he has learned to get along with members of the opposite party, make deals with Democrats and, occasionally, crack the whip to get the Legislature in line.

He is unquestionably the No. 1 man in his own State Republican circles, although a small minority openly resents him.

It was early poverty which shut him out of the schooling necessary for the clergy.

Born on Stockholm (now Ostend) street on November 20, 1900, he was one of the eleven children of a stonecutter-turned-policeman. He got through grammar school, but his education after that came in bits.

Already imbued with the fervor of a budding evangelist (one of the deepest impressions had been carved into his being when, as a boy of 10, he saw his father go up to the mourner's bench in Bennett Memorial Church and swear off liquor) he took a job as an office boy in a bank at \$20 a month.

Took Many Night Courses

The day he went to work, he enrolled in a night course at Baltimore City College, the first of a long string of night courses.

During his first week's vacation from the bank, he got a job in a cemetery digging graves at \$2.50 a day.

It was during his five years' stay at the bank that he met Miss Honolulu Claire Manzer, an employe of the bookkeeping department. She taught him how to run a ledger.

They remained friends after he left the bank in February, 1919, to take a better paying position with the banking house of Alexander Brown & Sons, and six months later, with the Fidelity and Deposit Company.

The future Governor and Miss Manzer were married October 17, 1924. They have two children, Theodore, Jr., 17, and Claire Whitney McKeldin, 14.

It was during his eight-year stay with the Fidelity and Deposit that young McKeldin started speaking for pay. He was assigned to give pep talks to the company's agents throughout the country.

Was Honor Law Graduate

During all stages of this business-world part of his career, McKeldin was continuing his schooling. He moved from City College to Milton College (a combined pharmaceutical and preparatory school), then to the College of Commerce and to Johns Hopkins.

Finally, in 1925 he climaxed his night-schooling by completing courses for a degree in law at the University of Maryland, where he won the honor case and gold key awarded to the prize student.

Two years later, he entered the private practice of law, but stuck at it just a fortnight before politics carried him into public office.

Baltimore was in the throes of a municipal election campaign that Spring of 1927. The Republican candidate was the late William F. Broening.

Good Republican that he was, the young lawyer, by then well known for his eloquence, volunteered his services as a campaign speaker for Broening.

His powers to hold an audience were proved in that campaign when at one meeting, because Broening failed to arrive on time, McKeldin was forced to keep going 77 minutes. The crowd was still there when Broening hove into view.

He opened his law office on schedule that June. But two weeks later, Mr. Broening offered him a job as his executive secretary.

McKeldin took it—and is still remembered

for the hundreds of speeches he made throughout Baltimore during the four-year period which followed.

He went out of office in 1931 with Mayor Broening, but managed to stay in politics so effectively that he became his party's candidate for mayor in 1939. By dint of dawn to midnight speaking, he managed to cut down the huge Democratic margin on the registration books to 24,000 at the polls.

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In 1942, he made his first bid for the governorship, losing to Herbert R. O'Connor by less than 19,000 votes.

The next year, he ran for mayor—and finally made it, defeating the Democratic incumbent, Howard Jackson, by 20,251 votes.

In 1946, he ran for governor again and lost to William Preston Lane, Jr.

Quelled A Party Revolt

Mr. McKeldin, his sights on the governorship which had eluded him twice, failed to run for re-election as mayor in 1947, but bided his time until the 1950 election.

He won over Lane by a margin of more than 93,000 to become the third Republican governor in Maryland's history.

As governor, he has proved to be pretty much of a middle-of-the-roader.

Perhaps the two most significant accomplishments of his administration have been an overhaul of the State's budget procedures growing out of studies made by the Sobeloff Commission and his implementation with more than \$500,000,000 in bond authorizations, extension of a roads improvements program inaugurated during the Lane administration.

In 1952, he quelled an attempted revolt within the Maryland Republican party and made sure that the bulk of the State's votes at the GOP National Convention went to General Eisenhower, despite the fact that a majority of the delegation favored the late Senator Robert A. Taft for the nomination.

With all of his burdensome duties and his frequent speaking junkets, the Governor still finds time to get in a lot of preaching.

It is nothing unusual to see him start out a Sunday by attending a Holy Name Society breakfast, act as lay reader in an Episcopal Church, then occupy a Methodist pulpit for a night-service sermon after speaking at an afternoon Israel Bond Rally.



Governor McKeldin, who literally talked his way into the Statehouse and is seeking re-election, is in big demand as a speaker throughout the country.