

# Fountain's back and emotion flows



By G. Nick Lundskow—The Capital

Comptroller William Donald Schaefer speaks yesterday after a fountain at the Governor's Mansion was turned back on for the first time in almost two years. Looking on are, from left, first lady Kendel Ehrlich, son Drew, Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., Treasurer Nancy K. Kopp and Lt. Gov. Michael S. Steele.

By THEODORE KIM  
Staff Writer

**T**he water's on again, and Comptroller William Donald Schaefer is grinning from ear to ear.

In a rain-soaked ceremony complete with a guest list, reception, string ensemble and Maryland's first family, water spouted from the fountain on the Governor's Mansion lawn in Annapolis yesterday for the first time in nearly two years.

The scene was equal parts rousing and absurd, with Mr. Schaefer embarking a spontaneous Cal Ripken-style handshake parade around the assembled crowd.

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. called the

fountain, a downtown mainstay for 13 years, part of "Maryland's history."

Mr. Schaefer's longtime companion, the late Hilda Mae Snoops, oversaw an extensive redecoration of the public rooms in the mansion after Mr. Schaefer replaced Harry Hughes as governor 17 years ago, and later came up with the idea of putting a fountain in the side yard of the mansion grounds. She organized a drive to raise nearly \$170,000 in private funds to pay for the fountain.

"The Ehrlichs, all of us, are proud to give this back to you," Mr. Ehrlich told a teary-eyed Mr. Schaefer before about 200 invited spectators.

Kendel Ehrlich, the governor's wife,

presided over the ceremony.

"Nothing stands for Maryland more than this wonderful fountain before us," she said.

County Executive Janet S. Owens, who attended the ceremony, called it a "wonderful day," saying: "I know how important this is to him."

The fate of the three-tiered fountain has been at the center of a deep-rooted quarrel between the comptroller and former governor Parris N. Glendening.

Another chapter of "As the Fountain Drips" played out in the public eye yesterday when Mr. Schaefer took another shot at his arch-

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nemesis: "I will not have any disparaging remarks about him. Except I hate him. That's putting it mildly."

Mr. Glendenning turned off the fountain water in the summer of 2001 citing statewide drought restrictions. The move incensed Mr. Schaefer, who took it as a personal affront and voiced his displeasure at every chance.

The twice-monthly meetings of the state Board of Public Works — which includes the governor, comptroller and state treasurer — often became verbal shoving matches between Mr. Schaefer and Mr. Glendenning, both of whom are Democrats.

That ill will spilled over into the 2002 elections, with many observers speculating the dispute helped undermine former Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend's efforts to unite the Democratic party in her campaign for governor.

During last fall's Democratic primary, Mr. Glendenning helped fund and organize the candidacy of John T. Willis, his secretary of state, against Mr. Schaefer for comptroller. Mr. Glendenning paid for radio attack ads against Mr. Schaefer in Baltimore.

In December, Mr. Glendenning restarted the fountain after drought restrictions were lifted. However, it was shut off again with Mr. Glendenning explaining that it was only turned on to examine the pipes before the winter.

During yesterday's ceremony, Mr. Ehrlich joked about hearing two main questions during trips across the state: When are we getting slot machines? And when are we turning on that fountain?

Cross one off that list.

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