

# Schaefer's Return Suggests Trouble for Glendening

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He's back, he's rejuvenated and he hasn't forgotten, or forgiven, a single slight. All this may spell trouble for those who have run afoul of former Maryland governor William Donald Schaefer—especially the current governor.

Schaefer, who wore goofy hats but championed significant social and construction programs during his 15 years as Baltimore mayor and eight years as governor, will be sworn in today in Annapolis as state comptroller. Two days from now, he will take his seat on an all-important panel where he will have equal voting rights with Gov. Parris N. Glendening—a man for whom Schaefer has suddenly dropped all pretenses of liking, a man he now says “did me dirt.”

The panel—the obscure but powerful Board of Public Works—decides all major state contracts, land purchases and lawsuit settlements, which are worth hundreds of millions of dollars and touch numerous facets of public life. If Schaefer is joined by the board's third member, who sometimes has his own beefs with the governor, Glendening could find himself blocked on fundamental governmental matters.

The comptroller's office, which is the state's tax collection agency, is hardly a traditional source of threats to the governor's authority. Another Democratic icon, Louis L. Goldstein, headed the office for 40 years, until his death last July. Goldstein was best known as a genial and tireless campaigner. He rarely got involved in controversies, and most Marylanders probably had little idea what he did besides politic and rush out their tax refunds with great fanfare.

Schaefer, however, seemed to pick a fight or two before breakfast most days, holding grudges and browbeating opponents in a frenetic career that was part New Deal idealism and part comic opera. In his new, lower-profile job, perhaps none of these personality traits would matter much, except for one thing: Schaefer, 77, once again holds one of three seats on the Board of Public Works, which meets every other week in the governor's stately Reception Room.

The other seats also are held by Democrats: state Treasurer Richard N. Dixon and Glendening, who was first elected in 1994 as Schaefer completed his two-term limit. And therein lies the possible recipe for political and governmental explosions over the next four years.

Dixon, a conservative stockbroker who was appointed by the General Assembly, has sided with Glendening on most issues but also has shown a willingness to oppose and criticize him at times. Schaefer, on the other hand, suddenly is venting his resentments toward Glendening now that the November election is over.

If Dixon and Schaefer team up against the governor, they could make it agonizingly difficult for Glendening to carry out basic exercises such as awarding major contracts for computer services, engineering work and dozens of other needs.

Just how bad are Schaefer's feelings toward Glendening? In a recent interview, Schaefer was asked to describe his relationship with the governor.

“Fine, no problems,” he said. “He knows he did me dirt. He knows. He fired all my people. He embarrassed me with the Ravens.”

Schaefer was talking about things that happened more than three years ago. In a typical move for new governors, Glendening replaced most of Schaefer's top aides with his own appointees. (Schaefer, in contrast, says he will retain most of Goldstein's top people.) The Ravens incident, however, was more controversial.

As mayor and governor, Schaefer had labored in vain to bring a National Football League team to Baltimore to heal the heartache caused when the Baltimore Colts left for Indianapolis in 1984. When a swaggering Glendening announced he had lured the Cleveland Browns (now the Ravens) at a Baltimore news conference in November 1995, he snubbed Schaefer, giving him no seat on the platform and no share of the glory.

“I asked him why one time, and his answer was interesting,” Schaefer said in last week's inter-

view. “He said, ‘You didn't really try to support me enough in the [1994] general election.’ I said, ‘It took you three years to tell me?’”

That's not Schaefer's only gripe with Glendening, whom he rarely mentions by name, preferring “he,” “this one” or “this governor.” He's angry that Glendening tried to position a friend to succeed Goldstein after Schaefer had signaled interest in the comptroller's job.

“No one thought I would ever do this,” Schaefer said of his new post. “He [Glendening] didn't. . . . He was positive, because he just walked all over me. When I told him that I was interested in the job, he said, ‘Well, you know, I've got people I'm interested in.’”

And Glendening's “Smart Growth” program to curb suburban sprawl? “We started Smart Growth,” Schaefer said. “He's grabbed it, run with it like it's something brand new.”

Glendening, who won a grudging endorsement from Schaefer in last year's reelection campaign, shows little appetite for a new dust-up.

“The governor expects to have a good working relationship with the new comptroller,” said Glendening press secretary Ray Feldmann, who was told of Schaefer's remarks. “Obviously they are going to disagree on issues sometimes. But the governor believes you can disagree without being disagreeable.”

Politics aside, Glendening and Schaefer could hardly be more different. Schaefer wore crazy gag-gift eyeglasses to start a State of the State address, and he sometimes tracked down and berated residents who criticized him, even using motor vehicle records to find them. Always a showman, whose fractured syntax typically omits a few subjects or predicates, he appealed to voters with a mix of moderate policies and daffy entertainment, a bit like new Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, the former professional wrestler.

Glendening, a self-proclaimed policy wonk, will never be mistaken for an entertainer. Relentlessly earnest, he conceals his emotions as naturally as Schaefer wears his on his sleeve.

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Those Schaefer emotions aren't always pretty, and Glendening has plenty of company on his hate-parade list. Schaefer makes no secret of his disdain for Harry R. Hughes, who preceded him as governor, and Kurt L. Schmoke, who succeeded him as Baltimore mayor.

Yet he bubbles with schoolboy enthusiasm when he explains why he jumped at the chance to end his political retirement. "If you like public service, and you really, really like it, it's a fascination," Schaefer said. "You really can do something to make lives better."

For now, at least, he seems unlikely to make Glendening's life better. As comptroller, Schaefer said, he will offer initiatives on economic development, a mission that traditionally falls squarely to the governor. "I'd like to coordinate with them," Schaefer said breezily. "If they don't, I'm going to have my own advisory committee on economic development anyway to look at taxes, look at things like this."

As for the newly constituted Board of Public Works, Schaefer said: "It's not going to be the bombastic that everybody thought, that everybody was going to sell tickets for \$1,000, and at the first meeting everybody's going to be punching everybody. That's not going to happen. It's going to happen when there's an issue. It's not going to happen on most of the routine stuff."

Schaefer said of his voting power on the board: "It's equal to the governor. He's the governor. But he's got to get the concurrence of Dixon or me on things that come before the board. People ask me if [being comptroller] is a step down. I don't think so."

Glendening, whose constitutional powers are vast, may eventually find it easy to cajole, co-opt or circumvent Schaefer. But if they come to blows, lots of Marylanders might be rooting for the old man. More than 800 supporters have said they'll attend his swearing-in ceremony today.