

# When a House Is Not a Home

By Robert Barnes  
Washington Post Staff Writer

ANNAPOLIS—The house has 51 rooms and lush gardens, and it takes less than a minute to walk from the front door to the office. But home is where the heart is, and for Gov. William Donald Schaefer, this isn't it.

Government House, built around 1870 as a home for Maryland's chief executives and now a showcase for Maryland art and furniture, is without a governor. When the work day is done in Annapolis, Schaefer nearly always trundles back to the modest Baltimore row house where he has lived almost all of his life—with his mother until her death in 1984 and alone since then.

In the four months Schaefer has served as governor, you could count on your fingers the number of times the governor has spent the night at Government House, where the private quarters reportedly have been allowed to deteriorate. The occasions are so rare that the first time

the governor slept over, he was asked about it at a news conference.

It was very nice, he told the reporter, but he kept forgetting that he didn't have to get up from the breakfast table to get more coffee. People were paid to make sure his cup was filled.

By law, Schaefer is required to live in the mansion, although the attorney general's office has said it would be nearly impossible to argue exactly how much time that means. And Schaefer, who used to say that he would move into the house in time, now sounds as if he has no intention of making it his home.

Schaefer complained to a group of students recently at the University of Maryland about the constant security he is under and said that living in the grand house would further isolate him from common people.

"You know, I could walk from the State House to that mansion and never see a poor person," Schaefer told the students.

But even though Schaefer does not like to spend the night there,

Government House does not sit empty, and life there has rarely been dull.

The original house was built around 1870 in high Second Empire style, with a mansard roof, a porch and a conservatory. But all that changed in the 1930s. In an attempt to make the mansion match the State House across the street, the house was completely wrapped in a pseudo colonial-revival overcoat.

And most every First Couple has tinkered with the house, including the Spiro Agnews, who added bathrooms (since removed) in the conservatory.

The mansion even became national news during Marvin Mandel's administration. That was another time that a governor didn't live at Government House, although not by choice.

In July 1973, Mandel announced his intention to divorce his wife of 32 years, Barbara, to marry "the woman I love," Jeanne B. Dorsey. Barbara Mandel, however, refused

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BY VANESSA BARNES HILLIAN—THE WASHINGTON POST

Gov. William Donald Schaefer outside the 51-room Government House in Annapolis, where he hardly ever stays because, he says, he feels isolated from the public: "I like my own little house" in Baltimore, he says.

# Schaefer

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to cooperate and Mandel moved to a nearby hotel. Barbara Mandel moved out after about five months.

Mandel moved back in, later with his new bride, but there was more controversy. The Mandels sued, and the state countersued, about furniture, liquor and supplies the Mandels removed from the house at the end of Mandel's second term. The suits were later settled, with Mandel reportedly paying the state a sum of money, but not returning any property to the state.

The real changes for the house, though, came during Harry Hughes' administration. Hughes' wife, Patricia, mounted a drive to restore the public rooms on the first floor of the mansion and secured about \$1.4 million in private gifts, donations and contributions to remake seven rooms into individual representations of Maryland's various historic periods. Only Maryland furniture, crafts and artists are represented in the rooms, which begin with the Federal period and end with the redecoration of the conservatory in the style of Billy Baldwin, a famous designer from Baltimore.

Schaefer, who does not credit the Hughes administration with much, is always quick to praise Patricia Hughes for the mansion restoration.

But the private quarters in the four-story mansion apparently don't match the elegance of the downstairs. Hilda Mae Snoops, the long-time "lady friend" of Schaefer who is now the mansion's official hostess, does not allow photographers or outsiders in the private areas.

A legislative panel, however, toured the mansion earlier this year and reported problems upstairs.

"Most of the third floor is used for storage," the panel's report stat-

ed. "There is a large, empty cedar closet, two empty file cabinets and a totally pink American flag. Many of the curtains are in a total state of dry rot."

Del. Timothy F. Maloney (D-Prince George's), whose subcommittee's report was largely tongue-in-cheek, described much of the private quarters as resembling "Howard Johnson's, circa 1940."

But he said there also appeared to be some structural problems, including cracks in the skylight at the top of the grand staircase, and his subcommittee proposed a study on possible repairs.

"No matter the current occupant, or whether the governor lives there or not . . . we want to make sure the house is in good repair," Maloney said.

But the problems upstairs, and

Schaefer's reluctance to move in, has not slowed the new governor's use of the house. Veteran legislators say that Schaefer is entertaining in the house more than Hughes did, throwing breakfasts for reporters, lunches for various constituent groups and a series of elegant dinners that included each member of the General Assembly.

Schaefer also may want to leave his own mark on the house. He has said he would like to remove the Billy Baldwin furnishings in the conservatory and make it a conservatory again, and Snoops has told guests about plans for improving the gardens that surround the house.

But don't look for Schaefer to give up his Baltimore home for the Annapolis mansion. "I like my own little house," he said.