

For Schaefer, a Day Flowing With Joy

Fountain Reinstated at State Mansion

By DARRAGH JOHNSON
Washington Post Staff Writer

It was former governor William Donald Schaefer's day to crow, as the fountain commissioned by his longtime companion, Hilda Mae Snoops, was once again trickling water. Still, he couldn't resist a swipe at the man who had turned it off two years ago, former governor Parris N. Glendening.

"When the former governor—and I will not have any disparaging remarks about him—except I hate him," Schaefer spat into the microphone at the ceremony honoring Snoops and the 12-foot verdigris bronze fountain on the grounds of the governor's mansion. Schaefer then paused as the 250 people dressed in springtime finery and holding colorful umbrellas laughed delightedly.

"That's putting it mildly," continued Schaefer, now in his second term as state comptroller. "I used to talk to him, and I got a better response from the wall. But he couldn't touch me. The only time in eight years was when he turned off the fountain, and that got me. That got me."

He paused again, looking at the three-tiered fountain. "This means a lot to me," he said.

Minutes earlier, Drew Ehrlich, the son of the current governor, had set the fountain flowing. The 3-year-old, dressed in a red-and-blue polo shirt with blue shorts and gray sneakers, pushed the fountain's brass "pumping station" handle again and again. The water started to trickle out. Drew kept going, bouncing on his wobbly knees, then jumping up and down, to the beat of "Good job! Good job!" as the crowd cheered.

For years, the fountain was a weapon in the war between Glendening and Schaefer, both Democrats. In May 2001, Glendening decided that keeping the fountain afloat was irresponsible amid a drought, so he turned it off, much to Schaefer's dismay—and ire. The two traded barbs about the fountain, but Glendening, as governor, had the final say. Until Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R) took office in January with a promise to turn it back on.

"When I was campaigning for governor, traveling around the state," Ehrlich remembered yesterday, speaking from a yellow-draped stage next to the fountain, "people would ask me: One, when are we getting slots? And two, when are you turning on that fountain?"

The proceedings drew throngs who circled the governor's mansion, waiting to enter the grounds.

Anne Arundel County Executive Janet S. Owens (D) stood in line with a large umbrella that matched the edging of her lilac suit. "I walked out and didn't

know it had clouded over, and I thought: It's the ghost of Parris Glendening. It's going to rain," she said.

A few minutes later, a light rain began. People opened their umbrellas, and one man in a dark suit crowed, as though he were still fighting a battle with Glendening: "There never was a drought. There never *was* a drought."

The guests gathered in a tight knot in the mansion's back yard, as the Annapolis High School Quartet played Bach and people trampled the governor's tulips. Among the well-dressed visitors were former Democratic governors Marvin Mandel and Harry R. Hughes, several state lawmakers and a school superintendent. "I should have worn pearls and a hat," one woman, clad in a black velour pantsuit, said as she eyed the finery around her.

Outside the mansion grounds, spectators crowded on

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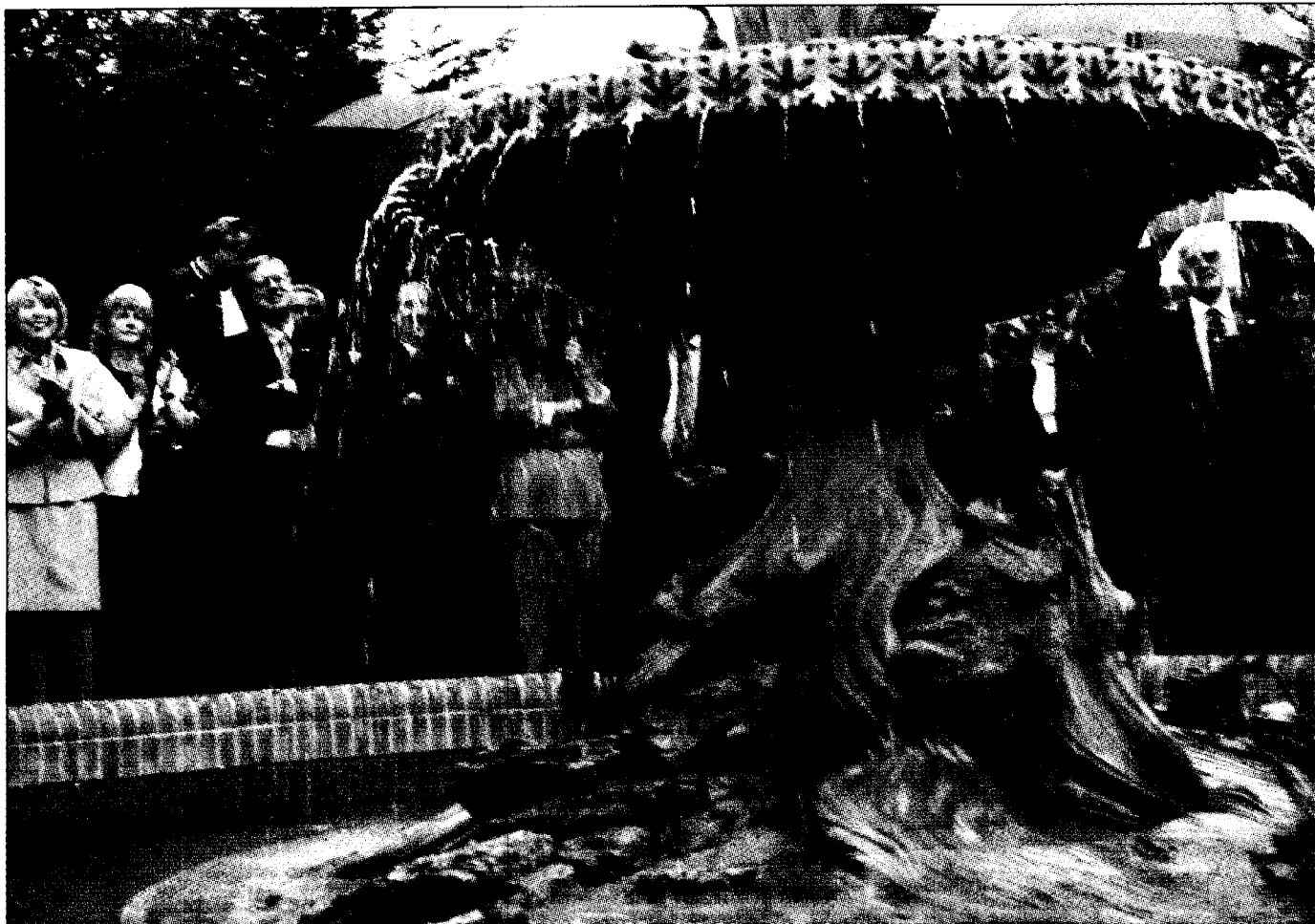
Gov. Ehrlich

the sidewalks and peered through the wrought-iron fence, cameras around their necks. A janitor stood outside the double doors of the Lowe House Office Building and watched from across the street. At one point, as applause roared around the trickling fountain, a man drove past in a white pickup, turned to look at the ceremony and took both hands off the wheel to clap, too.

And as Schaefer finished, a wind caught the blue paper on which he had written his remarks and blew it off the podium. He looked up at the sky, as though addressing Snoops, who died in 1999, and said, "Now, Hilda Mae, I'm not going to be long. Just a minute."

He returned the blue paper to the podium, then changed his mind and folded it up, saying simply, "I really am most appreciative."

An hour later, after the guests had gone inside the mansion for refreshments and the crowds had dispersed from the sidewalks, Drew Ehrlich returned to the fountain, where he took a long blue net, dipped it into the bottom pool and walked in circles, around and around and around the newly flowing water.



PHOTOS BY MARVIN JOSEPH—THE WASHINGTON POST

An Overflow Of Feeling In Annapolis

Water flows again from the fountain at the Maryland governor's mansion. The fountain, installed in 1990 by Gov. William Donald Schaefer's companion, Hilda Mae Snoops, was turned off by Gov. Parris N. Glendening in 2001 amid a drought. In a ceremony yesterday, it was turned back on by the young son of Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., at right with a moved Schaefer. Story on Page B4.



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