

It's Counselor Schaefer Now

Former Governor Signs Up As 'Of Counsel' At Baltimore's Gordon, Feinblatt

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In a move that may clarify William Donald Schaefer's intentions regarding Baltimore's next mayoral race, the former governor yesterday announced that he has joined the law firm of Gordon, Feinblatt, Rothman, Hoffberger & Hollander.

Schaefer was Baltimore's mayor for 15 years beginning in 1971, and in recent months speculation has swirled over whether he again covets the mayor's seat.

Business leaders have called for Schaefer to run, and last week, WJZ-TV suspended Schaefer's biweekly television commentaries until July 3, the filing deadline for mayoral candidates.

"When it became a news story that he was possibly a candidate, the station wanted him to declare one way or another so we were not put in an awkward position," said Mary Beth Livingston, WJZ's special projects producer. "He chose not to declare."

Schaefer's public criticism of Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke's ad-

ministration fueled rumors that he was prepping for battle with Schmoke and Mary Pat Clarke in the upcoming election.

Yesterday's announcement, however, could show that Schaefer has decided he has fought his last campaign.

"The 'Of Counsel' relationship will allow Schaefer to announce, teach and do other things," explained Barry F. Rosen, chairman and C.E.O. at Gordon Feinblatt.

"If he went back into politics could he retain 'Of Counsel' designation? I don't think so. There may be some positions that would allow him to retain that, but being mayor is a full-time job," Rosen said.

Alternatively, the former governor could simply be making contingency plans in the event of a failed campaign. Schaefer is also a visiting professor at The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland.

Even should Schaefer opt to try another run at city hall, his association with Gordon Feinblatt will benefit the firm. According to founding partner Eugene M. Feinblatt, the 72-lawyer concern is counting on Schaefer's long familiarity with Baltimore and Maryland government to attract clients.

Rosen echoed those sentiments.

"People will seek him out for advice, and it will give him a way to offer it," he said. "It offers him a base from which he can offer services to other clients.

Also, he can use us for a base."

Schaefer began his legal career at his own Baltimore firm after graduating from the University of Baltimore Law School.

His political career began on the Baltimore City Council. From there he moved to the presidency of that body, and then on to the mayor's suite. Schaefer was Maryland's governor from 1987 until the last general election.



William Donald Schaefer