

# The Schaefer saga continues

Irrepressible official  
begins a new chapter  
in Annapolis this week

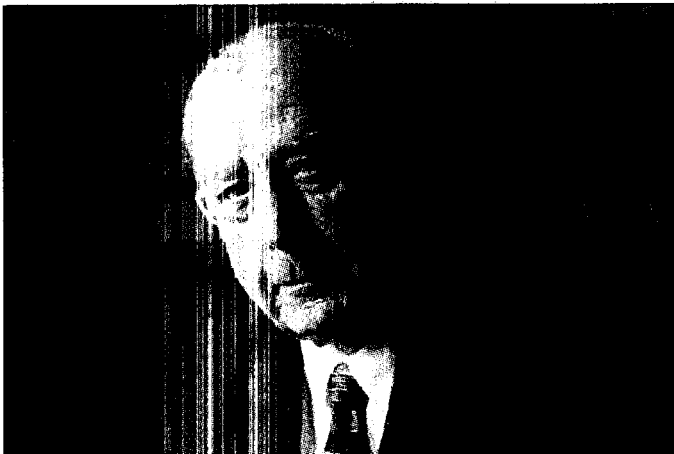
By JOANNA DAEMMRICH  
SUN STAFF

In Highlandtown, he's Mayor. In Cumberland, he's Governor.

And in Annapolis, as William Donald Schaefer ends his restless retirement to become Maryland's first new comptroller in 40 years, nobody knows quite how to address him.

"What will we call him?" puzzled House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. "Probably, at least in public, I'll refer to him as Mr. Comptroller. Most of the time, though, I'll call him Governor, which is what I've always called him. Privately, I'll call him Don."

It's a dilemma that goes



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**Comptroller:** *William Donald Schaefer joins the governor and state treasurer on the Board of Public Works.*

beyond etiquette.

This week, the 77-year-old Schaefer will return to the state capital — and to the public life he reluctantly left after four terms as Baltimore's mayor and two terms

as Maryland's governor. He will walk back into the State House, back to a high-ceilinged room where he once presided, and take a seat next to his successor, with whom he's had [See Schaefer, 6A]

# Schaefer joins Glendening on Board of Public Works

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an off-and-on relationship.

Gov. Parris N. Glendening was on Schaefer's mind last week as he sorted mail in his new office, the library of the treasury building.

"He's got more money in one year than I did in four," Schaefer said, referring to the state's huge budget surplus. "You can do so much with money. You can reward people. You can make it difficult for people.

"He [Glendening] is over budget. But I don't blame him for that. If I were governor, I would be, too," he said. "What I will be doing now is to see that we don't spend everything we have and don't mortgage the state for the future."

In his new role as comptroller, Schaefer's main stage will be the Wednesday morning meetings of the Board of Public Works, the powerful three-member panel that includes the governor and state treasurer.

Judge Alan M. Wilner, now on the Maryland Court of Appeals, described it in a 1984 history as "almost unique in American government." The board must approve virtually all state contracts, worth billions of dollars each year.

It provides a window into the inner workings of state government — and a check on the strong executive powers of the governor. There, two officials independent of the governor can block or delay administration-proposed spending that they consider wasteful or ill-advised.

## Two governors on board

Just the notion of the former and current governors' having to work side by side has stirred speculation in political circles. Many State House observers foresee clashes and attempts at one-upmanship between the unpredictable, notoriously temperamental Schaefer and the bookish yet equally thin-skinned Glendening.

"We could certainly afford a tax cut if we just sold tickets to the Board of Public Works meetings," quipped Julian L. Lapidus, a former Baltimore lawmaker who quit the comptroller's race last summer as soon as Schaefer entered.

Said Sen. Robert R. Neall, an Anne Arundel County Republican: "One thing is certain: A lot of people will be going to those meetings that never went before."

Even though they are both Democrats and share many views on public policy, Glendening and Schaefer are far from close friends.

## A querulous history

Schaefer has often felt slighted by his 56-year-old successor. Glendening did not install Schaefer's portrait for two years, and practically ignored him in November 1995 when the National Football League returned to Baltimore, fulfilling a goal of Schaefer's.

When the state's popular comptroller, Louis L. Goldstein, died last July, Glendening picked another man for the job. Only after Schaefer made it clear that he would run, with or without the governor's support, did Glendening back him.

For his part, Glendening was frustrated during his re-election campaign by what he saw as tepid support from Schaefer. Beyond a few obligatory appearances, Schaefer spent little time with Glendening.

Still, both men say they've put past quarrels aside. They insist that they will work together, if not always in agreement, at least not as bitter adversaries.

"Everyone's talking about selling tickets and all that," Schaefer said. "I think they're wasting their time. They're going to be very disappointed."

Said Glendening: "Whether you agree or disagree with him, he [Schaefer] has always been extraordinarily respectful of the institution of governor and the state process itself. I think on occasion we'll disagree, but 99 percent of the time we'll be sailing along."

Beginning this afternoon, they will have ample opportunity to

## In Annapolis

### Highlights in Annapolis today:

**House Appropriations Committee** budget briefing.

1 p.m. Room 130, House office building.

**Senate Budget and Taxation Committee** budget briefing.

2:45 p.m. Room 100, Senate office building.

**Inauguration of William Donald Schaefer** as state comptroller.

4 p.m. House chamber.

**Senate meets** 8 p.m. Senate chamber.

**House of Delegates meets** 8 p.m. House chamber.

show off their spirit of understanding. Glendening will swear in Schaefer at 4 p.m. in a ceremony that is expected to be attended by hundreds. On Wednesday, another crowd of spectators is likely to show up for their first Board of Public Works meeting.

## Standing room only

Schaefer's inauguration will be in marked contrast to the quiet ritual that took place every four years, for four decades, while Goldstein was in office. So many well-wishers want to be there that chairs are being removed from the House of Delegates chamber so that people can stand.

For Schaefer, it's another act in a political drama that has continued for 40 years — coincidentally, just as long as Goldstein was comptroller.

After playing a dominant role in city and state politics, Schaefer is taking over the third-highest office in the state, one that is perhaps least understood. Friends predict he will carry on Goldstein's traditions, but also shape the \$100,000-a-year job in his own style.

The Maryland Constitution describes the comptroller's work as "general superintendence of the fiscal affairs of the state." Besides collecting taxes, the comptroller is the state's financial guardian, serving on the boards that oversee most state spending as well as the retirement system. Schaefer will have 1,100 employees working for him.

"William Donald Schaefer is not going to take that office and become a potted plant," said Nelson J. Sabatini, senior vice president of the University of Maryland Medical System, who is on Schaefer's transition team.

"He's coming in with new ideas, new approaches, and he's going to expect people to listen to him," Sabatini added. "He believes if it's not broken, don't fix it. But he's going to be a very activist comptroller."

Schaefer says he has no plans for a major shake-up, noting that Goldstein built a loyal, competent staff. However, he says, he wants to use the office to promote business development more aggressively. He's already begun to make small changes.

Over Christmas, he walked into the treasury building and noticed it was bare. No wreaths, no poinsettias, no lighted tree. In no time, he had the place decorated.

## Mayor, governor, comptroller

It was vintage Schaefer. It was reminiscent of his efforts, big and small, to improve Baltimore's image and sense of civic pride during 15 years as mayor.

That was the job he loved best, and he refuses to quell speculation that he might run for mayor this year in the wide-open race prompted by Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke's intended departure.

Even today, Schaefer says, he likes best to be addressed as "Mayor." But he won't complain if called "Governor," which according to protocol remains his title.

Now there will be two governors in town. Only time will tell if it's in name alone.

*Sun staff writer Michael Dresser contributed to this article.*