

# BALTIMORE'S NEW MAYOR WHAT'S HE REALLY LIKE

Photo by PAUL HUTCHINS. By CEI RICHARDSON

FROM across the room, someone else's campaign manager was studying William Donald Schaefer's progress through a reception crowd. "He's loosened up a lot," he said. He sloshed the scotch he was holding.

"Well, maybe 10 per cent. But for Don, that's a lot."

Mr. Schaefer, an attorney who will be sworn in Tuesday as Baltimore's 44th mayor, was smiling an introvert's smile and offering a few quiet one-line quips. He was campaigning. The drink in his hand appeared to be a gin. In reality it was straight bottled club soda.

The man who was elected to be the city's chief executive on the same day he became 50 years old is a teetotaler and a non-smoker. He is the city's first bachelor mayor since Thomas Hayes was elected in 1899. He is also a regular churchgoer, a booster and a joiner of lodges, veteran organizations and constructive citizen groups.

The media have characterized him drab, dull and unexciting. His staff says that trying to get good press for him is "a nightmare" because he neither boasts nor promises.

The new mayor and his predecessor, Thomas J. D'Alessandro 3d, are both men of Democratic machines. Personally they present few other similarities.

Young Tommy, who was 38 when he became mayor, rapidly soured on the job. One reason he gave for bowing out after one term was an often confessed aversion to the heavy social commitment. The mayor receives an average of 10 invitations to appear every night of the week.

One evening when Mr. Schaefer is on his way home from three banquet dinners in a row he confesses, in one word, that he shares Mr. D'Alessandro's feelings. "People want to see the mayor," he adds. "They'll accept the president of the City Council." He seems resigned to assuming a greater social burden than the former mayor, but in his mental file cabinet the task probably has a special place under W for Work (hard). He is no robot.

Young Tommy came under fire for not giving more time to the job. He frequently could be found on the golf course. Other pursuits took him out of town regularly. As City Council president, Mr. Schaefer stood in during the former mayor's absence. He pushed D'Alessandro legislation through the Council.

The ceremonial duties he assumed saw him often in the mayor's office with its oriental carpets, tall mirrors and threatening chandeliers. He would sit behind

the mayor's elegant desk, legs crossed, hands folded tensely in his lap, his head tilted, listening politely and responding in his gray voice.

Substitute duties took him daily on the banquet and community meeting circuit. En route, in the chauffeured Buick of the Council president, one could watch him gearing up for the exposure. His pace is dizzying, but he manages to maintain restraint within a high-energy alertness. There are moments when he shows the symptoms of a habituated coffee drinker although he consumes no more than three cups a day.

Young Tommy, who once referred to himself as a worrier, is said to have nicknamed Mr. Schaefer Nervous Nellie, probably less because of a physical attitude than a mental one. When he won the Democratic primary in a city where Democratic voters outnumbered Republicans 8 to 1, Mr. Schaefer's success in the general election became a foregone conclusion. But when acquaintances began prematurely hailing him as Mr. Mayor his smile would fade. The primary was only a first hurdle, he'd explain. "One down, one to go." His face would show a flicker of anxiety at the thought of taking an election outcome for granted.

Donald Schaefer is of average height. He has a strong nose, colorless eyes, thin lips and a freckled complexion. In 1957, at the beginning of his Fifth district councilmanic career, he had a receding hairline and an obvious crewcut.

TODAY his jowls are heavier. His graying hair is thinner. It is noticeably longer. "I'm very pro-Army . . . very. I always had it cut short, but my barber decided it wasn't right. He refused to cut my hair the way it was before." This is one of the new mayor's favorite stories. He smiles briefly. "It's better," he adds, in the tone of someone conceding a point.

Mr. Schaefer lacks his predecessor's rollicking sense of humor. Intimates say he is an excellent mimic, but what humor he lets show in public is more on the order of the whimsical quip. The jokes he tells are often on himself. "Five pounds was the biggest fish I caught. I almost lost my mind I was so happy." He might have loosened up, smiling more often, projecting himself more, circulating less doggedly at social events. But he has shown no indication of wanting to escape the tag of drab conservative.

The striped suit he wears says "politician" more than it does "lawyer." Often there are dark perspiration marks under the arms. On his pinkie finger he wears a star ruby ring. His ties are fashionably wide and mildly interesting. His socks

are occasionally mismatched.

His shirt wardrobe, on the other hand, includes a number of different textures and cheerful colors.

Those shirts come as a surprise from a man who has few surprises to offer. "You can't talk much about his personal life," says Joan Bereska, his administrative assistant. "There isn't one."

IF the man is genuinely dull, then it could be the result of a personal fetish that adds up to all work and no play. He is rarely in his office later than 9 A.M. and frequently works through until 11 P.M. and later. "Are you taking half a day?" he is reported to challenge his staff, half jokingly, as they pack up around 8 P.M.

"You never catch up. There's no time when there's nothing to do." If he had an extra two hours in every day, he says, he'd spend one reading and digesting reports and the other out in the city investigating citizen complaints, a task he takes seriously. "I never have enough time to see all the things people call to my attention and there are some things you simply must go and look at."

Mr. Schaefer shows up in his office on Saturday, the day he also regularly visits the Lexington Market ("I'm sure, pro-market"). He works on Sunday afternoons, escorting his mother to old St. Paul's Church on Charles street.

His voice is usually mild. But when he pronounces the word "work" he uses a peculiar throaty emphasis. He appears to resist an impulse to strike a fist in his hand. "They're not clock watchers," he says of his mostly female staff. "They know my moods. When I've got a lot on my mind, they know. They give. Many times they work on holidays. They work very hard. If you don't want to work, there's no place for you."

"They're not anything he's demanded," says Mr. Schaefer's assistant about the long hours. "We just know. He never takes you to task when you've tried and made a mistake. It's when you don't try that he can ride hard. He generates work just because of his physical presence."

"Joan's very smart," says the new mayor. ". . . I don't tell her this."

Donald Schaefer's aura is one of sameness. Perhaps his most unexpected action of late was at the opening of a City Fair headquarters when he thumped on a tambourine to accompany the long-haired lead singer of a folk-rock group. He had never played a tambourine before. "I must have hit the tune right." He almost grins.

But aside from active Army duty in

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Europe during World War II, he has lived in the same western Baltimore house all his life. Every week he has his hair cut by the same barber at the same East Baltimore street barbershop where his late father, also an attorney, had his hair cut. "I wouldn't think of going anywhere else."

He eats at the same restaurants, most of them haunted by other city politicians. Before he leaves home he grabs a glass of orange juice. But breakfast is always at the same hour at Horn and Horn, an old-fashioned cafeteria on Baltimore street where all the waitresses know him. Along with toast and a bowl of Wheaties he orders hot tea. Wait and see, he says, shamming dismay. As always, a cup of coffee appears before him. Why can't he be served the tea he always asks for?

AT nearby Bickford's where he has lunch, the double salad and fish he orders has come to be known as the "Schaefer Special." He also frequents Connolly's on Pratt street, a ramshackle pier-side seafood restaurant and bar. "That's my place," he says with satisfaction. "You see everyone from derelicts from The Block to the president of the biggest bank in the city, side by side. You see hippies, but there's never any trouble." By hippies does he mean students? Longhairs? "Hippies," he says firmly. The new mayor is sorry that Connolly's eventually must be demolished for the Inner Harbor renewal program.

When he's not being chauffeured, Mr. Schaefer drives the same nondescript car, an eight-year-old mud-colored Plymouth with a white top. "I like it. I know it. It's like an old pair of shoes."

Campaigning for mayor did work changes in his life. During those months, he says, his law practice in the Blaustein Building stagnated. He woke up one morning and discovered he had lost 15 pounds. Some of the potted ferns and African violets in his City Hall office yellowed and died.

Along with knickknacks, figurines, a bouquet of American flags on a stand, a bust of the late President Kennedy and a plaque offering "A Mongrel's Prayer," his office contains a large collection of model cars that admirers have been adding to for years. But the collection has lately ceased to interest him.

In his younger years he played soccer. Today his physical activity is hustling here and there on the job. Instead of the elevator, he uses the circular stairs on the Holiday street side of City Hall.

His energies seem limitless. Not so his temper, which grows shorter as a typical grueling day wears on. Sometimes his nerves are frayed by early afternoon. The jaw line above two chin hardens. His eyes lose their expression.

THE new mayor is reputed to be a frightening figure when he becomes

angry. When he is merely irritated, his manner hints of lethal forces. He is openly concerned about water pollution. "We won't be able to drink the harbor water, but we're going to clean it," he has declared. Air pollution is another matter. "It's not the problem here as in some places." He considers industry to be essential to the financial health of the city and makes clear an unwillingness to discuss air polluters.

However, the issue came up without warning one afternoon at the opening of a hospital laundry. An official enthusiastically described to Mr. Schaefer the quantities of airborne grime that are trapped in the clothes dryer filters and must be shoveled out weekly. It comes from the outside air, he said, and must be filtered out before it enters the dryer. Donald Schaefer turned away without speaking.

LATER, when his driver asked to turn on the radio, the voice from the back seat suggesting "something nice and soothing" was an ominous growl. Things were not going well.

Yet at the City Fair in the glorious weather he had audibly hoped for, no one could have been more lighthearted. He stuffed "Smile-You're in Baltimore" buttons into both pockets, dodged two parade elephants and strode down Baltimore street exalting: "A beautiful city, a beautiful city. Look at those people, just having a good time." His attitude toward municipal problems has been criticized as "happy city," and "rose-colored glasses." But on City Fair day when Charles Center sparkles and people do look happy, who could find fault?

"No tension here," he explained as he loped toward the neighborhoods pavilion. "You know, you can feel tension . . ." His high spirits were a reminder that he had not had a day to himself for months.

"We try to persuade him to try a different type vacation," says Mrs. Bereska. "We try to persuade him to try a vacation, but we've never been successful." He takes days off, but never vacations.

IN July and again in November, Donald Schaefer drove alone to Ocean City where he has a trailer in a trailer park on Assawoman Bay. Both times he returned to Baltimore after two days. "I happen to like to fish." Fishing is his only hobby. Conversationally it wears thin.

The story of the two willies (small-mouth bass) and two crabs he caught in July is often repeated. The willies were only so big. He holds up two hands and instantly moves them closer together in a parody of the tired old fish joke. The little pantomime appears to amuse him. It also gives him a sudden air of vulnerability and fragile honesty.

A sense of solitude in the midst of activity is what the mayor-elect appears to enjoy about Ocean City. . . . my fa-

vorite place," he says. "There are always people there. But not in my area." Not even his staff knows the location of his trailer. There is no telephone.

He fishes to relax, he says, and enjoys casting as much as anything, shunning the ocean waters in favor of the quieter bay. "I get a boat with a motor or fish off the pier or the rocks or the shore."

BESIDES fishing stories, his other small talk standbys are Army stories and details of the latest late night television movie. At odd hours at home Mr. Schaefer does watch television. He brings to mind stories of men with high pressure jobs who unwind by reading cheap potboilers. In the morning he tunes in cartoon shows like Rocky and Bullwinkle and "that guy who goes up in the sky," probably Astroboy.

The new mayor's boyhood home where he lives with his widowed mother is in a once white middle class now predominantly black middle class neighborhood half a block from Edmondson avenue. Noises of heavy traffic carry up the sycamore-lined street from Route 40.

The two-story brick rowhouse with a flat-roofed front porch is indistinguishable from its neighbors except for Mr. Schaefer's attorney shingle hanging on the porch railing. The lawn and thorn hedge are somewhat more neatly trimmed than others.

With Mr. Schaefer and his mother lives Skippy, a 13-year-old shaggy spaniel-type dog. "Just a good dog," he explains. "She's getting gray and very independent. She lets me pet her when she's in the mood. There's nothing spectacular about her—just a nice dog. My mother takes very good care of her."

At 77, Tulu Schaefer is a winning woman, alert and composed. She appears no older than 57. Smiling, she says she sometimes feels 97. She works in her son's law office several days a week, but she rarely sees him, she says, since they keep different hours.

AS a rule she doesn't talk to reporters. "I think he's a very nice person," she volunteers. She laughs and amends: "He's a pretty nice guy."

Mrs. Schaefer is not about to say she knew all along Donald would win the mayoralty. She isn't like that. "I'm not a very optimistic person. You wait until the end. If it's God's will . . ."

She is especially proud of her son's Army record. Mr. Schaefer enlisted as a private in 1942, had become a major by 1948. As a reservist he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

"He was a good soldier," says his mother. "He had a wonderful Army record. Maybe that's what I would have liked for him—to stay in the Army."