

Leonard S. Jacobson appointed to judgeship on Circuit Court

By Joel McCord

Baltimore County Bureau of The Sun

Baltimore County Attorney Leonard S. Jacobson, a member of the county executive's inner circle of political advisers, was named by Governor Hughes yesterday as a Circuit Court judge.

Mr. Jacobson, 56, is to succeed former Judge Walter R. Haile, who left the county bench June 30 at the mandatory retirement age of 70.

"I'm elated. It's something I really wanted," Mr. Jacobson said yesterday of his appointment to the \$58,500-a-year judgeship. "I'm really looking forward to it."

Mr. Jacobson, who represented Pikesville in the House of Delegates from 1967 to 1971, was one of three nominations sent to the governor by the county's Judicial Selection Commission to fill Judge Haile's seat.

The others were Joseph F. Murphy, a prominent Towson defense attorney, and William M. Nickerson, a partner in the firm of Whiteford, Taylor, Preston, Trimble and Johnston.

It is not known when Mr. Jacobson will be sworn in. He said he wants to "wind up my work [in the law office] and make the transitions" in his private practice before assuming the judgeship early in August.

As a member of the Circuit Court,

Mr. Jacobson will have to run for a 15-year-term in the next statewide election in September, 1984.

Mr. Jacobson was named county attorney in February, 1979, by County Executive Donald P. Hutchinson. A close friend of Mr. Hutchinson's since the two served in the legislature together with the governor in the late 1960s, Mr. Jacobson was the only person involved in the executive's 1978 campaign who later became a county department head. Mr. Jacobson makes \$47,000 a year as county attorney.

Mr. Hutchinson acknowledged yesterday he "encouraged the governor"

to appoint Mr. Jacobson to the judgeship.

"The governor also served in the legislature with Leonard, so he knew his qualifications," Mr. Hutchinson said. "He knows Leonard has a perfect judicial temperament."

Mr. Jacobson said he "made a commitment" to stay with Mr. Hutchinson during his first term and that he passed up earlier opportunities to apply for judgeships.

"But this opportunity came along [at the beginning of Mr. Hutchinson's second term], and I knew there would not be another one for at least three years, so I applied," he explained. "It's like a friend told me — this isn't

like a bus that comes along every 15 minutes."

Mr. Jacobson reorganized the county law department during his tenure, assigning assistant solicitors to specific county departments rather than having each assistant take cases involving any department as they came up.

"Those department heads could get directly in touch with their attorney that way, and it gave the assistants the opportunity to develop some expertise in those areas," he said.

Mr. Jacobson also negotiated an end to a 1978 civil rights suit the federal government filed against the

county charging discrimination in hiring practices.

He said he would "make a recommendation" to Mr. Hutchinson for his successor but that it is "his appointment to make."

Mr. Hutchinson said Malcolm F. Spicer, Jr., the deputy county attorney, would "make an excellent solicitor," but that he would "have to see what inquiries there are" before he makes his decision.

"I'm not going to linger over the decision," Mr. Hutchinson said. "It will have to be somebody I feel very, very comfortable with because not only is he the county's lawyer, but he works very closely with me."