

# Taylor speech not without emotion, history

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CUMBERLAND — Casper Rohman Taylor Jr. has made innumerable speeches during his 19 years as a member of Maryland's House of Delegates but none as rewarding as his impassioned acceptance as the new speaker of the House last Tuesday in Annapolis.

Upon being endorsed unanimously by the Democratic Caucus to succeed the retiring R. Clayton Mitchell Jr. as the "gavel master," a recommendation equivalent to election, Del. Taylor vacated his cus-

tomary place in the last row of the historic chamber to move "front and center."

A lot of things passed in review through his mind about the past, he admitted when he returned to his home on Prince George Street for the Thanksgiving weekend. Many of those thoughts were about his parents and grandparents when he was growing up in Frostburg, LaVale, and Cumberland.

In fact, the speech was made on the anniversary of his mother's unexpected death on Thanksgiving Day more than 25 years ago.

While those emotional recollections were not a part of the fervent speech before 105 fellow Democrats, the memories were embedded in the back of his mind while he spoke.

In his new position, which will become official when the General Assembly opens its 1994 session on Jan. 12, Speaker Taylor will be spending even more time in Annapolis than he has ever done before. "Maybe that's the incorrect way of putting it," he said, "because as chairman of the Economic Matters Committee, it seemed like the only times I could get back home

were weekends."

Getting home on the weekends is doubly important for him. First, it enables him to spend that time with his family, and secondly, as the Democratic delegate representing portions of Allegany and Washington counties, he will be able to touch base with constituents here.

He will continue to maintain his Cumberland office on the second floor of the When Pigs Fly Restaurant, a business he once owned. Mrs. Ruth Watson will be his secretary here,

as she has been for a number of years. Mary Anne (Snyder) Kuhn, a Cumberland native, will be his secretary in the Annapolis speaker's office.

As the new speaker, Taylor will become the strongest representative in the State House from Western Maryland since Hagerstown's William Preston Lane Jr. was governor (1947-51). Taylor will also make history when he is sworn in Jan. 12, becoming the first Allegany Countyman ever to be speaker of the House.

Only three lawmakers from Western Maryland have ever served as speaker of the House and Taylor becomes the first in 115 years. Prior to Taylor's selection, Lewis C. Smith of Washington County was speaker from 1876-1878. John Lee Carroll, a Democrat, having been governor then.

Allegany and Garrett are Maryland's last two counties, the reason for them occupying back-row positions in the House of Delegates. Allegany was created on Christmas Day 1789 by the legislature. Washington came into existence by resolve of the Constitutional Convention in 1776 and what is now Allegany County repre-

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sented the western portion of Washington. Garrett County was created in 1872 after having been a part of Allegany for 83 years.

Del. Taylor went into a huddle with several of his associates before writing his acceptance speech for the Speaker's post. After a day-and-a-half of work and having rewritten the speech three times, he arose at 5 a.m. Monday and finished the job. "Maybe there were several little things we could have changed," he said, "but overall we liked the final product."

His next big speech-writing job, he envisions, will be even more difficult. That's the one he will deliver to open the 1994 assembly in January. "That will be a message for all residents of Maryland," he said. "The one last week was for only those in the Democratic Caucus."