

BLAIR LEE III, *Lieutenant Governor of Maryland*

When Maryland voters elected Blair Lee III as Lieutenant Governor, they chose a public official who in a sense was born to the office. Both his maternal and paternal grandfathers were State Senators, like Mr. Lee, who is continuing a tradition of public service that has been intertwined with the Lee family heritage for generations.

Lieutenant Governor Lee's father, E. Brooke Lee, was Secretary of State under Governor Albert C. Ritchie and after that was Speaker of the House of Delegates. Earlier he had been elected State Comptroller at 29. Respectfully called "Colonel Lee," he was one of Maryland's most formidable political figures of his day and is still frequently consulted by young, up-and-coming office seekers.

Blair Lee III, Maryland's first Lieutenant Governor under the Constitution of 1867, was born in Silver Spring, on May 19, 1916, the son of E. Brooke and Elizabeth S. (Wilson) Lee. He was educated at Princeton University, where he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1938, with a major in American History. He studied law for two years before he enlisted in the Navy. Between 1941 and 1945, he served in the U. S. Naval Reserve, ferrying supplies across the Atlantic, being discharged with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

After the war, he became editor of the Maryland News, a weekly newspaper operated by his father in Montgomery County. He was president of the Maryland Press Association in 1949.

That same year Mr. Lee was appointed Vice Chairman and Park Commissioner for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. He held that post until 1951, and was a member of the Commission in 1965 and 1966. He served as Executive Officer of the National Capital Planning Commission (a Federal agency serving Washington, D. C. and its environs) from 1951 to 1954.

In 1948 Mr. Lee was chosen as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, a role he also filled in 1960 and 1964.

He was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1954 and served until 1962, when he became a candidate for the Democratic nomination to the U. S. Senate. During his two terms in the House of Delegates, Mr. Lee was Chairman of the Montgomery County delegation. For his outstanding abilities in resolving a dispute in 1958 between the Maryland State Teachers Association and the General Assembly, Mr. Lee was chosen Legislator of the Year by the Maryland Legislative Correspondents Association, composed of reporters who regularly cover the General Assembly.

In 1960, Mr. Lee served as Montgomery County campaign manager for John F. Kennedy. During the 1964 campaign, he was Regional Coordinator of the Middle Atlantic States for the Johnson-Humphrey ticket.

In 1966 Blair Lee was elected to the Maryland Senate, where he was Vice Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and a member of the Legislative Council.

He was midway into this term when Governor Mandel selected him as Secretary of State. In recognition of his abilities, Governor Mandel said Mr. Lee would immediately assume the functions of a Lieutenant Governor, since Maryland had none at that time. Subsequently, the General Assembly enacted a constitutional amendment creating the office of Lieutenant Governor. This amendment was ratified by the voters at the November 1970 general election, and at the same election, they chose Blair Lee III to fill the new office.