

Get the Local Headlines Newsletter

Free daily updates delivered just for you.

Maryland Politics

In Annapolis, saying goodbye to former Md. governor Marvin Mandel

By Josh Hicks September 2 at 6:47 PM

Maryland's political establishment paid its respects Wednesday to former governor Marvin Mandel at the State House in Annapolis, temporarily replacing the building's late-summer humdrum with ceremony, reverence and a steady trickle of visitors.

Attendees filtered past Mandel's flag-draped casket in the marble rotunda from morning until evening — some wiping away tears, others smiling — then paused for hushed conversations with family and acquaintances.

Mandel died Sunday at age 95. His funeral is scheduled for Thursday near Baltimore.

“He lived such a full life that you can't be sad for him, but I think everyone is feeling personal losses, because they loved him so much,” said Morrissa Maltz, Mandel's granddaughter from his first marriage.

[Marvin Mandel obituary]

Mandel's casket was brought into the State House by six members of a National Guard honor guard, followed closely by Mandel's stepson Paul Dorsey, Rabbi Stuart Weinblatt, Gov. Larry Hogan (R), Lt. Gov. Boyd Rutherford (R) and House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel).

Family and dignitaries made up the bulk of the initial procession of about 50 people, including former governors Robert L. Ehrlich Jr. (R), Parris N. Glendening (D) and Harry Hughes (D) and former lieutenant governors Michael S. Steele (R) and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (D).

Inside the State House, National Guard troops removed the U.S. flag from the casket and state troopers replaced it with a Maryland flag. Members of the guard and state police took turns watching over the casket throughout the day, marching crisply to relieve each other at 15-minute intervals.

Hogan delivered brief remarks in the morning, his voice occasionally shaking as he talked about Mandel's friendship, the advice the longtime public servant regularly offered the first-term governor and the impact

Mandel had on state government.

“He spent 28 years in elected office, but he dedicated 95 years of his life to making Maryland a better place,” Hogan said. “The state of Maryland owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude.”

[Hogan attends 95th birthday party for Mandel]

In 1969, Mandel was serving as speaker of the House of Delegates when the legislature elected him to finish the term of Gov. Spiro T. Agnew (R), who resigned to become Richard M. Nixon’s vice president.

Mandel won two more terms to become one of Maryland’s longest-serving governors. He was the only Jewish person who has held the office.

During his 10-year tenure, Mandel’s accomplishments included reorganizing an expansive network of more than 340 agencies, bureaus, commissions and boards into 12 departments led by secretaries. He also helped lay the groundwork for Maryland’s mass-transit system and established the state’s first nomination commission to help identify candidates for judicial office.

“He really brought the state government into the 20th century,” Busch said in an interview. “He was great at answering questions for anyone coming into the executive branch or the legislature. Before you try to change things, you have to understand why they were put in place to start with. He had the institutional history to provide all of those answers.”

Mandel’s legacy was complicated by a 1977 conviction on charges of mail fraud and racketeering and an affair that led to his temporary exile from the governor’s mansion while he was divorcing his first wife, Barbara Mandel.

Mandel served 19 months in prison for the conviction before President Ronald Reagan commuted his sentence to time served.

A federal judge overturned the conviction in 1987.

[The many denials of Marvin Mandel and how they all unraveled]

On Wednesday, Mandel’s loved ones focused mostly on fonder memories.

Maltz said she shared an adventurous spirit with her grandfather, remembering how they visited Las Vegas together. The last time she hung out with him, they took a road trip to the Maryland home of movie director John Waters, Maltz said.

She described Mandel as her best friend.

“We bonded over very simple things, and that’s the stuff that matters in life,” Maltz said. “We watched Turner Classic Movies, we watched westerns, we sat on the couch until one in the morning, talking about life.”

Mandel lived alone after his second wife, Jeanne Dorsey, died in 2001, but he resided with Paul Dorsey and his family in St. Mary’s County in the weeks leading up to his death from complications of a heart ailment.

The day before he died, he and his family and friends celebrated Dorsey’s 50th birthday. His stepson said Mandel was in good spirits, talking local politics with elected officials and watching the Ravens-Redskins exhibition football game with family.

“He was always around family,” Dorsey said. “We made sure of that.”

Mandel’s funeral will be Thursday at the Sol Levinson funeral home in Pikesville, northwest of Baltimore. The service, which will be open to the public, is to begin at 11 a.m. and will be followed by interment at Lakemont Memorial Garden in Davidsonville in Anne Arundel County.

Josh Hicks covers Maryland politics and government. He previously anchored the Post’s Federal Eye blog, focusing on federal accountability and workforce issues.

PROMOTED STORIES

Recommended by



Donald Trump says he’d put Sarah Palin in the White House
Fortune



Workplace rudeness is contagious
Culture Amp - The Survey Platform for People and Culture.



What's One Thing Your Food Bank Needs You to Donate?
The Huffington Post