

Cornell N. Dypski

One of Baltimore's longest-serving state legislators, he held seats in both the House of Delegates and the Senate

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Cornell N. Dypski, one of Baltimore's longest-serving state legislators who was in both the House of Delegates and Senate, died Tuesday of Alzheimer's disease at Gilchrist Hospice Care. He was 77.

During yesterday morning's session, Del. Peter A. Hammen, a Baltimore Democrat, announced Mr. Dypski's death, and delegates observed a moment of silence in his honor.

"He was an awfully decent fellow," former Gov. Harry R. Hughes said yesterday. "He typified the public official who worked really hard as a legislator representing the people who had elected him."

Former Gov. Marvin Mandel was a friend for many years.

"Cornell was a very good member of the legislature and always there when you needed him. He was just one of those reliable people," Mr. Mandel said.

"He was one of those people who understood his work, took it very seriously and realized he had an obligation to find solutions to problems," he said.

Mr. Dypski was born and raised in a two-story Dillon Street rowhouse, the youngest of 12 children — 11 of them boys.

His father, an Austrian immigrant, was killed in an automobile accident when Mr. Dypski was a child, and his mother went to work in a Canton cannery to help support her family.

In a 1999 interview with *The Johns Hopkins Gazette*, Mr. Dypski remembered how he and other neighborhood children would take lunch during the summer months to their mothers who were working in the sweltering canneries.

The experience left a lasting impression on Mr. Dypski, who years later recalled seeing his perspiring mother dressed in a heavy rubber apron that was dripping with tomato juice.

He was a 1950 graduate of Polytechnic Institute and attended the University of Baltimore.

Mr. Dypski worked as an insurance salesman and was a court constable before becoming an administrative officer for the state Motor Vehicle Administration in the early 1970s. He retired in 1994.

Mr. Dypski's elder brother, Raymond A. Dypski, a tester and inspector in the metallurgical department at Bethlehem Steel Corp.'s Sparrows Point plant, was first elected to the House of Delegates from the old 47th District in 1966.

Mr. Dypski, who served as his brother's campaign manager, helped introduce into local political lore the slogan "Three Cheers for Dypski," which seemingly appeared everywhere.

In 1974, it was Cornell Dypski's turn, and he waged a successful campaign for the state Senate, where he served two terms until 1983, when the 47th District was redistricted into the 46th District.

Mr. Dypski selected James R. Dietrich to be his campaign manager for his first run for public office from the blue-collar district.

"He told me, 'Kid, I'm going to teach you politics and give you a lesson in practical politics,'" Mr. Die-

trich said, recalling that Mr. Dypski held in his hand the voter list for the Highlandtown-Canton neighborhood.

They went to the top of a building and looked down at the rowhouses that spread out in every direction.

"He said, 'We go door to door while the other guy goes bar to bar. Rap on the door, give 'em a firm handshake, and you'll win,'" Mr. Dietrich said.

Mr. Dypski also adopted the "Three Cheers for Dypski" slogan for his campaign.

"He was a very good candidate and a maverick. He got along with people, and never missed Mass or Communion on Sunday," Mr. Dietrich said.

After Mr. Dypski won his Senate seat, the two brothers commuted to the General Assembly in a converted mail truck they dubbed an "office on wheels." It was painted red, white and blue and festooned with a sign stating: "We're here to help."

"It's the pride and joy of Cornell and Ray Dypski, one of the few — if not the only — brother team ever to serve in the General Assembly," observed a 1975 *Evening Sun* article.

Former state Sen. Julian L. Lapidés, a longtime friend of Mr. Dypski's, also served in the legislature with him.

"Cornell was never part of the establishment but was a Democratic voice with a truly great social conscience. He was an independent, and I liked him immensely," Mr. Lapidés said.

"I remember Cornell getting up on the floor and saying, 'When I came to this august body, I was so overwhelmed that I wondered how I ever got here, but after being here for four weeks, I wonder how many of you got here,'" Mr.

Lapidés said, laughing.

Mr. Lapidés said the Depression made a profound and lasting impression on Mr. Dypski.

"Cornell remembered the Depression and how tough life could be for some people, and because of that, he developed a strong social conscience and was committed to helping working people."

Mr. Lapidés described him as being a "totally unpretentious" individual and "truly a man of the people who was a Democrat with an upper and lower case 'D.'"

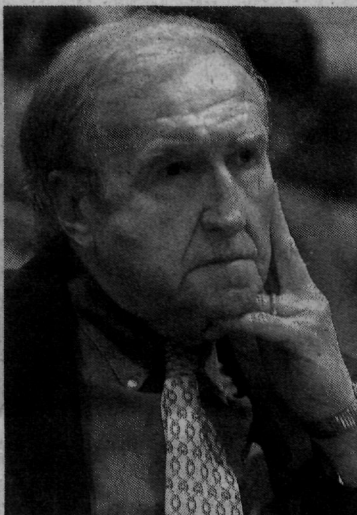
Mr. Dypski, who served in the House of Delegates from 1987 and had been vice chairman of the city's House legislative delegation since 1991, decided against seeking re-election for his 46th District seat in 2002.

"I reached the conclusion it was time to go," he told *The Sun* at the time.

Mr. Dypski, a longtime resident of the 600 block of S. Decker Ave. in Canton, was married for 52 years to the former Joyce Houtz, who died last year.

He was a communicant of St. Casimir Roman Catholic Church, Kenwood Avenue at O'Donnell Street, where a Mass of Christian burial will be offered at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Surviving are his son, Michael C. Dypski of Towson; and a sister, Theresa M. Posko of Pasadena.



Mr. Dypski served in the Senate from 1974 to 1983 and in the House of Delegates from 1987 to 2003.