

## **METRO** | *Friday*



BY DUDLEY M. BROOKS—THE WASHINGTON POST

**MARYLAND**

### **Delegate Remembered**

Hundreds attended the funeral, above,  
for Del. Howard P. Rawlings.

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# Rawlings Remembered for Moral Courage

*Hundreds Mourn Md. Legislative Leader Who Supported Education, Other Causes*

By CRAIG WHITLOCK  
Washington Post Staff Writer

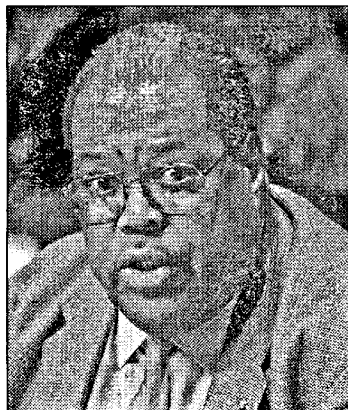
Maryland's political ruling class paid homage yesterday to Del. Howard P. Rawlings, a longtime Baltimore power broker whose grip on the state treasury and intimidating manner made him a fixture in the General Assembly for a quarter-century.

Hundreds of mourners streamed to Douglas Memorial Community Church in Baltimore yesterday in what easily could have been mistaken for an official state funeral. A 30-member honor guard of Maryland state troopers stood watch outside the brick church as a slow-moving line of current and former governors, mayors, county executives and university presidents filed past Rawlings's casket, which was draped with Maryland's checkered state flag.

Rawlings, 66, died of cancer Nov. 14. Despite his four-year illness, he remained a vigorous and influential presence in Annapolis as the Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, overseeing meetings and hearings through the final weeks of his life.

A large, bespectacled man with a piercing stare, Rawlings—known widely by his nickname, Pete—was known as a champion of public education and other causes who was unlikely to back down in the face of resistance.

"Pete always liked to intimidate people," recalled the Rev. Vernon Dobson, a friend and speaker at the funeral, before adding tongue-in-cheek that Rawlings may have finally met his match: "I didn't think he'd be able to intimidate God into resurrection."



Del. Howard P. Rawlings in February.

Another eulogist, former House speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. (D-Allegany), remembered Rawlings as a man who stood by his convictions, regardless of how unpopular they might be.

"Pete Rawlings had a moral courage that transcended the politics of our day," Taylor said. "Pete was a public official almost totally oblivious to public opinion. If he wanted a poll, he looked in the mirror."

NAACP President Kweisi Mfume, a longtime friend, called Rawlings "a tall timber of a man" who was "unawed by opinion, unseduced by flattery, undismayed by disaster."

Rawlings rose to power after a childhood that began in segregated public housing in Baltimore. The son of a postal worker, he parlayed a talent for mathematics into university scholarships and later taught math at Morgan State University, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, Baltimore City Community College and Baltimore public schools.

In 1978, he was elected to the House of Delegates and took a



PHOTOS BY DUDLEY M. BROOKS—THE WASHINGTON POST

**Mourners sing hymns during Rawlings's funeral at Douglas Memorial Community Church. He died Nov. 14 after battling cancer for four years.**

seat on the Appropriations Committee, which oversees the state's finances. He was named committee chairman in 1992.

Over the years, he served as a mentor to a number of young black legislators from Baltimore but also gave his blessings to several budding white politicians. In 1999, he endorsed a young white City Council member, Martin O'Malley (D), for mayor of Baltimore over two black candidates in a move that proved prescient.

Yesterday, O'Malley—now the mayor and seen as a rising star nationally in the Democratic Party—repaid the tribute. He likened Rawlings to Frederick Douglass, calling the delegate a modern-day abolitionist when it came to moral causes.

"If anybody followed Frederick Douglass's formula—'Agitate, agitate, agitate!'—it was Pete," O'Malley said. "Pete said things others were afraid to say, and he did so loudly."