

SPIRO T. AGNEW
Governor of Maryland

Spiro Theodore Agnew was inaugurated as Maryland's 55th elected governor on January 25, 1967. He took office with several distinctions. He was the fifth Republican ever elected governor in this predominantly Democratic State; the first governor of Maryland to be born in this century; one of the youngest, at age 48, to hold the office; and the first American of Greek descent to become the chief executive of a State.

Governor Agnew, a lawyer by profession, was County Executive of Baltimore County, one of the nation's largest and fastest-growing political subdivisions, for four years immediately preceding his election as governor. It was the only previous elective office he had held.

His administration as governor was launched with an impressive series of legislative accomplishments, achieved through a close working relationship with the Democratic-controlled Maryland General Assembly.

These included a fiscal reform program which, for the first time, based the State income tax on a graduated scale instead of a flat rate and gave local governments a major revenue source other than the property tax; an open housing law that was the first on a state-wide basis south of the Mason-Dixon Line; implementing legislation for the convention to rewrite Maryland's one hundred-year-old Constitution; and authorization to plan and build four additional toll crossings of the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor.

The Governor created within his office a Task Force on Modern Management to study waste and duplication in the State government and to recommend improvements. He also initiated with legislative approval a new policy of substantial cash down payments on capital improvements to save interest costs. He appointed executive-legislative committees to study reform of the business tax structure and highway financing. Planning was started on development of comprehensive air and water pollution control programs.

An early mark of the Agnew administration was a closer working relationship with local governments. The Governor personally visited the heads of county and city governments in the State's twenty-four political subdivisions to establish this liaison. Nearly eighty-five percent of the additional revenue raised from the tax reform program also went directly to local governments, primarily to finance educational and police protection improvements and to provide real estate tax credits for the elderly—needs that otherwise would have fallen on local property taxes.

The Governor is a native of Baltimore City. He was born November 9, 1918, the only son of Theodore Spiro Agnew, a restaurant operator and a leader of the city's Greek community, and the former Margaret Akers of Bristol, Virginia. His father came to this country in 1897 at the age of 21 from the village of Gargalianos, in Messenia, Peloponnesus, Greece. Both parents are deceased. The family name Agnew was shortened from the Greek name Anagnostopoulos by the Governor's father.