

FOREWORD

This edition of the *Maryland Manual* reflects the first major change in design and content in twelve years.

In 1977, the bicentennial year of the inauguration of state government under Maryland's first constitution, we completely reorganized the content of the *Manual*, selected a more readable typeface, adopted a combined single and double-column format, and generally set a course of making the *Manual* as accurate as possible. Since that time, the editors, first Frank F. White, Jr., then Gregory A. Stiverson, and now Diane P. Frese, have managed to improve each new edition with only slight increases in part-time staff and the operating budget. Automation of the operation, including in-house keyboarding of text and pruning of free distribution, have kept the cost per volume down and virtually unchanged since 1977, despite inflation. A major frustration in producing the *Manual* in a timely manner, however, always has been the time consumed in working with a contractor on composition. Double, sometimes triple proofreading caused by unreliably typeset pages or unavoidable last-minute changes, drained resources and led to unnecessary errors largely out of our control.

With the advent of desktop publishing, it is at last possible to eliminate the composition middleman. The form of the *Manual* can now reflect its content. Information presented on the page can show the structure of government while retaining as high a degree of readability as possible. Resources previously allocated to correcting mistakes of typesetting can be reallocated to improving accuracy of content. After testing desktop publishing, I concluded that we should try it with this edition. To do so meant hiring contractual employees and upgrading some computer equipment, but we managed within the existing appropriation, in large measure due to the hard work and mastery of the software by Diane and her staff.

To Diane Frese should go the credit for all that is good in this edition. Twelve years ago compiling the *Manual* was a full-time job for one senior archivist every other year. In the intervening years the State budget has grown from two billion dollars to nearly eleven billion and the size and complexity of State Government has increased even more dramatically. Compiling, editing, and composing the *Manual* now requires a minimum staff of two full-time senior archivists and part-time contractual labor equivalent to four full-time keyboarders and editors. At present we are funded only for one senior archivist full-time and every two years receive an appropriation for contractual staff. Despite insufficient staff to gather and distill all the information about State and local government that we would like to include, this edition remains a triumph. In many respects it will prove more helpful to users than any previous edition. For example, because Governor William Donald Schaefer requested that the *Manual* staff produce organizational charts and structural outlines of state agencies for use in the budget process, the information about those agencies in this edition of the *Manual* is more comprehensive than ever before.

In concentrating our resources on the structure and organization of State Government, however, we found it necessary to eliminate the Historical List, Miscellany, Charter, and Cities, Towns, & Incorporated Areas and to reduce the county section to the minimum required by law (name and address of each county officer who is elected, appointed by the Governor, or appointed by the Board of Public Works). To do otherwise would have increased the size of the book beyond reasonable limits and possibly resulted in a two-volume edition, neither of which could be supported by the existing appropriation or accomplished in a timely fashion by present staff.

We intend to publish an historical abstract of useful information regarding state government late this year that will include sections no longer in the *Manual* and that will be updated every four or five years. Not only will this work include the historical lists found in the last *Manual*, but also we hope to present an historical overview of Maryland government, drawing on our extensive collections and the scholarship of our staff.

While we did not have the resources to expand the county section of the *Manual* for this edition beyond the minimum required by law, it is our hope that funds will be available in the future, either to enlarge the next edition of the *Manual*, or to produce a separate volume. Accurate, comprehensive, and current information about county and local government is essential to the effectiveness of State government.

Edward C. Papenfuse
State Archivist and
Commissioner of Land Patents

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