

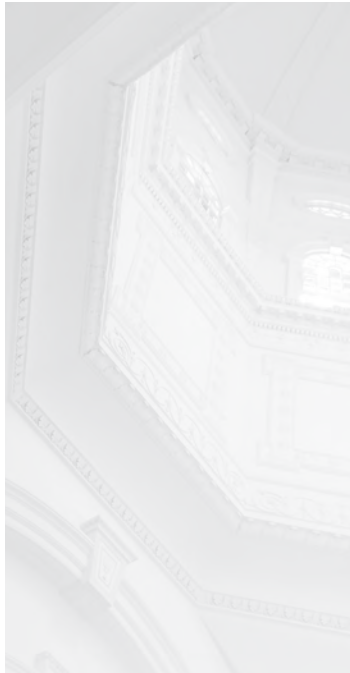


THOMAS V.
MIKE MILLER, JR.

DECEMBER 3, 1942 - JANUARY 15, 2021

HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER, SENATOR, LAWYER, MARYLANDER, TERP

SENATOR



MIKE MILLER was not just the longest-serving Senate president in American history. He was the most effective Maryland political leader in generations.

The Washington Post called him “a pillar of Maryland government,” observing that Mike Miller “was as much a part of Annapolis’s vista, it seems, as the State House dome.” Indeed, the Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. Senate Office Building will always share the skyline with the State House he loved so much.

Under the 226-year-old wooden dome, Mike worked, for half a century, making landmark contributions to his state. Public education, Maryland’s natural resources, the legal system, the state’s health care system, and even Maryland’s triple-A bond rating all bear his lasting imprint. The University of Maryland campus is forever changed by his leadership.

But Mike Miller’s real legacy runs much deeper. By sheer force of character and unprecedented longevity, he instilled in the heart of the Senate, and the state government, his most deeply held values: the importance of public integrity, a commitment to fiscal responsibility, an abiding love of Maryland history and a deep respect for the Senate itself, the traditions of the Senate, and for each senator.



Such greatness comes rarely. It can only be explained by the many paradoxes of Mike Miller. A student of history, he was focused on the future: “I knew where the Senate had been, I knew where the Senate was now, and I could predict where the Senate was going.” While he loved history, he thought human nature was more important: “Times change, but people don’t.”

He was a passionate Democrat, whether it was leading the 27th District team, the county Democratic Party, the Senate Democrats, or the national Democratic state legislators. He campaigned for the Democratic Party in every election from 1970 all the way to 2020, when, in his wheelchair, he joined Biden/Harris supporters waving signs along the highway.

He brought order and discipline to Democratic campaigns. He brought enthusiasm. He brought his friend Bill Clinton to Clinton. He was a Democrat to his bones. But he also respected the rights of the minority party, who respected him back, and he worked with Republican governors when it benefitted the state.

He had a strong will, and newspapers tended to focus on “the powerful Mike Miller.” But his real strength laid in giving power away, giving every Senator a role, understanding the will of the Senate, and ultimately the will of their constituents. He became the architect of consensus.

Mike could be funny, but he was serious about governing. Privately, was sometimes coarse, but in the Senate chamber, he insisted on decorum. He had a reputation for personal toughness, but he was filled with compassion for the people he served with and for. He could be obstinate, but he listened when it was important, and always heard what people told him.

Mike Miller was all these things, and much more. Most of all, he was deeply human, truly himself. He was not the product of any poll or focus group. He was real, genuine, unvarnished.

In the words of Attorney General Brian Frosh, “We will not soon see his like again.”



LAWYER

MIKE MILLER was admitted to the Maryland Bar on November 17, 1967. After serving as law clerk and legislative bill drafter, he hung out his shingle in Clinton, where he practiced law for the next 53 years.

For more than half a century, Mike's neighbors, friends and local businesses trusted him with their legal matters. They knew Mike would provide them frank and sound judgment, and that he would be a zealous advocate for them. Although he sometimes called himself a "country lawyer" his practice grew in size and complexity. The Law Offices of Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. soon became the go-to firm for criminal, workers' compensation, and malpractice cases in Prince George's County and Southern Maryland.

Mike was a hands-on trial lawyer, handling tens of thousands of cases in his lifetime. During the day, he could be found "riding the circuit," traveling to courtrooms from Upper Marlboro to Prince Frederick and LaPlata, and often to Leonardtown and Annapolis.

At day's end, Mike would head back Clinton, where the light in his office burned late into the evening as he prepared for the next day's cases. He was known by judges, prosecutors and clients alike for his diligence, integrity, and practicality.

Because of his years in the courtroom, Mike was able to make major contributions to Maryland law. As chairman of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee in the 1980s, he led the effort for reform of Maryland's divorce laws to insure that women received fair alimony and property settlements. As president of the Senate, he pushed modernization of the state's domestic violence laws and for criminal justice reform.

Last November, the Maryland State Bar Association bestowed on Mike Miller the J. Joseph Curran Award for "selflessly serving the public good." The Bar recognized his half-century commitment to the profession, and a life well lived in the law.

Mike's love of the law has been passed onto his son, Thomas V. "Tommy" Miller, III and his daughter Melissa "Missy" Miller. After practicing with his father, Tommy served as a Maryland parole commissioner, and since 2010 has been a judge of the Anne Arundel County District Court. Missy, a former prosecutor, has practiced with her father since 2000, and is one of Southern Maryland's leading trial lawyers.



MARYLANDER



MIKE MILLER was the quintessential Marylander. His roots ran deepest in Clinton, on a short stretch of Old Branch Avenue near Woodyard Road, where lived, worked and prayed. Mike was baptized and his children were baptized at St. John the Evangelist, where generations of Millers worshipped. He worked summers and evenings at his family's iconic corner store, B.K. Miller Meat & Liquor, bagging groceries and cutting meat. He practiced law in a two-story brick building adjacent to St. John's and B.K.'s. He raised his own family right up the road on Horseshoe Drive.

Mike was the oldest of ten kids. His father, Thomas Miller Sr., was descended from German immigrants. He could be gruff and unsparingly honest, and wasted few words. He worked day and night, was a tough taskmaster, and became successfully many times over, first at B.K. Miller's, then in real estate, and improbably, by investing in wholesale soda.

Mike's mother Esther was smart, opinionated, and politically active. She had high aspirations for Mike, and pushed him out of the store and to law school. Together, Mike's parents bequeathed him both an extraordinary work ethic and a deep love of politics.

Mike grew up surrounded by history. Across from B.K. Miller's, his family once owned the historic Surratt House, which they donated for use as a public museum.

Inspired by the late Comptroller Louis Goldstein, Mike came to have an encyclopedic knowledge of Maryland history.

All his life, he would recite names, places, and events from Maryland history, often from the Senate rostrum. In every Maryland crisis, he could find lessons from the past, going back to the Civil War, the Revolutionary War, and even the Ark and the Dove. He preserved the State House as a monument to history, and now he is part of that history.

Although ever the historian, Mike Miller was also deeply immersed in the present. He knew thousands of Marylanders, in every corner of the state. But he knew more than their names and faces. He knew their families, their jobs, their histories, their cares. This especially endeared him to his constituents, his clients, and his colleagues. He never forgot, and they remembered.

As the nation's longest running Senate president, he was invited to speak around the state and the country. But always, he returned to his roots, coming back late in the evening to speak at a firehouse banquet in Baden, a church supper in Dunkirk, or an Eagle Scout ceremony in Brandywine, not far from Old Branch Avenue.

Mike's final wish will be honored as he is laid to rest at Resurrection Cemetery, just down Woodyard Road from B.K. Miller's and the Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. Law Offices.

A great Marylander comes home.



TERP



SEPTEMBER 12, 1960 was a breezy Monday, sunny in the mid-70s. On that day, seventeen-year-old Mike Miller hitchhiked from Clinton to College Park to register as a freshman, and began a sixty-year love affair with the campus. He enrolled in the business school, pledged Phi Sigma Kappa, met his wife Patti, and made lifelong friends. He graduated in 1964 with a B.S. in business administration.

Seven years later, in 1967, Mike became a “Double Terp,” earning a law degree from the University of Maryland School of Law. Three years later, just before turning 28, Mike was first elected to the General Assembly, where he began a half-century of advocacy for the College Park campus.

No Maryland elected official in history has made a bigger impact on the campus. Mike was instrumental in enacting the 1988 reorganization of Maryland higher education, which designated College Park as the state’s flagship campus, and providing the funding to make the campus one of the nation’s top public research universities. Mike’s vision led to the creation of the MPower Partnership between College Park and University of Maryland, Baltimore, which now has a \$1 billion joint research enterprise, 25 joint programs and 600 joint research proposals.

Because of Mike Miller, College Park is a vastly different campus than it was six decades ago when he first arrived on campus as a



freshman. The Xfinity Center, the Bioscience Research building, the Clarice Smith Center Performing Arts Center, the Physical Sciences Complex, new Cole Field House training facility and many other buildings were built on the strength of Mike’s leadership.

For half a century, Mike’s presence was felt everywhere on campus, at the 50-yard line, at courtside, in the classroom, and on the golf course. Miller children and grandchildren have followed him to College Park.

Mike Miller’s imprint on the campus can be found everywhere, but his name will forever adorn one building, the Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. Administration Building, overlooking McKeldin Mall. There, President Darryll Pines observed, “his name will remind us all of his unwavering pursuit of service to the great state of Maryland and the world.”



HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER



OF ALL THE TITLES and honoraria bestowed upon Mike Miller, there was only one that mattered to him and he cherished most above all else: “Family Man.” For all the attributes that commentators attributed to his success—towering intellect, unflinching energy, overwhelming charisma—there was only one irresistible force: Family. At his final moment, family was at the center of Mike Miller’s heart. He was first of all husband, father, and grandfather, right to the end.

Mike’s first “win” was his greatest, and it set in motion all the others that would follow. In 1962, he looked across the room at a Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity party and spotted Patti Given, who soon became the love of his life.

They were married on June 6, 1965, beginning a legacy of love now in its third generation. Mike assured Patti they would not have kids until he graduated from law school and established his career. But since he came from a Catholic family of ten, this was one campaign promise Patti surely did not believe. A mere fourteen months later, in August, 1966, Thomas Vincent “Tommy” Miller III was born, followed by Melissa “Missy” Miller in October 1967, and the twins, Michelle and Melanie in October, 1968. The family was complete when Amanda was born a decade later in January, 1978.

Mike worked long hours in his Clinton office, working to provide for his family, and representing his 27th District community in the legislature. Patti efficiently managed the household of five young children, and the dog Clancy. Michelle remembers that “Dad would work late into the evening, and he counted on Mom as his energy source. She would have a hot fresh meal prepared and waiting for him when he came home from work, no matter the hour.”

Together, they built a strong home, built on a foundation of love and faith. Hugs were abundant. “I love you” was heard often. Sunday was



always and exclusively family day, everyone’s favorite. The day would begin with the family filling an entire pew at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church, founded by Miller ancestors. After church, the family would make the local rounds, going to community events or visiting historically significant places. Each excursion would be followed up by a quiz, and a correct answer got the best “endorsement” possible from Dad—his Blue-Eyed Wink.

Over the years, the family expanded as the children married. Mike and Patti were elevated to a status that only the blessings of grandchildren can bestow. Mike became Pop Pop and Patti, Maw Maw. Their home and arms were always open to their fifteen grandchildren: Brian Meyer, Michael Scott, Thomas V. Miller IV, Michaela Cassidy, Matthew Scott, Natalie Miller, Riley Cassidy, Catherine Scott, Olivia Miller, Abbey Cassidy, Tate Cassidy, Bryan Miller, Alan Stokely Jr. (AJ), Patricia Stokely (Tricia) and Weston Stokely.

They entertained large family gatherings weekly with homemade food and Pop Pop holding court, usually poolside, with a history book in hand. Each grandchild added a new chapter to this special story, bound by faith, family and love. Because of Pop Pop and Maw Maw, a new generation of Millers are filling the ranks of community and public service, filled with their grandparents’ devotion and commitment.

Marylanders everywhere have claimed Mike Miller as their own, but ultimately he belonged completely to his family. Mike’s story ended as it began, with Patti holding court in the kitchen, Mike saying, “I love you,” quickly followed by “I love you more” by Patti. This fills our hearts with joy, even at this time of irreplaceable loss.

The story of Mike Miller has been written. But the true love story, with Mike and Patti as co-authors, will live on through their devoted family, and generations to follow.





FAREWELL



“As I leave the Senate and public service, there are many things that could be said, but none better than the words of George Washington, when he resigned his commission in our Maryland State House in 1783, and he told the Continental Congress:

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my Official life, by commending the Interests of our dearest Country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to his holy keeping.

Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of Action; and bidding an Affectionate farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life.

I must now retire from the august body of the Senate of Maryland and take my leave of public life. I bid an affectionate farewell to you all and it is my greatest hope that our Almighty God bless you and protect you, your families, our Nation, and our State. I pray that future generations in the Maryland General Assembly will continue to come together in the spirit of public service and unity to once again get to work on behalf of the citizens of the great state of Maryland.”

—THOMAS V. MIKE MILLER, JR.
DECEMBER 23, 2020



ARRANGEMENTS

ON THURSDAY AT 4 P.M., a funeral procession will begin from the Lee Funeral Home in Clinton to the State House. Senator Miller's body will be escorted by Maryland state troopers who served on his protective detail. The procession will stop by important places in Mike Miller's life in the following order: the Law Offices of Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., B.K. Miller's, the Clinton Volunteer Fire Department, Surrattsville High School, the Miller family home, the Dunkirk law office, the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Company, the entrance to Camp Roosevelt, Chesapeake Beach, Herrington Harbour, and finally arriving at the State House in Annapolis around 6 p.m.

Senator Miller will lie in state at the State House beginning on Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. with visitation by appointment only. From noon to 3 p.m. on Friday, the Senate will conduct a memorial session. The State House is closed to visitors, but the program will be livestreamed at <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>.

On Saturday, the family will hold a private Mass of Christian Burial at their family church, St. John the Evangelist in Clinton at 11 a.m., followed by a private interment. The funeral Mass will be livestreamed on the St. John the Evangelist Facebook page at [facebook.com/SaintJohnEvangelist](https://www.facebook.com/SaintJohnEvangelist).

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Calvert Health Cancer Foundation, the Dunkirk Volunteer Fire Company, the Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr. Center for Leadership at the College of Southern Maryland, or the Thomas V. Mike Miller Education Fund to support youth environmental education and career programs through the Chesapeake Bay Trust (please denote the Senator Miller fund if donating online).
