

# Spiro's Pal Hammerman Denies All

By Vera Glaser and  
Malvina Stephenson

Washington

SPIRO AGNEW'S grade school chum, I. H. Hammerman II, was waiting for the signal to launch Agnew's 1976 presidential bid — until the Maryland investigation came up.

Bud Hammerman, a wealthy mortgage banker and real estate developer, has booked the Sheraton Park Hotel ballroom — capacity 3000 — for Nov. 9, 1976.

That's where Bud will toss his annual birthday party for Ted Agnew. He had hoped it would be a presidential victory celebration as well.

Now Agnew, Hammerman and other prominent Maryland figures have been notified by the U.S. attorney in Baltimore that they are under investigation in a probe of alleged bribery and kickbacks by state contractors.

Like Agnew, Hammerman has denied any wrongdoing.

In an exclusive interview before the scandal broke, Hammerman spoke of his lifelong friendship with Agnew and his hopes of helping him reach the White House.

Nattily dressed, Hammerman drank coffee from fine bone china in a sumptuous 18th-floor office overlooking

his \$41-million Baltimore harbor improvement project.

He is a stocky man of medium height with crinkly gray-flecked hair and fun-filled brown eyes. He wears a gold vest chain, smokes cigars in a holder and sends dollars encased in plastic bricks for Christmas cards.

In the recent publicity torrent, Hammerman, 53, has been less conspicuous than the others.

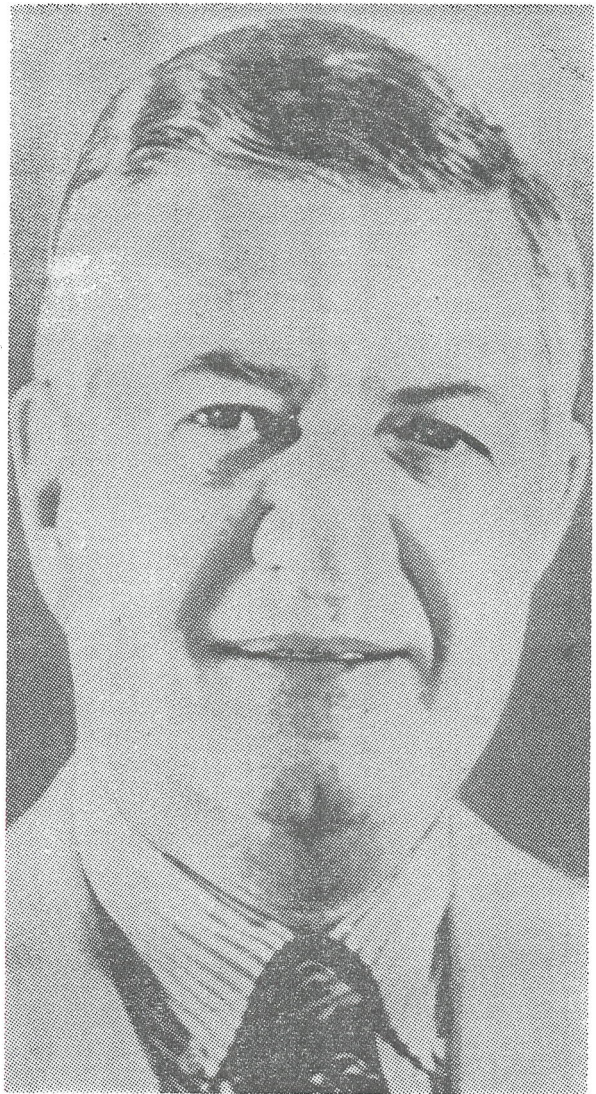
He describes his friendship with Agnew as "going back a long way."

In junior high the two boys delivered groceries for ten cents a trip. Bud was Ted's first law client, finance director of his unsuccessful campaign for county judge and over the years one of his biggest financial backers.

After World War II, the Agnews checked with the Hammermans before choosing a house, to make sure they'd be neighbors.

In 1968, as governor of Maryland, Agnew dispatched a Coast Guard cutter to locate Hammerman, who was out fishing when his pal was nominated for vice president.

In 1972 Bud, Ted and singer Frank Sinatra relaxed at the vice president's Coral



I. H. HAMMERMAN II  
Grade school chum

Gables, Fla., quarters while awaiting Agnew's renomination.

The mortgage banking and real estate firm Hammerman's father founded in 1918 now grosses about \$100 million a year.

Bud and his wife, Lois, are on an old-shoe footing with Ted and Judy, whose kids call Hammerman Uncle Bud.

Bud jokes with the vice president, talks back and needles him, observing, "When I reach the point where I can't tease or raise hell with him when I think

he's wrong, I'll be of no value to him."

Bud phones Ted on his frequent visits to Washington. Among other things, Bud is a presidential appointee, serving as a director of the National Corporation for Housing Partnerships.

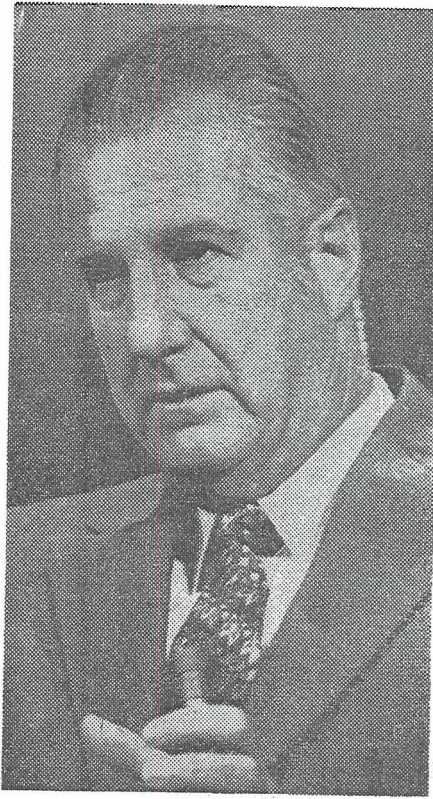
Another Hammerman buddy and Agnew-in-'76 man is former New York Stock Exchange head Bernard Lasker. Agnew told them to "cool it" when they tried to launch his bid last year, Hammerman said.

The nucleus for any future Agnew campaign might well





**BERNARD LASKER**  
"Agnew in '76"



**SPIRO AGNEW**  
Old friendships

be found at Bud's annual birthday parties for Ted. At the last one Bud unveiled a blowup of the famous Revolutionary War fife-and-drum trio known as the "Spirit of '76."

The word "spirit" had been changed to "Spiro" and each figure bore a superimposed head.

Hammerman, like Agnew, is a former Democrat. They worked together for New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller's 1968 presidential bid.

Hammerman's admiration for Agnew seems unbounded. He credits the vice president with "a phenomenal memory" and unusual candor.

"Sometimes he's not as diplomatic as you'd like, but he calls a shot a shot, and always has," Hammerman said.

Agnew reciprocates the warmth as shown by his signed photograph hanging in Bud's office. It reads, "The name of Hammerman is honored in my house."