

State's Portrait of Agnew Is Missing

By Edward Walsh

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The State of Maryland is missing a portrait of its most famous former governor, Spiro T. Agnew.

Last February, when Agnew was still the Vice President and a possible presidential contender in 1976, the portrait—which cost the state \$2,000—was in Annapolis, awaiting a public unveiling ceremony in the main reception room of the State House. But a week before the ceremony was to be held, the portrait was mysteriously spirited back to Washington by two Agnew aides, supposedly for final touching up.

It hasn't been returned.

"To my knowledge, we never got it back," said Frank A. DeFilippo, Gov. Marvin Mandel's press secretary. "It's in the custody

of the former Vice President's staff."

"We fully expect it back," DeFilippo added.

In Washington, Agnew's office refused to return repeated telephone inquiries about the portrait.

The portrait was commissioned in 1972 by the Maryland Board of Public Works, which is headed by Mandel. The work of Robert Tollast, a 52-year-old British subject, the portrait was completed last fall after about six sittings in Agnew's vice presidential office in Washington. It shows Agnew seated, with his legs crossed.

The portrait was to have hung in the State House reception room, along side those of other Maryland governors.

Last Feb. 20, two Agnew aides traveled to Annapolis to make arrangements for

the unveiling ceremony. But they ended up removing the portrait from the State House, leaving behind them conflicting versions of why the portrait was taken back to Washington.

Mandel's office said at the time the portrait was removed for security reasons. Agnew's office said Tollast requested it back for touching up. And Tollast himself expressed dismay, saying he hadn't asked for it back, nor did it need any more work.

DeFilippo said that since February, the state has made no effort to get the portrait back. "We're presuming good faith and expect that it will be returned before the former Vice President's office in Washington is closed," he said.

As for rescheduling the public unveiling ceremony, DeFilippo said Maryland of-

ficials would do so "at the former Vice President's pleasure." He added that "at some point there will have to be discussions of what to do with it."

Maryland also owns a portrait of another Agnew—Judy Agnew—which was to be unveiled at the same time as her husband's. Mrs. Agnew's portrait now rests in a locked storeroom in the basement of the State House.