

## AGNEW PROTEGE AIDED BY HUGHES

**\$10,000 Gift, Termed Legal,  
Sought by Vice President**

By BEN A. FRANKLIN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7—At the request of Vice President Agnew, Howard R. Hughes made a secret cash contribution of \$10,000 to the 1970 Maryland governorship campaign of C. Stanley Blair, according to testimony in a California lawsuit confirmed today.

The Hughes gift, which was acknowledged and described as "nothing illegal" by Mr. Blair's former campaign treasurer and by the Maryland Attorney General, nonetheless underlined the awkward judicial situation here as Mr. Agnew's dispute in the Federal court moved toward a climatic week.

Mr. Blair, 45 years old, was appointed United States district judge here in July, 1971, on the recommendation of the Vice President.

The appointment followed more than four years of service by Mr. Blair as an Agnew political ally in the Maryland Legislature, a campaign worker for Mr. Agnew, and as an official aide to Mr. Agnew, both as governor and vice president.

The \$10,000 contribution was received by Mr. Blair in cash in his unsuccessful and debt-ridden race for Governor. The gift from the recluse billionaire was confirmed by two former Blair finance officials after its disclosure in Newsday, the Long Island newspaper.

Because of such personal or political relationships with the Vice President, all nine of the Federal judges here disqualified themselves from any consideration of the Agnew investigation, which is being conducted by George Beall, the United States Attorney for Maryland.

Mr. Beall also is a Republican whose appointment was approved by Mr. Agnew, but they have never been close. The prosecutor's brother is Senator J. Glenn Beall, Republican of Maryland.

A judge from the United States District Court in Norfolk, Va., Walter E. Hoffman, 66, is presiding over the hearings on the Vice President's challenges to the prosecutor's authority.

The Hughes contribution to Mr. Blair's campaign—he lost by a wide margin to Marvin Mandel, a Democrat—came to light in a deposition, or sworn pretrial statement, by Thomas C. Bell in advance of a \$17.3-million libel suit against Mr. Hughes in United States District Court in Los Angeles. The suit was filed by Robert A.

Maheu, a former Hughes employe.

Mr. Bell testified in the deposition last March 19:

"I delivered \$10,000 to Al Bishop [a former Maheu public relations aide] for delivery, I believe, to the then-candidate for Governor of the state of Maryland, who was a dear friend of the then-Vice President of the United States, Mr. Agnew, who had requested it of Mr. Hughes.

"Mr. Hughes had instructed Mr. Maheu to honor the request," Mr. Bell said in his statement. "I then delivered the money to Mr. Al Bishop in a manila envelope, \$10,000."

Mr. Bishop could not be reached for comment. But according to Gus Constantine, a finance official in Mr. Blair's 1970 campaign, it was a close Agnew friend and fund-raiser, J. Walter Jones, who asked him to meet Mr. Bishop in Washington to receive the cash.

Mr. Jones, an Annapolis banker and real estate developer, has been notified that he is under investigation by the Federal grand jury here along with Mr. Agnew.

"There's some money coming in from Las Vegas," Mr. Constantine quoted Mr. Jones as having said to him.

In an interview here today, Mr. Constantine said Mr. Jones had then asked, "can you go and pick it up?"

Mr. Constantine said he had met Mr. Bishop at the airport in Washington.

"There was a band around the money that said \$10,000," Mr. Constantine recalled.

He said he had taken the cash to a Blair-for-Governor office in the Washington Hilton Hotel, and it was then deposited in a suburban Maryland bank.

Both Judge Blair's 1970 campaign treasurer, Alvin B. Krongard, and the Maryland Attorney General, Francis B. Burch, said in interviews that the failure of the Blair campaign to acknowledge publicly the Hughes gift under Maryland's campaign finance law had not been illegal.

Mr. Krongard said that the \$10,000 had been reported merely as ticket-sales receipts at a Blair "bull roast," a traditional Maryland fund-raising event at which donors buy costly tickets to eat barbecued beef and drink beer. He called this "nothing illegal."

Mr. Burch confirmed that under the Maryland law in 1970—it has since been tightened by amendment—funds raised through tickets sold for such events that cost \$50 or less apiece did not have to be reported by name, only as a lump sum.

Under the 1970 law, the \$10,000 gift did not violate the state donor ceiling of \$2,500 to any individual's campaign because ticket sales then were nominally not "contributions." The amended law requires full reporting by name of purchasers of more than \$250 worth of "bull roast" or dinner tickets.