

L.A. Times
**Noguchi Victim
of Power Play,
Lawyer Says**
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Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi's fourth attorney charged Thursday that the suspended coroner is the victim of a power struggle.

Attorney Godfrey Isaac demanded an investigation of the circumstances which led the Board of Supervisors to remove Dr. Noguchi from the county payroll March 4.

"He has been the center of a power struggle among various medical societies, schools and other groups," Isaac said.

"He therefore feels that an inquiry into the attitudes toward a Japanese-born and trained forensic pathologist should be made to determine whether the efficiency and professional capacity of all citizens are judged by the same standards."

Letters Hold Charges

Isaac's charges were made in letters to the Board of Supervisors, County Civil Service Commission, County Counsel John D. Maharg and L. S. Hollinger, county chief administrative officer.

Although Dr. Noguchi's wife previously had insisted he was the victim of racial prejudice, Isaac's letter was the first formal announcement that the coroner himself is raising this issue.

Isaac demanded that the coroner be reinstated "immediately and unconditionally."

He categorically denied

charges by Hollinger that Dr. Noguchi has behaved erratically, forced subordinates to perform chores beneath their professional level and threatened them with bodily harm.

Antagonism Alleged

Isaac said the coroner "incurred the personal antagonism and wrath" of Hollinger while zealously endeavoring to improve his department, staff and facilities.

Hollinger has made remarks that at times have been "intemperate," the lawyer continued.

Hollinger may file lengthier charges against the coroner with the Board of Supervisors today. He said he definitely will do so before Tuesday to permit the board to decide whether to make the 30-day suspension a permanent dismissal.

If he is not reinstated, Dr. Noguchi will insist upon a public hearing to tell his side of the controversy, Isaac said.

Appointment Opposed

The "power struggle" charge recalled the stormy era when Dr. Noguchi's appointment to the \$31,104-a-year position was under consideration by the county supervisors.

The board approved him by a 3-2 vote on Dec. 19, 1967, after the USC and UCLA medical schools, with the implicit backing of the Los Angeles County Medical Assn., opposed him.

The medical groups contended the Japanese-born pathologist, who is now an American citizen, was then too young and too inexperienced for the job. He was 40 years old.

On Feb. 25 Dr. Noguchi resigned as chief medical examiner-coroner to become a pathologist with the County Hospitals Department at no reduction in salary.

A week later he withdrew the resignation and the supervisors promptly followed Hollinger's recommendation and suspended him.