

COSTS OF LEGAL BATTLE MOUNTING

Noguchi's Life Savings Gone, Backers Say

BY RICHARD WEST
Times Staff Writer

Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi already has spent his life savings in his legal battle to be reinstated as county coroner and he may soon have to sell his home to raise more money, a group of his supporters disclosed Tuesday.

Spokesmen for JUST (Japanese United in the Search for Truth) told a Press Club news conference they hope to raise "as much money as we can" to aid the Japan-born Noguchi in his fight.

They said they regard Noguchi's ouster from the \$31,104-a-year coroner's job as the worst injustice done the Japanese-American community "since the dark days in 1942."

Meanwhile, Noguchi's counsel, Godfrey Isaac, reported that City Councilman Thomas Bradley has agreed to appear as a witness for Dr. Noguchi. Isaac said he may call Bradley when the former coroner's hearing resumes at 9:30 a.m. today in the Hall of Administration.

Bradley, who lost to incumbent Sam Yorty in the mayoral election last week, is a Negro. One of the county's allegations against Noguchi is that he discriminated against a black coroner's aide.

Among other witnesses scheduled to testify for Noguchi today are Capt. John Walsh, head of the sheriff's homicide division, and Dr. George Schwartz, a cardiologist.

Noguchi's expenses so far total \$25,000 to \$30,000, not including attorney's fees, it was estimated by Dr. Henry N. Yamada, a dentist and an executive secretary of JUST.

Dr. Yamada added that JUST has raised \$4,000 or \$5,000 so far and that the organization hopes to be able to present at least \$25,000 to Noguchi.

The dentist said attorney's fees are no problem at this time as Isaac has indicated he is more concerned with obtaining justice for Noguchi.

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than in getting paid.

Costing large sums, though, are the investigation by the defense, which began long before the Civil Service Commission hearing into the dismissal started May 12, and travel expenses for defense witnesses, Dr. Yamada said.

Aided by Experts

Dr. Noguchi has brought expert forensic pathologists here to testify in his behalf from as far away as Chicago, Wichita and Pittsburgh.

Yamada said that the county has "unlimited funds to present their case."

(County Auditor - Controller Mark H. Bloodgood told The Times he currently is making a study of how much the Noguchi hearing is costing the taxpayers.)

(The study was requested by Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, he said, and results should be available shortly.)

Yamada noted that even more money will be required by Dr. Noguchi if the Civil Service Commission fails to reinstate him as Noguchi will then take his dismissal into the courts.

The dentist accused county officials who engineered Noguchi's dismissal as "appealing to this latent prejudice" against Japanese left over from World War II.

Overtone Charged

He said he once was as-

sured by Dep. County Counsel Martin Weekes, who is representing the county at the Noguchi hearing, that there would be "no racial fallout."

But, Yamada went on, the hearing has developed racial overtones although "the main problem Dr. Noguchi has had has been a personality clash with members of the (county) administration."

Ken Nakaoka, former mayor of Gardena and cochairman of JUST, told the news conference that "we as Americans of Japanese origin are deeply concerned with this case."

"Again we face an injustice which may reflect upon us. Our loyalty has

not been questioned since the dark days in 1942.

"It took many years to reestablish confidence, and this confidence now exists. It must not be allowed to be placed in jeopardy again ...

"Every American belongs to a minority. None must feel unsafe. America as a just and moral country must be preserved."

Also released at the meeting was a statement by Dr. Yoshio Yamaguchi, an executive secretary of JUST and Dr. Noguchi's personal dentist. Yamaguchi testified at the hearing Monday in Noguchi's behalf.

"The principle involved

here goes beyond Dr. Noguchi and has unlimited evil ramifications," Dr. Yamaguchi said in his statement.

'False Accusations'

Yamaguchi said it is unfair to subject a person to "humiliation, distortion, professional degradation and character assassination on the basis of public statements made by governmental officials on unfounded and false accusations."

Dr. Yamada announced that a fund-raising dinner for Noguchi will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Rodger Young Auditorium. The speaker will be attorney Isaac.

"We want to see that Dr. Noguchi has enough money," Yamada reiterated.

"It may be us the next time. It may be our children."

Isaac said it appears now that he will be able to wind up Noguchi's defense a week from Friday, with Noguchi taking the witness stand.

The hearing was in recess Tuesday. 