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Top C.I.A. Panel Aide

David William Belin

By NANCY HICKS

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WASHINGTON, June 6 —

For the last 10 years, David William Belin has defended his role as assistant counsel of the Warren Commission against those who criticize its investigation of President Kennedy's death.

Man in the News The truth, he said, is all that was sought, and he is adamant in his conviction that the truth was indeed determined.

Today, Mr. Belin will begin defending a new report—the one submitted to President Ford by Vice President Rockefeller's commission investigating the Central Intelligence Agency, which he has served as executive director.

Ironically, this report may be more controversial than the Warren Commission findings and may tend to discredit some of its conclusions that Mr. Belin has defended for more than a decade.

Mr. Belin is a Republican who describes himself as an "independent conservative." He was chairman of Lawyers for Nixon-Agnew in the 1968 campaign.

Rights of the Individual

While that might tell a good deal about his politics, it does not tell all. He is a firm believer that individual rights must not be subjugated to the needs of the nation's security, which is not the typical stand that a self-professed conservative would be thought to take.

David Belin was born June 20, 1928, in the nation's capital and lived here until he was 12, when his parents, the late Louis I. Belin and Esther Klass Belin, moved the family to Sioux City, Iowa. He attended school there and was graduated as valedictorian of his high school class.

He attended the University of Michigan, where he completed his undergraduate, masters and law school



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Self-styled "independent conservative."

studies in six years. He received a perfect score on the national law school admissions test, and was named one of two outstanding seniors in law school.

In 1955, he began practicing law in Des Moines with the firm now known as Herrick, Langdon, Belin, Harris, Langdon & Helmich. He is still an active partner.

Three years earlier he married the former Constance Newman, who says he is a highly individualistic person and illustrates her contention in describing his manner of dress.

Extremely Disciplined

Her husband wears bow ties, she said, and while that might not seem so special these days, Mrs. Belin says he has always worn them and will always wear them.

"He wore them when no one else did, and he didn't care. He liked them. It's an indication of how individualistic he is," she said in a telephone interview from Des Moines.

She also said that he is extremely disciplined—the type

of man who faithfully does his in-place jogging every day; completing it in the evening when he cannot in the morning.

The Belins have five children, John, 18; Jim, 16; Joy, 13; Tom, 10, and Laura, 6.

In 1964, Mr. Belin took a break from his law practice to come to Washington to serve as assistant counsel to the Warren Commission. It was there that he met Gerald R. Ford, then a Representative of Michigan, who was a member of the commission.

Mr. Belin was assigned the job of determining if Lee Harvey Oswald, the suspected killer of the President, had killed a policeman, J. D. Tippit, in Dallas. This fact was the Rosetta Stone of the puzzle to determine Oswald's guilt, Mr. Belin has said. He elaborated his theory and defense of the commission in a book entitled, "You Are the Jury," which was published by Quadrangle Books in 1973.

For the length of his service on the C.I.A. commission, Mr. Belin commuted back and forth from Des Moines to Washington, a habit he picked up during his work on the Warren Commission.

This gave him some time to spend with his family, which his wife said is too large to move around easily.