

Former Justice Had Like Difficulties With Hoover

E.P. at 11/20/70

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark said Thursday that he, like his son, Ramsey Clark, had trouble with the FBI when he was attorney general.

Reached by telephone in San Francisco where he is holding court, Clark answered criticism of his son by FBI director J. Edgar Hoover.

"We're both getting pretty old," said Clark, who is 71. "That's why I retired."

Hoover is 75 and has been FBI director for 45 years. Clark retired as an associate justice of the Supreme Court in 1967 after Ramsey Clark was named attorney general.

"When I was there I had some problems, too, but I never aired them publicly," said Clark, who was attorney general from 1945 to 1949.

He then went on to refer, with a chuckle, to his and Hoover's advancing years.

In a book published this week

Ramsey Clark charged Hoover with a "self-centered concern for his own reputation." Sometimes, Clark wrote, the FBI will back off a crime fight rather than share credit with other crime control agencies.

Hoover reacted by describing Clark as a "jellyfish." In an interview with the Washington Post, the FBI director said Clark was the worst attorney general he had encountered. By way of contrast, Hoover praised Tom Clark as a "good, strong man."

Asked by an AP reporter for comment, the elder Clark appeared reluctant at first to get involved in the dispute. He said, "It's like a hot cup of coffee. It ought to sit in a saucer for a while to cool off."

Clark went on, however, to dispute Hoover's characterization of his son. "Ramsey is not any Mr. Milquetoast. He's always spoken up. I've never known him to dodge any issue,"

he said.

Then, speaking of Hoover, who served under him, Clark said: "He has been there 45 years and built a very distinguished and effective bureau. He's done a very fine job."

Clark also described Hoover as "an old friend."

But the former justice returned to the FBI director's description of his son as "like a jellyfish . . . a softie."

"I never thought of him that way," Clark said. "He has strong convictions. He's just the opposite. He takes a definite position."