

On Resolving the Estate of the FBI's Clyde Tolson

By Maxine Cheshire

There may be a legal battle shaping up over the \$800,000 estate of the late J. Edgar Hoover, which was willied three years ago to his longtime friend and law enforcement associate, Clyde Tolson.

Tolson, who died here two months ago at the age of 74, left an estate of approximately \$840,520. Presumably, most of that figure represents the Hoover bequest, minus taxes.

Tolson disinherited his own relatives in a will filed recently in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Instead, he passed some \$200,000 of his legacy along to former servants, secretaries and friends of his and Hoover's.

The other \$340,000 was to be divided equally between the Boys Club of America and the Damon Runyon Memorial Fund for Cancer Research Inc., which were Hoover's chosen beneficiaries if Tolson had preceded him in death.

Tolson's brother, Hillory, executive director of the White House Historical Association, said here last week that he and his family, who would be Tolson's legal heirs if the will were broken, are consulting a lawyer.

If the will is not contested, the beneficiaries are:

John Mohr, the No. 3 man in the FBI who resigned "for personal reasons" after Hoover's death, was named executor by Clyde Tolson. He receives \$25,000.

Mohr's daughter, Mrs. Joseph Henry Scott Jr., \$1,500.

Albert Paul Gunsser, who is remembered by FBI colleagues as the agent "who always did Hoover and Tolson's income tax returns," \$27,000.

Hoover's housekeeper, Annie Fields, and his chauffeur, James Crawford, \$32,000 each.

Three Washington physicians: Dr. Joseph Kennedy, Dr. Robert Cholisser and Dr. William Waldrop, \$15,000 each.

Tolson's former secretary, Dorothy Skillman, \$27,000. His former assistant secretary, Lillian Brown, was left \$4,000. So was Hoover's former secretary, Helen Gandy, who had already received \$5,000 from Hoover himself.

Bequests of \$1,000 each were also left to Mrs. John Kelly, a friend of Tolson's mother, and a former maid, Rachel Gill.

No matter who ultimately inherits the estate, the executor is going to have another legal problem to resolve.

Tolson, Hoover's deputy and closest companion for 44 years, bequeathed to his executor "any and all memorabilia, medals, plaques, photographs, or any and all other personal property which can be easily identified with the late J. Edgar Hoover."

"The purpose of this bequest," the will states, "shall be to install . . . (these items) . . . in the J. Edgar Hoover Room in the new FBI building."

FBI press spokesman Homer Boynton said last week that there are currently no plans for such a room. Some photographs and awards already on deposit with the FBI will be prominently displayed, along with Hoover's desk, on the public tour route which is expected to be open in August, he added. But no other space has been allocated. It is unclear what would happen to the other memorabilia in the event that the FBI does not want it.

Washington socialite Page Lee-Hurty, who has been getting national and international publicity because of her friendship with Sen. Edward M. (Ted) Kennedy, will be on the cover of Town & Country magazine's special September issue on the Nation's capital.

According to one source at the magazine, not all editors involved in the project approved of putting Miss Hurty on the cover. Originally, the face of NBC News correspondent Tom Brokaw's wife was supposed to be featured.

"But it was felt that Miss Hurty would sell more magazines," the source said.

The magazine will also run a feature story inside on Miss Hurty, along with additional photographs. One shows her riding one of the two Arabian stallions given her several years ago by Jordan's King Hussein.

Miss Hurty, 27, is a painter who has a political science degree from Stanford University. Descended from American Revolutionary hero Gen. "Lighthorse Harry" Lee, she is the daughter of Washington investment banker Page Hurty.

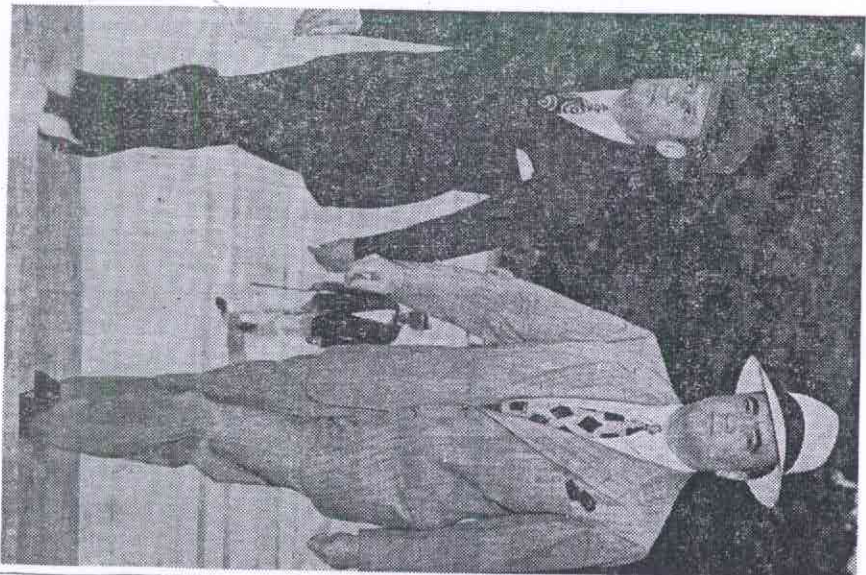
Her mother, a member of Standard Oil's Archbold family, is a cousin of John Archbold, whose 38-acre \$1.4 million "Hillendale" estate on Reservoir Road was the highest assessed residential property in the District of Columbia when he inherited it from his mother in 1970.

Miss Hurty lives in a gatehouse on the Archbold property.

Ralph Nader, who would like to see more common folk entertained at the White House by Presidents and First Ladies, has been quietly analyzing what he calls "elitist" guest lists at the White House in recent years.

"I'd like to go back to the populist practices of Andrew Jackson," Nader said recently. "I don't see why ordinary Americans can't get invited to state dinners, instead of so many movie stars and dress designers and political contributors."

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Tolson, left, with J. Edgar Hoover, 1942.

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