

Parade 10/21/72
Q. Would you please explain to me how Richard Kleindienst became Attorney General of the United States? Was it politics or talent?—S.L., Tucson, Ariz.

A. Mr. Kleindienst is a talented conservative lawyer. He was ROTC freshman honor cadet at the University of Arizona, president of the Harvard Conservative League, a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He is considered by many to be a more knowledgeable attorney than his predecessor John Mitchell, a graduate of the Fordham Law School who specialized in municipal bonds.

Kleindienst, however, is basically a politician. He entered Arizona politics in 1953 as the youngest member of the state legislature. He became chairman of the Republican State Committee in 1956. In 1964 he became field director on the Barry Goldwater for President Committee. In 1964 he ran for Governor of Arizona and was defeated. Three years later he became Nixon's Arizona campaign manager and then his national director of field operations. After the election Nixon showed his gratitude by appointing Kleindienst Deputy Attorney General under John Mitchell. When Mitchell resigned last February, Kleindienst succeeded him. The top positions in the U.S. Justice Department are regrettably part of the American spoils system. It will be recalled that in 1960 President Kennedy rewarded his brother, Robert, with the position of U.S. Attorney General after Robert successfully served as his campaign manager.