

# Mitchell Resigns To Spend Time With His Family

7/2/72  
By George Lardner Jr.  
Washington Post Staff Writer

John N. Mitchell has resigned as director of President Nixon's re-election campaign "to devote more time to his wife and family," it was announced yesterday.

The former Attorney General's abrupt departure came after an ultimatum from his wife, Martha, who had threatened to leave him unless he left politics.

A close friend and confidant of the President, Mitchell apparently first told Mr. Nixon of his decision several days ago and then discussed it at length during a meeting Friday in the Executive Office Building next to the White House.

The new campaign director will be Clark MacGregor, the former Minnesota congressman who has been the President's counsel for congressional relations for the past 18 months.

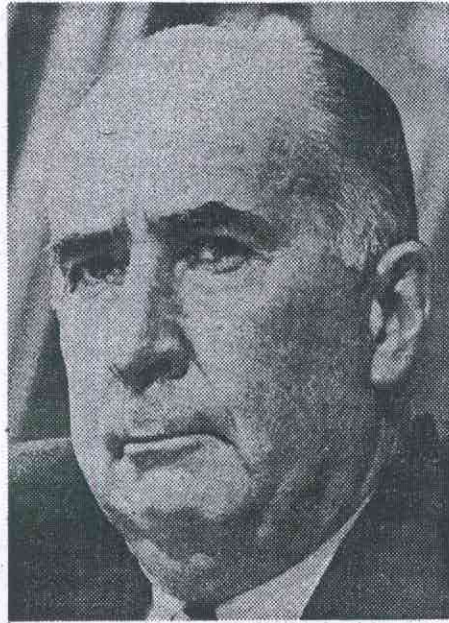
MacGregor will move over to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President at the same \$60,000-a-year salary that Mitchell has been drawing.

In a letter to Mitchell dated yesterday, Mr. Nixon told his old law partner that he fully understood and appreciated "the compelling reasons" that led him to abandon full-time political activity.

"When you came to Washington, you made a most substantial sacrifice, personal and financial," the President continued. "However, in my 26 years of political life, I have often noted that the greater sacrifice is usually the wife's, since she must not only share the disappointments and the brickbats, but must accept the frequent absence of a husband and father.

"I am well aware that this has been particularly true of the Mitchell family," Mr. Nixon wrote, "and I am most appreciative of the sacrifice Martha and you have both made in the service of the nation."

A spokesman for the re-election com-



John N. Mitchell: home and hearth.



Clark MacGregor: the new boss.

mittee, DeVan L. Shumway, said yesterday that Mitchell will remain in Washington temporarily as a partner in the law firm of Mudge, Rose, Guthrie & Alexander, but eventually return to their New York offices. He will continue as an adviser to the committee, whose offices at 1701 Pennsylvania Ave. are on the same floor as the law firm's Washington suite.

The surprise announcement capped a family drama that became public last weekend after a series of the loquacious Mrs. Mitchell's famous phone calls.

Confiding her problems to Helen Thomas of United Press International, she called first on June 22 from the bedroom of her Newport Beach, Calif., villa—only, she later complained, to see

a security guard pull her phone off the wall. Indignantly, she left for the Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y., her former home, where she again called Miss Thomas last Sunday to announce that she was definitely leaving her husband "until he decides to leave the President's re-election campaign."

After the first call from California, Mitchell said that he and his wife still love each other and that he had promised to return to his private law practice as soon as the November elections were over. But Mrs. Mitchell tearfully said Sunday that she couldn't wait that long.

See MITCHELL, A3, Col. 1.

### MITCHELL, From A1

She had said in February that her husband's resignation then as Attorney General left her heartbroken. Now, she complained that she had become "a political prisoner," manhandled by guards in California until she was "black and blue." One of them, she protested, "stuck a needle in my behind."

Her 58-year-old husband flew off to Rye Monday to talk things over. His associates at the re-election committee said it was "a purely personal matter" and that Mitchell had no intention of leaving the campaign until November.

But the determined Mrs. Mitchell evidently won her point. The couple returned to Washington by Thursday, apparently reconciled. Late that

night, Mr. Nixon was on the phone with MacGregor, telling his aide of the new job waiting for him.

After his meeting with the President Friday, Mitchell followed up with a letter stating how important he considered Mr. Nixon's re-election and how eagerly he had planned to devote "all my time and energy" to bringing it about.

"I have found, however," Mitchell wrote, "that I can no longer do so on a full-time basis and still meet the one obligation which must come first: the happiness and welfare of my wife and daughter. They have patiently put up with my long absences for some four years, and the moment has come when I must devote more time to them."

Mr. Nixon said in his letter that he would continue to rely on Mitchell's "wise counsel" to the extent that his time would allow. Many expect Mitchell to continue to play an important role in the campaign. But his departure would appear to end the extraordinary day-to-day influence in the Nixon administration that Mitchell exercised, both as political adviser and as No. 1 man in the Cabinet.

As Attorney General, Mitchell often saw Mr. Nixon two or three times a week, chatted with him by phone daily and often served as his golfing partner. He had a rare entree at the White House and was able to get the President without going through top staffer such as H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

Often the center of controversy, Mitchell was a strong advocate of law and order as Attorney General and, since taking over at the re-election committee, has come under a barrage of Democratic criticism over his refusal to disclose the sources of \$10 million in campaign contributions for the President's drive for another term.

The committee also has come under partisan attack in the wake of the arrest of five suspects last month during an alleged attempt to bug the offices of the Democratic National Committee here.

The Democrats subsequently filed a \$1 million suit against the Committee for Re-Election of the President, charging it with "political espionage." Mitchell, however, disavowed any knowledge of the so-called "Watergate caper," and committee spokes-

man Shumway said yesterday that it had nothing to do with his resignation.

"Mr. Mitchell had absolutely no knowledge of the incident and has denounced it," Shumway said. "The reason he resigned was for the reason stated."

A specialist in municipal and corporae bonds for most of his professional career, Mitchell became fast friends with Mr. Nixon shortly after their two New York firms merged Jan. 1, 1967, and the two men began occupying offices just down the hall from each other. Mitchell soon became the manager of the 1968 Nixon campaign.

It seems doubtful that MacGregor will command as much authority, but White House associates yesterday described him as a "take-charge guy" who has already impressed the President mightily in his handling of congressional relations.

"I don't think he'll have any trouble," said one. "He's tough, patient and competent."

MacGregor said he expects to be on the job Monday morning "at 9 or earlier" after spending the weekend briefing his White House successor, William Timmons. Timmons will keep his present title as special White House assistant for congressional relations, but will move up in fact as Mr. Nixon's chief liaison man with Capitol Hill.