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# Mitchell Resigns, Heads Nixon Drive

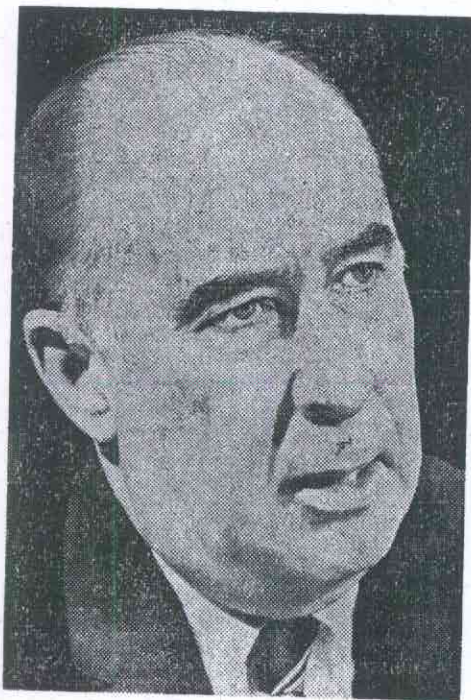
## Kleindienst Named as Successor

By Don Oberdorfer  
Washington Post Staff Writer

In a long-anticipated election year move, Attorney General John N. Mitchell resigned his government post yesterday to head President Nixon's campaign for re-election.

Mr. Nixon named Mitchell's Justice Department deputy, Richard G. Kleindienst, to be his successor as Attorney General. L. Patrick Gray III, currently an assistant attorney general, was selected to become deputy attorney general succeeding Kleindienst.

Senate consideration of Kleindienst, a former Barry Goldwater campaign aide whose nickname is "Mr. Tough," is expected to gener-



**JOHN N. MITCHELL**  
... President's closest confidant



**RICHARD G. KLEINDIENST**  
... a swirl of controversy

ate considerable controversy, but administration officials expressed confidence yesterday that he will win confirmation.

Mitchell is expected to return to the New York law firm in which he and Mr. Nixon were senior partners prior to the 1968 election, and from that private vantage point to be the 1972 Nixon campaign manager. It is generally believed he will not return to the Justice Department if the re-election campaign is successful.

Mitchell would not discuss his plans yesterday other than to say that he has left the Cabinet to dedicate himself to Mr. Nixon's re-election. His resignation as Attorney General is effective March 1, about the time the President expects to return from his trip to China.

Mitchell was the campaign manager of the 1968 Nixon presidential campaign, and is Mr. Nixon's closest confidant in government.

The decision that he would leave government after the President's return from China is reported to have been made by the two men several weeks ago. It was made final in an unannounced meeting at the White House Monday, at which Mitchell submitted a handwritten personal letter of resignation. His letter was not released.

The President's letter of reply, which was made public yesterday, accepted the resignation with "utmost regret" and "deep thanks for a difficult task superbly done."

Mr. Nixon, who campaigned in 1968 with a promise to stop the rise in crime and to name "a new Attorney General" to do it, praised Mitchell's anti-crime activities in yesterday's letter and said, "You have given the American people new — and newly justified — confidence in their ability to halt the spiral of crime and to restore domestic peace."

The President also praised Mitchell's "consistently wise advice and counsel" throughout the course of the administration. As Mr. Nixon's for-

See MITCHELL, A6, Col. 3

## Mitchell Quits Justice Dept. Job

MITCHELL, From A1

mer law partner and campaign manager and close confidant, Mitchell has been consulted on nearly every major decision of the President, foreign and domestic. At Mr. Nixon's request, he was granted a special status on the senior committees of the National Security Council and received a daily foreign intelligence briefing from the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mitchell was the one person who played a major part in all of Mr. Nixon's nominations to the U.S. Supreme Court, including those of Judges Clement Haynsworth and G.

Harold Carswell, who were rejected by the Senate. While there were published reports that the Supreme Court controversies strained the Nixon-Mitchell relationship, there was no outward sign that this was so. Long after all the battles over court nominations, Mr. Nixon continued to ask major figures in his administration to get Mitchell's judgment before coming to him for final decision, in important matters.

Mitchell has often been portrayed as an ideological conservative and an architect of a Nixon "Southern Strategy" in 1968, but he is said by close political associates to be

a "supreme pragmatist" who is ready and willing to adjust his position to trends and conditions as he sees them. Formerly one of the nation's leading bond attorneys, he has a wide acquaintanceship with state and local politicians of both parties.

According to members of Mr. Nixon's political team, Mitchell actually has been serving as 1972 Nixon campaign manager for many weeks, directing the activities of the Committee for the Re-election of the President from the Justice Department via frequent meetings, telephone calls and memoranda.