

Nixon's Law Partners Unhappy About Publicity

By Don Oberdorfer
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NEW YORK — Five years ago, Richard M. Nixon moved from California to become a senior partner of a prestigious New York City law firm with nearly a century of history behind it and 56 attorneys on the payroll.

On Aug. 9, the day after he was nominated for President by the Republican Party, Nixon forewent further duties for and profits from the firm of Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander & Mitchell. On Jan. 1, his name will come off the firm's stationery and off the door of the five-floor law office at 20 Broad St., next to the New York Stock Exchange in the heart of the world's most important financial district.

Before Jan. 20, according to a spokesman for the law firm, Nixon will be paid in full for his share of the partnership, and will sever his connections formally and finally.

Brings New Era

Nixon's arrival brought an era of change to the firm — it has doubled its legal roster, to 120 lawyers — and his imminent departure to the Presidency is bringing changes of a different sort.

Until recently, hardly known beyond Wall Street, Nixon, Mudge now finds itself prominently mentioned in the nation's press, the subject of five recent columns by Drew Pearson and of considerable public speculation.

In the subdued setting of their 24th floor sanctum, Nixon's principal partners are unhappy about the publicity and uncertain about the business

toward their clients and their partnership, and by Canon 27 of the Canons of Professional Ethics of the American Bar Assn., which prohibits practicing attorneys from soliciting or inspiring publicity about themselves.

Beyond this, there are few guidelines. While 23 of the 36 American Presidents have been attorneys, none in modern times has gone directly to the White House from a major law practice. The last President to go from fulltime legal advocate to President appears to have been Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

The partners of Nixon, Mudge decline to submit to formal interviews but in view of the possible questions of public policy involved, a spokesman supplied answers to questions.

After Jan. 20, the spokesman said, "Mr. Nixon will, of course, have no relationship with the firm."

As to the firm's relationship with the federal government, which will be headed then by its former partner, the spokesman said "the firm will follow the same rules of conduct and standards which it has heretofore followed and which are applicable to all other counsel practicing before the agencies of the federal government."

"No More, No Less"
As of now, the partners see no reason why the successor partnership of Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander & Mitchell should not continue normal practice before federal administrative agencies or other federal tribunals. To do so, in their view, would be both unnecessary and impractical, since occasional business with federal agencies is a custom

mary part of almost any large law practice.

"We want to be treated like any other law firm," one of the senior partners told a recent visitor, "no more, no less."

Another senior partner said jokingly that the only way to avoid all charges of favoritism might be for the firm to lose every federal case — but he had no wish to try that way out.

The spokesman for the firm declined to reveal the total billings or earnings of the firm. Certainly both are well into the millions yearly. Nixon's own income from the firm was estimated at about \$150,000 annually by writer Fletcher Knebel, who was permitted to examine the candidate's income tax returns early this year.

Despite the political eminence of its first-named partner, the firm has not been known as a "political law firm" and until the campaign of 1968 few of its leading lights took much part in public life. When he arrived in 1963 with the recommendation of Elmer H. Bobst, board chairman of Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co. and an important client, Nixon told the partners that he was finished in politics, and was seeking a new life in the law.

The assassination of president John F. Kennedy and the Republican disaster of 1964 changed the prospects, and by

1966 Patrick J. Buchanan Jr., a non-lawyer and political aide, began work in a small antechamber off Nixon's private corner office on the 24th floor of Nixon, Mudge. In addition to secretaries Rose Mary Woods and Shelly Scarney, Mrs. Nixon would appear at the office from time to time to help with the political mail.

Later, Nixon moved his political operations to a separate headquarters, and some of his partners and associates from the law firm followed. John N. Mitchell became his campaign manager with extraordinary authority. Leonard Garment became media director and talent scout, and Thomas W. Evans became campaign general counsel.

Unlike some large law firms, Nixon, Mudge does not list its major clients publicly in legal directories, and the spokesman declined to furnish such a list. However, the spokesman did consent to check a list of clients which have been identified with the firm, and to confirm the relationship with those for which legal work has been done.

The confirmed list, with

descriptions and information added from other sources includes:

Pepsi-Cola, legally **Peplco Inc.**, with 494 Pepsi plants in 114 countries and territories and annual sales of \$665,000,000. Pepsi president Donald M. Kendall says he plans to continue the law firm as Pepsi's chief outside counsel after Nixon leaves for Washington.

Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co., manufacturers of prescription drugs, candy bars, cosmetics and many other products grossing annual sales of \$452,000,000.

El Paso Natural Gas Co., owner and operator of 11,400 miles of gas transmission lines, supplier to 109 utilities and municipalities in the West and holder of leases on 1,600,000 acres of oil and gas producing land. Annual operating revenue: \$372,000,000.

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