

'Roe,' JFK ^{2/5/92} figure recalls role in history

By Tony Mauro
USA TODAY

DALLAS — History won't leave Henry Wade alone.

Wade, now 77, was the district attorney of Dallas when President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.

Ten years later, in the same capacity, Wade was the main defendant in the landmark case *Roe vs. Wade*, which legalized abortion.

Now the Kennedy case is under scrutiny because of Oliver Stone's movie *JFK*. The Supreme Court stands poised to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*.

But while his claims to fame undergo revision, Wade's life of semiretirement goes undisturbed. He left the D.A.'s office in 1986; now he handles criminal cases for a blue-chip Dallas law firm, heading home by 4 each afternoon to indulge his passion for repeats of *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza*.

"I haven't seen a movie in a theater in eight or 10 years," he says. "But I have an idea Oliver Stone is a very good director, because I hear a lot of people bragging on the movie."

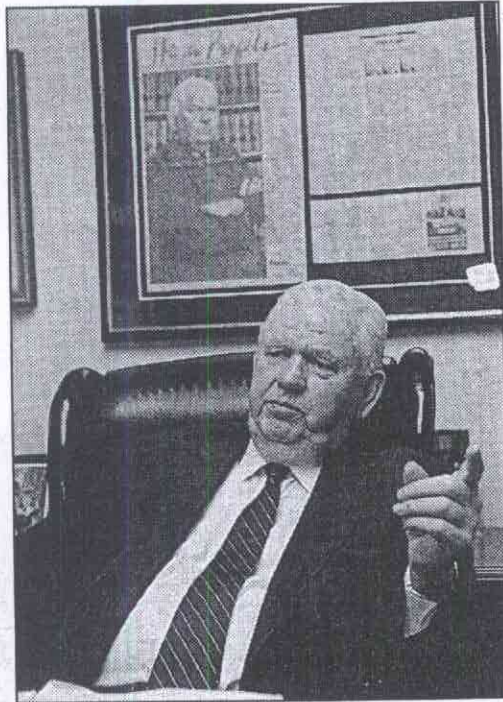
Wade says Stone interviewed him for three hours while doing research for *JFK*. Recently a crew from CBS's *48 Hours* visited his memorabilia-filled office to discuss the assassination. The show airs tonight.

Critics say Wade, long known as a hang-em-high prosecutor who stopped at nothing to solve a crime, was too hasty in declaring Lee Harvey Oswald the assassin. He signed off on filing charges against Oswald within 10 hours of Kennedy's death.

But Wade makes no apologies. "I still believe Oswald did all the shooting. I wouldn't have had any trouble convicting him."

He does think it's possible Oswald acted on behalf of others — probably for the group of pro-Castro Cubans that Oswald hung around with.

Wade also defends releasing Kennedy's body the night of the assassination for return to Wash-



By Susan Weems, AP

WADE: Former district attorney now divides time between his law practice and TV reruns.

ington, D.C., although he concedes it was subjected to "probably the sorriest autopsy ever made" at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

"At the time, Dallas was taking a beating," says Wade. "I felt there wasn't any point arguing to keep it in Dallas."

The latest flurry over the assassination amuses Wade; he thinks the public will never be satisfied. He tells a reporter, "When you're dead and gone, they are still going to debate this."

As for abortion, Wade says, "I don't have any philosophy on the thing." It was just an accident that Wade was listed as the first defendant in the lawsuit against Texas' anti-abortion law, and Wade never argued the case.

"No one has ever asked me what I think about abortion," he says. "You've got nuts on both sides. I can see some cases where abortion is justified. But if you've got someone who gets pregnant every six months and aborts, that shouldn't be allowed."