

Clark Long a Contender For Attorney General

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The name of Ramsey Clark came up yesterday as soon as President Johnson disclosed that the Attorney General's post would be vacant. There was no indication that the President wanted it any other way.

Clark, 39-year-old son of Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark, has figured in speculation as eventual successor to

Nicholas deB. Katzenbach ever since February, 1965, when Katzenbach won his spurs as Attorney General and Clark became his Deputy.

The President's penchant for surprises has made predictions futile. But it seems unwise to rule out Clark, whose father is a longtime Johnson friend and who is a Johnson favorite in his own right.

Headed Watts Study

Besides handling the traditional Deputy chores of judge-ships and legislation, Clark has had special assignments to look into the legal problems of urban life. Mr. Johnson sent him to the Watts area of Los Angeles to head a special task force into the causes of last summer's rioting.

The President has replaced retiring Kennedy appointees in top Justice Department posts with division chiefs who were as close to Clark as they were to Katzenbach, or closer.

Antitrust chief Donald F. Turner was highly acceptable to Katzenbach, and he had been law clerk to Justice Clark. Legal counsel Frank M. Wozencraft knew Katzenbach at Yale Law School but he and Clark are former Texas lawyers. Lands Division chief Edwin L. Weisl Jr. is the son of a close TJB associate, who is said to have known Ramsey Clark "forever." Just last week Harold Barefoot Sanders Jr., highly regarded by Katzenbach when he was a Federal prosecutor in Texas and perhaps Clark's closest friend in government, was named head of the Civil Division.

Inspires Loyalty

Clark also has acquired the loyalty of Department underlings who are not old friends but who find him willing to listen to their problems. Associates do not claim Clark possesses brilliance as an administrator, but they say he is highminded, intelligent and authentically liberal.

In turn, Clark has displayed

the same kind of loyalty that endeared Katzenbach to the President, the quality that Mr. Johnson likes in his Cabinet officers.

Both President Johnson and Katzenbach turned away all questions about the top Justice post. Katzenbach would not say whether he had recommended a successor, only that he had discussed several names with the President.

Disagreed With Father

The blunt question whether being the son of a Supreme Court Justice would disqualify Clark was also unanswered at President Johnson's news briefing. Young Clark is known to have stayed out of Supreme Court litigation despite tempting chances to handle major high court arguments. He argued one 1957 Supreme Court case as a Dallas attorney and his father sat that one out.

Often in disagreement with his more conservative father on constitutional issues, Clark went out of his way last year to tell the American Bar Association that "Court decisions do not cause crime" and that attacks on Supreme Court decisions, rather than the decision, posed a danger to American liberties.

Other names have been mentioned for the post Clark will fill on an "acting" basis. The President is said to have dropped the name of Solicitor General Thurgood Marshall on at least one occasion. Former Assistant Attorney General Burke C. Marshall has been pushed by civil rights leaders.