

# Senate's Watergate

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Chairman Sam is a sometime credit card huckster. Howard Baker and Lowell Weicker think of running for president.

Edward Gurney and Herman Talmadge have faced ethical questions about money. Daniel Inouye is as far from the limelight as his state is from the mainland. Joseph Montoya is dead.

Five years ago, the members of the Senate Watergate Committee were delving into America's greatest political scandal. The years have brought changes, ironic in some cases.

Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, "retired" since 1974, hasn't changed much since he starred on daytime television — jiggling those eyebrows in time with his outrage, dispensing homilies like blue ribbons for peach

preserves at the Burke County fair.

Watergate, he is fond of saying, made him one of the most notorious characters in the United States — a renown that didn't escape the attention of the firm that advertises those apple green credit cards.

"Do you know me?" asks Chairman Sam, the country lawyer, scrunching down in his airplane seat.

Well, heck, American Express, almost everybody knows Ol' Sam.

At nearly 82, the aphorisms still trip wondrously from his tongue.

Of Richard Nixon's memoirs: "I'd have to say that insofar the President discusses the things I know the best that he certainly did obey Mark Twain's injunction, "truth is very precious, use it

## Committee:

sparingly."

Of his life since he returned home to Morganton, N.C.: "Oh, Lord, I'm working as hard as I did when I was in the Senate, one way and another. I'm practicing just a little bit of law. I'm making a lot of speeches. I'm being called on to aid this, that and the other."

The speeches and the rest keep Ervin on the road much of the time. He can command \$2,000 for a speech, but makes many for nothing.

If Ervin was the best known Watergate senator, then surely that other country lawyer, Sen. Howard Baker, asked the most memorable question: "What did the president know and when did he know it?"

The post-Watergate spotlight has

played longer over the Republican senator from Tennessee than any of his colleagues, Ervin included.

"It's interesting to listen to how I am introduced when I speak outside my home state," says Baker. "Watergate used to be the first thing they mentioned. Then it sort of slipped down into the body of the introduction and now they sometimes don't mention it at all."

Baker tried to parlay Watergate exposure into the 1976 Republican vice presidential nomination. When that failed, he vowed never to run for the second spot again, and now his name is high among Republicans considered 1980 presidential candidates. But he says his first concerns are his job of minority leader, and re-election in the fall.

# Where are they now?

The other Watergate senator among early presidential prospects is Lowell Weicker, the maverick Republican on the committee.

He has divorced and remarried, but in public life his ways haven't changed. In 1975, with Henry Kissinger holding out on documents the House Intelligence Committee subpoenaed, Weicker said Congress should carry its contempt citation to the final stage: imprisonment.

And Weicker was no kinder to Zbigniew Brzezinski in declaring: "If I were president and I had a national security adviser who singled out American Jews as an impediment to my policies, I would have his resignation before sundown and his reputation for breakfast."

A Weicker-for-president committee has been formed, but the Connecticut senator says it is there only in case he decides to run — it is not a commitment to run.

For Edward J. Gurney, service on the committee augured bad times. Now he is running for Congress from Florida's

9th District, the House seat he vacated 10 years ago to run for the Senate.

Gurney was the third Republican on the committee and the man in Richard Nixon's corner. As he prepared to run for re-election in 1974, he was indicted on charges that included bribery and perjury in an alleged scheme to shake down Florida builders. He was acquitted in two trials, and was left \$2½ million in debt to his lawyers. He said the Justice Department "has destroyed a U.S. senator, blackened my name, besmirched my character and ruined me economically."

For Sen. Herman Talmadge, D-Ga., trouble began after his 1977 divorce and a property dispute that followed. The Senate Ethics Committee is looking into the Washington Star's allegations that he accepted tens of thousands of dollars from constituents.

And Joseph D. Montoya, 40 days before he died June 5, told a hearing he had not been influenced by \$5,000 in campaign contributions and gifts from Korean rice dealer Tongsun Park. The New Mexico Democrat, who lost the 1976 election, died at 62 of liver failure.

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, left the limelight with the end of the Senate Watergate committee's hearings. He served as chairman of the Senate intelligence committee for one year, then stepped down.