

Counsel Secretive On Assassinations

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Bulletin Washington Bureau

Washington — The House Select Committee on Assassinations named a new chief counsel yesterday and announced that it will operate for the foreseeable future in absolute secrecy.

A Cornell University professor of law, G. Robert Blakey, was named to replace Richard A. Sprague, who resigned last March after a bitter battle with the committee's former chairman, Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-Tex).

Blakey, 41, who will be paid \$47,500, told reporters: "The purpose of this news conference is to announce that there will not be any more news conferences."

Committee Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) said the committee will operate behind closed doors and make no public statements about its investigations of the killings of President John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Even the committee's resolution to operate in secret was made in secret — at a closed session held prior to the announcement of the hiring of Blakey.

There was no apparent explanation for the new emphasis on secrecy and Stokes declined to offer any.

The general sentiment on Capitol Hill recently has been that the Assassinations Committee is foundering and has broken little new ground in either of its probes.

Sprague, a former chief assistant district attorney in Philadelphia, attracted wide press attention while he was with the committee, but the com-

mittee has drawn little publicity since Sprague quit.

Blakey said yesterday: "A talking prosecutor is not a working prosecutor, and a promising prosecutor rarely performs."

Blakey asked reporters to "leave us alone for a while and let us do our work quietly and efficiently."

There were reports that the Assassinations Committee attempted to hire former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg and former Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox to replace Sprague but that both men turned down the job.

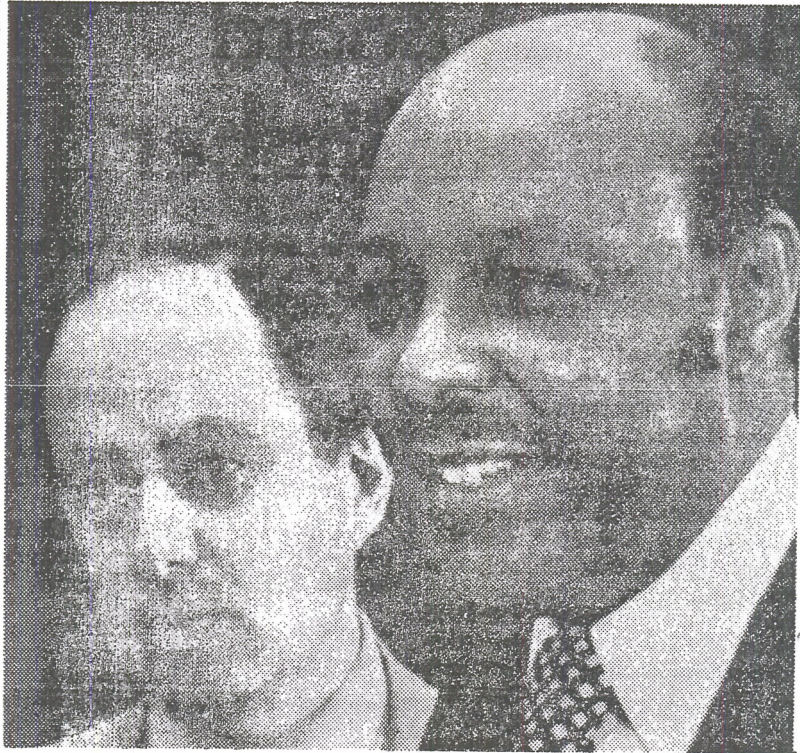
Committee members declined comment yesterday on others who had been considered for the chief counsel's job.

Blakey holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Notre Dame. He was a lawyer in the Justice Department's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section in the early 1960s and since then has been a consultant on organized crime for several federal commissions.

From 1969 to 1973 he worked for the Senate Judiciary Committee. He was chief counsel of the Senate subcommittee on criminal laws and a member of the National Commission for the Review of Federal and State Laws Relating to Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance.

He is director of the Institute on Organized Crime at Cornell Law School. The institute does research on crime under a grant from the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Blakey said he has taken a leave from Cornell to work for the Assassinations Committee.



New counsel G. Robert Blakey (left) and chairman Louis Stokes.

AP Photo