

# U.S. Court Clerk Quits in Dispute Over Her Letters Criticizing Agnew

Pr 12/28/73  
PADUCAH, Ky., Oct. 27

(AP) "I believe what I wrote and ... I would do it again," says Mrs. Ernest W. Rivers, who resigned as resident clerk of the U.S. District Court here after three judges requested that she quit because of letters she wrote to newspapers contrasting penalties imposed on a young shoplifter and on former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

Mrs. Rivers, who held the clerk's post for seven years and 10 months, submitted her resignation Friday afternoon. She said the request came through the District Court clerk in Louisville, from the federal judges who sit in the court's Western District.

The clerk in Louisville claimed that the three judges — Chief Judge James F. Gordon, Judges Rhodes Bratcher and Charles Allen — "were unanimous in their decision," Mrs. Rivers said.

Chief Judge Gordon confirmed the report. He said that the judges considered the letters printed in the Paducah Sun-Democrat and the Louisville Courier-Journal "a reflection on the integrity of the federal judiciary."

In the letters, Mrs. Rivers noted that an 18-year-old girl had been given a 30-day jail sentence and fined \$200 in Paducah police court for attempting to steal a \$1.99 bottle

of hair lightener, and observed:

"I am appalled ... to think that a sentence of this kind could be imposed upon a young girl when ... a man who was elected to the second highest office in the country gets away with bribery and extortion and heaven only knows what other crimes, and the Attorney General of the United States asks us to have 'compassion' for him."