

Jones granted separate trial

BALTIMORE (AP)—J. Walter Jones, a close friend of Spiro T. Agnew, has been granted a separate trial on federal charges concerning an allegedly illegal corporate contribution to the Nixon-Agnew reelection campaign.

U.S. District Court Judge R. Dorsey Watkins approved the defense motion to split Jones' trial from that of the Singer Co. and Raymond A. Long, president of one of the firm's subsidiaries.

Watkins' ruling means the Singer Co. and Long will stand trial here next month on charges that they took part in a conspiracy to illegally contribute \$10,000 in corporate funds to the 1972 Nixon Agnew re-election.

Further pretrial motions in the case are scheduled to be argued June 9. No trial date has been set for Jones, who has asked that his trial be moved out of the state.

Jones' lawyers argued that their client's association with Agnew would make it difficult for him to receive a fair trial here in the immediate future.

Agnew resigned the vice presidency and pleaded no contest to a federal tax charge Oct. 10, 1973, after being investigated by the U.S. attorney's office here as part of a probe into political corruption in Maryland.

Jones, chairman of the Maryland

Finance Committee to ReElect the President, has been described in court by federal prosecutors as a bagman for cash kickbacks to Agnew from architects and engineers seeking government business.

In contrast to Jones' position, the Singer Co. and Long asked Watkins for a speedy trial, arguing that the charges against them are eroding their positions as bidders on government contracts.

Watkins' decision to grant the separate-trial request last week came over the objections of federal prosecutors who contended that splitting the case would give Jones' lawyers an unfair advantage.

Asst. U.S. Atty. Barnet D. Skolnik said during hearings earlier this month that delaying Jones' trial would give his attorneys "a front seat" for the Singer-Long trial. This would enable them to see the entire prosecution case before they had to answer the evidence themselves, Skolnik argued.

Besides Jones, Long and the Singer Co., two other men were charged in the case. Both James F. Fansen, a Baltimore lawyer, and John W. Steffey, a former state senator who was treasurer of the Maryland finance committee of CRP.