

'Perfectionist' Watergate Counsel

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Samuel Dash

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WASHINGTON, May 17—Samuel Dash admitted today, that he was "a little nervous" before the Watergate committee's opening session began, and there was reason. He is a central figure in the drama, and he himself has said of his appointment as the committee's chief counsel: "Everything

Man in the News I've done personally led up to this job." For the 48-year-old, partly bald Mr. Dash,

"everything" is a word that takes in a lot. He is now a professor of law at the Georgetown University Law Center and director of the center's Institute of Criminal Law and Procedure. He has been, among other things, a trial lawyer, a district attorney, a consultant to or member of numerous American Bar Association projects and committees, the author of a study of electronic investigation, "The Eavesdroppers," and a classmate of former Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst at Harvard Law School.

Mr. Dash, after admitting a little pre-opening nervousness, "like all performers," added that "once we got going, I was relaxed because I knew I was prepared." He also made sure that the committee's members were prepared on this first day of the nationally televised hearings, by supplying them with questions ahead of time. Once the hearings reach the "bigger witnesses," he said, he plans to do more of the questioning himself.

Parents Comment

According to Mr. Dash's 70-year-old father, Joseph, his son told him at the age of 14 or so "that he would be a lawyer or a judge." His mother, Ida, 68, said in the course of the same telephone interview from Atlantic City, where they now live, that the second of her six children was "a perfectionist." She described him as "the most honest person in the world," which she sees as the reason for his selection for the chief counsel's post.

The elder Dashes had emigrated from the Soviet Union, where they were born, to Camden, N. J. When he was about 7 years old, the family moved to Philadelphia, where he graduated from Central High School. His undergraduate career at Temple University there was interrupted by World War II. After Air Force service, he returned to receive his degree in 1947.

It was in High School that he met his future wife, but they did not really get to know each other until July, 1945, when they were both strolling on the Atlantic City Boardwalk and a mutual friend recalled the acquaintance. Later, says Sara Dash, they "bumped into" each other while swimming, and were married exactly a year later.



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Samuel Dash, right, chief counsel to the committee, conferring yesterday with Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., chairman of the committee investigating Watergate.

History, Archeology

She confirms that the law—and history—has always been her husband's principal interest. But he is also a devotee of archeology: "If he ever retired," his wife said, "I think he'd go dig."

Another lifelong avocation has been writing poetry, an aptitude that he now confines to such special occasions as his wedding anniversary or, most recently, the 17th birthday of his younger daughter, Rachel.

The Dashes' other daughter, Judy, 21, is in her third year at Brown University. They live in Chevy Chase, a Maryland suburb, and are, according to Mrs. Dash, "to a certain degree observant" of the Jewish holidays.

Mr. Dash used to paint, too, and some of his oils are hung in their house. He still does all the household repairs, says his wife, who adds:

"One thing that impressed me when I met him was that this man was pretty good at anything he set his mind to."

He drinks not at all, shares the family problem of liking good food—he recently lost "a lot of weight," according to his wife—and likes to tell funny stories at parties about "the funny things that have happened in court."

A for his professional life, it began in 1950, when he received his law degree cum laude and went to Northwestern University as a teaching associate. From there, he went to the Justice Department a year later to serve as a trial lawyer; then back to Philadelphia as an assistant district attorney, becoming chief of the appeals division in 1962 and first assistant in 1954. From 1955 to 1956 he was the district attorney, having been appointed to fill a vacancy. He did not run for the post at the next election.

Instead, he became a partner in the firm of Blank, Rudenko, Klaus and Rome until 1958, when he became a partner in his own firm of Dash and Levy, specializing in criminal trial work. In 1963, he became director of the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement, where he remained

until coming to Georgetown in 1965.

He has also been the president of the National Association of Defense Lawyers in Criminal Cases; executive director of the District of Columbia Judicial Conference Project on Mental Disorders, and a special consultant to the National Association of Attorneys General and to the Ford Foundation.

Directs Wiretap Study

He also directed the Pennsylvania Bar Association Endowment's study of wiretapping and eavesdropping from 1956-58, the year before his own book on the subject was published. Mr. Dash is also a director of the International League for the Rights of Man, a private group that has consultative status with the United Nations.

Richard Sprague, now the first assistant district attorney in Philadelphia, who was attached to the district attorney's office when Mr. Dash was, summed up the tall, amiable Democrat's tenure there in terms that seem likely to become dated very soon in his newest role: "If I had to say anything in an over-all sense, he never really stirred up controversy."