

A 'Ramrod' Lawyer

Archibald Cox

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WASHINGTON, May 18— Whether in a morning suit with tails, arguing a case before Supreme Court justices, or lecturing a law class at Harvard in a three-piece suit, his 6-foot, somewhat gaunt frame has always been taut. "He's ramrod-straight," says a former colleague.

Archibald Cox is a "ramrod" in more than appearance. He carries the trait to his personality, described by one acquaintance as "friendly, but not warm." And "when he makes up his mind, he's rigid," said one colleague of Mr. Cox, who was named today as the special prosecutor in the Watergate case.

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A 'Willie Mays'

One former Assistant Attorney General recalled Mr. Cox's stubbornness as Solicitor General, the third-ranking official in the Justice Department, with responsibility for arguing the Government's cases before the Supreme Court.

"We had one case, *Preston v. the United States*, involving the right of Government officials to search automobiles brought to police headquarters. Archie felt there was no justification for the Government's position, he refused to make the arguments before the Court, and we lost the case," the former associate recalled.

But while Mr. Cox was Solicitor General, during the Kennedy Administration, he also gained a reputation as the "Willie Mays of Supreme Court lawyers."

"He's brilliant and arrogant, an incredibly learned and self-confident man," according to one who knows Professor Cox.

His confidence—some call it arrogance—led Mr. Cox to lecture the Supreme Court justices.

"The first year he was Solicitor General, in 1961," recalled a former Justice Department official, "I saw him lecture the Court like they were nine law students. He

was explaining the law in a labor case—he's an expert on labor law—and there wasn't a peep out of the justices. He won the case, as I recall, 9 to 0."

Mr. Cox has not had a placid career as a professor. From 1969 to 1971 he played a major role in negotiating with student dissidents such as war demonstrators, protestors of the killing at Kent State and women's liberationists.

'He's Unflappable'

"He can take a lot of pressure and keep going on course," said Daniel Steiner, the general counsel at Harvard and a former student of Mr. Cox. "He's unflappable."

His talent and patience here also tested in 1968, when he was named chairman of the five-man committee inquiring into the causes of the disturbances at Columbia University.

Mr. Cox was born in Plainfield, N. J., the son of a patent lawyer, but his ties are to New England. He prepared for college at St. Paul's school in Concord, N. H., studied history and economics at Harvard College and received his law degree magna cum laude from the Harvard Law School.

After graduating in 1937, he became a law clerk for the famed Judge Learned Hand of the United States for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York. A year later he became an associate in a Boston law firm and in 1941 came to Washington. He was on the staff of the National Defense Mediation Board, was then appointed to the office of the Solicitor General and in 1943 became an associate solicitor in the Department of Labor.

Lives on Farm

When he was 34, only a year after he returned to Harvard, he became one of the youngest men to hold a professorship there. For the next 15 years he taught at Harvard, where one of his students, in 1946, was Elliot L. Richardson, the man who selected him as the special prosecutor.

Mr. Cox now lives on a farm in Wayland, Mass., with his wife, Phyllis. He spends almost all his leisure time growing corn and cucumbers, among other things.

He spends some time with his wife — they have three children — on their farm in Maine, reading a mystery thriller, riding at times with his wife, who loves horses, and taking an occasional drink of bourbon.

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