

Kalmbach Quits Law Firm In California

By George Lardner Jr.
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President Nixon's personal attorney, Herbert W. Kalmbach, announced yesterday that he has resigned from his California law firm following his guilty plea to federal campaign law violations.

Kalmbach, 52, said in a short statement issued by his office that he intends to pursue "personal business interests and investments."

Officials of the California Bar Association said that proceedings will be instituted to determine whether Kalmbach should be disbarred.

The Newport Beach, Calif., lawyer founded his own firm—Kalmbach, DeMarco, Knapp & Chillingworth—in 1967.

Kalmbach said he had made his resignation from it effective Feb. 15. The firm will now be known as DeMarco, Barger and Beral. (Knapp and Chillingworth had left the firm previously.)

Associates of Kalmbach said he decided to quit despite the advice and entreaties of his colleagues. He was said to be hopeful of overcoming the threat of disbarment because he does not feel that the offenses to which he pleaded guilty constitute crimes of "moral turpitude."

Kalmbach pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court here Monday to secretly raising millions of dollars and peddling an ambassadorship in an illicit 1970 fund-raising operation organized by the White House.

He promised to cooperate with Watergate prosecutors in return for immunity from other charges that might have been lodged against him, but he still faces a maximum penalty of three years in prison and \$11,000 in fines for the campaign-law violations.

Although one of the offenses is a felony, disbarment is not automatic under California law. Certified copies of the court records in Kalmbach's case will first be sent to the California supreme court with a letter from state bar officials stating whether they think the crimes involve moral turpitude.

Carl H. Heil, disciplinary counsel for the California state bar, said the court can order hearings by the bar association to recommend what disciplinary action to take or to restudy the question of whether the crimes are serious enough to warrant any action. The final decision is up to the state supreme court.

It was unclear whether Kalmbach would continue to do Mr. Nixon's legal work now that he has left his own firm, but the California lawyer told reporters in federal court Monday that he is still the President's personal attorney. Kalmbach's office said yesterday that there has been "no change in relationship" between him and the President.