

A surprise 'resignation'

Chicago Daily News

WASHINGTON — The White House has forced Barbara Watson, top-ranking black executive at the State Department, to vacate her post as administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs.

Authoritative sources confided the announcement of her resignation by the White House was a surprise. They said it was apparently released to force her departure after she refused to accept a transfer to a fourth-class ambassadorship.

Washington observers are puzzled why the White House should suddenly decide to oust her. She had been a showcase figure in Republican campaign literature, as a demonstration of the administration's pursuit of equality of opportunity.

One source said there are two wings at the White House, one friendly to blacks, the other hostile.

The names of the officials involved in Miss Watson's forced departure could not be learned.

Miss Watson, who was brought into the department



Barbara Watson

under the Johnson administration, was earning \$38,000 a year and was entitled by her rank to a first-class ambassadorship.

She was in the midst of negotiations about her new post, when the matter was brought to a head by the White House announcement.

There was immediate speculation a Senate battle may develop over confirmation of the White House choice to succeed her, Leonard Walentynowicz, a Buffalo lawyer.