

Earl Warren: Watergate

By R. L. Revenaugh

Earl Warren, chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1953 to 1969, not only is worried about the effect of Watergate scandals on political institutions, he also is convinced the legal profession has been hurt.

"Many thoughtful people believe that in America our profession has plummeted to the nadir of its existence," he told 220 law students who were graduated yesterday at the University of Santa Clara.

"The public is shocked by the accusations and admissions of many lawyers in the White House itself of fraud, corruption, burglary, obstruction of justice and related crimes. Of 21 so charged with such crimes, 16 are lawyers and still others are under criminal investigation," he said.

Warren said the side effects of Watergate "bear not only upon the actual practice of the law and the lifelong commitment of young people

to the profession whose proud emblem is the cause of justice, because when the law and its administration are thus demeaned, a resulting cynicism of the public invariably ensues."

There was no reaction from the 1500 persons until Warren finished.

Then he moved to another of his favorite concerns — the Supreme Court.

"... There are those in the land who would have the jurisdiction and effectiveness of the Supreme Court substantially weakened."

He said the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association has approved the bare contours of a plan to strip the Supreme Court of some of its vital powers to decide certain types of cases and to transfer those powers to a new court, a mini-Supreme Court.