

SF Chronicle SEP 21 1974

Ford Names New Press Secretary

Washington

Ron Nessen, a White House reporter for NBC, became President Ford's new press secretary yesterday. With Mr. Ford standing beside him, Nessen said he would never knowingly mislead or lie to the White

House press corps.

After being personally introduced in the White House briefing room by the President, Nessen, 40, said he believes that the first duty of a presidential press secretary is to "get as much news as possible . . . to the American people."

Nessen had been on the staff of NBC since 1962. He came to the White House as an NBC correspondent when Mr. Ford became President in August. He had traveled more than 100,000 miles covering Mr. Ford as vice president for the radio-television network.

He replaces J. F. TerHorst, a veteran Detroit newspaperman, who resigned after Mr. Ford's pardon of former President Nixon, saying it was a matter of conscience because he disagreed with the decision. TerHorst also said he felt important information on pres-

Back Page Col. 7

From Page 1

idential decisions had been withheld from him.

Nessen said he hoped he would be able to earn as much respect from the press as TerHorst had during his brief time as press secretary.

"I think it's probably too late to go back to a honeymoon," Nessen told reporters, "but maybe we could have a trial reconciliation."

Mr. Ford said he had the opportunity to get to know Nessen very well during 57 vice presidential trips that Nessen covered. He said he admired his skill and objectivity and "enjoyed his company." Mr. Ford also described his new press secretary as having a "superb reputation" and pointed out

that Nessen had experience in both electronic media and the writing press. Nessen worked with the United Press International in Washington before joining NBC.

Richard C. Wald, president of NBC News, said in a statement: "NBC is delighted that Ron Nessen has been chosen as the new White House press secretary. In the 12 years he has been with NBC News, Ron had proved himself one of our finest journalists . . ."

Nessen, in his first pronouncement, said: "I hope the White House press corps is ready for another Ron," a reference to Mr. Nixon's press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler. "I am a Ron, but not a Ziegler, I can tell you that."

Nessen added: "I will never knowingly lie to the White House press corps. I will never knowingly mislead the White House press corps and I think if I ever do you would be justified in questioning my continued usefulness in the job."

He said he does not think that a press secretary always has to agree with a President's decision. He said he felt it was his role to report actions of the President, how and why they were made.

And he said he thought the press and the presidential spokesman "both have the same aim which is to get as much news as possible on what goes on in this place to the American people."

"I've been assured that I will know what is going on" and will be in daily contact with the President, he said.

Nessen described himself

as "apolitical," saying he had been covering most of the political campaigns of the last 15 years and has no affiliation with any political party.

Nessen cited two former press secretaries as models that he will try to emulate:

"Bill Moyers for his knowledge and his honesty and the amount of information that he put out.

"Pierre Salinger for the good humor and the good fellowship and the grace that he brought tot his job."

Nessen said his salary will be \$42,500 and he hopes to get a leave of absence from NBC. Nessen, a native of Washington, D.C., and his wife Cindy, the former Young Hi Song of Seoul, South Korea, have two children, Edward, 1½ and Car-en, 18.

The Nessens live in Bethesda, Md., where they recently entertained President Ford at a poolside press party.

Associated Press