

Nixon Allowed To Quit Bar

By Michael Taylor

Richard M. Nixon is no longer a lawyer in the state of California.

The state Supreme Court accepted the former President's resignation from the State Bar yesterday, an organization Mr. Nixon joined more than 36 years ago when he first began the practice of law in Whittier.

The court accepted the resignation "without prejudice to further proceedings in any disciplinary matter pending against him before the State Bar should he again seek to become a member" of the bar.

The wording of the routine, one-paragraph court order was no different from language used in similar, past cases of resignation.

"This is the customary manner in which all cases of this type are handled," a court spokesman said.

If Mr. Nixon should want to practice law again in California, he would have to wait at least five years before re-applying for membership. He would then have to go before a board hearing to determine his fitness to practice law.

Most of the "proceedings in any disciplinary matter" mentioned by the court have been researched and are now sitting in a voluminous file of documents at the State Bar headquarters here. The material is the result of a lengthy investigation of Mr. Nixon that began last year as the Watergate scandals mushroomed.

The day after Mr. Nixon was pardoned by President Ford, the ex-president announced that he wanted to resign from the bar and quit the practice of law.

He sent the bar's Board of Governors a letter of resignation, but failed to acknowledge that he was un-

der investigation by the bar.

The board rejected the resignation by a substantial margin.

A few days later, on September 16, Mr. Nixon relented and sent the board a letter admitting he was under investigation, thus fulfilling the bar's requirements.

The board then reversed its earlier decision on the resignation and forwarded the file to the Supreme Court, recommending, as it does in such cases, that the court qualify the resignation with its warning about further proceedings.

Mr. Nixon's sporadic law career began when he was admitted to the California Bar on Nov. 9, 1937, after

graduating from Duke University's law school in the top 10 per cent of his class.

He applied, unsuccessfully, for jobs with several prestigious New York City law firms and for a job with the FBI.

The former president then returned to Whittier and joined Wingert and Bewley, the town's oldest law firm, where he was first given a slew of divorce cases and later became a specialist in estates and federal income taxes.

Mr. Nixon left the practice of law in 1942 — first for a job with the Office of Price Administration and then for service in the Navy during World War II.

He didn't return to law until 20 years later, after he had been defeated during the 1962 California gubernatorial campaign.

Mr. Nixon then moved to New York City and, after being admitted to the bar in 1963, joined the reputable firm of Mudge, Stern, Bald-

win and Todd.

Within a year, the ex-president's name was leading the partnership and it was later expanded to include John Mitchell, the former U.S. Attorney General.

Most of Mr. Nixon's work during his five years as a New York lawyer involved

negotiations with foreign governments on behalf of the firm's wealthy clients, such as Pepsi-Cola.