

New Watergate Prosecutor

NYTimes

Henry Swartley Ruth Jr. OCT 24 1974

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23—“That’s the best news I’ve heard in a year!” a member of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force exclaimed earlier this week on hearing a report that Leon Jaworski, the departing special prosecutor, would probably be replaced by his deputy, Henry S. Ruth—a report that became official today.

Man in the News

As the news of Mr. Ruth’s impending appointment spread, the young lawyer’s enthusiasm appeared to be shared by most of his colleagues. “Are you as happy as everyone else around here?” another assistant prosecutor was asked.

“Oh, yeah,” he replied, beaming broadly. The formal announcement today that Henry Swartley Ruth Jr. had been chosen as the third special Watergate prosecutor did not come as much of a surprise.

Mr. Jaworski, whose resignation will take effect on Friday, had publicly suggested to Attorney General William

B. Saxbe that Mr. Ruth be named to succeed him, and White House officials who had a hand in the decision have said that no other candidates were seriously considered for the post.

Mr. Saxbe said today that his appointment of Mr. Ruth, whom he termed “a highly competent lawyer,” had been made with the full support of President Ford, and he gave assurances that when Mr. Ruth takes over on Saturday he will have “the same independence as his predecessor in carrying out his duties.”

But the admiration that those of the prosecutor’s staff feel for the 43-year-old Mr. Ruth, who has served as deputy special prosecutor since June last year, seems to stem from much more than his legal competence, which they say is unquestioned.

Some lawyers on the staff recall, for example, that in the dark days following President Nixon’s dismissal of Archibald Cox, the first special prosecutor, it was Hank Ruth who gathered the distraught staff around him and persuaded them to stay and press on.

One prosecution official today compared Mr. Ruth, who has worked closely with most of the office lawyers in making the day-to-day decisions, to the executive officer aboard a naval vessel.

“He’s been absolutely indispensable,” the official said, “the one guy who is the source of knowledge of just about everything.”

Mr. Ruth, who was born on April 16, 1931, in Philadelphia, combines both of the qualities possessed separately by Mr. Cox, a noted legal scholar, and Mr. Jaworski, an experienced trial lawyer with a background in criminal law.

After graduation from Yale university and the University of Pennsylvania Law School and service in Army intelligence, Mr. Ruth took his first job with the law firm of Saul, Ewing, Remick and Saul in his home town.

He moved in 1961 to the Justice Department’s Organized Crime and Racketeering Section, where he served as a special attorney for three years under Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

He later spent two years as an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, which he left,



United Press International

“One of the three or four most selfless public servants in the country.”

in 1969, to head the Justice Department’s National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

Mr. Ruth, who was born into a staunch Republican family but later became a Democrat, resigned from the institute in 1970 and took the post of director of Mayor Lindsay’s Criminal Justice Coordinating Council in New York City. He held the job until shortly before joining the Special Prosecution Force last year.