



A. L. WIRIN
ACLU counsel

Sirhan Seeks 'Big' Lawyer

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan has asked the American Civil Liberties Union to help find a "big name" lawyer to defend him against the charge of assassinating Robert F. Kennedy.

A. L. Wirin, noted constitutional lawyer and chief counsel of the Southern California ACLU, has been visiting Sirhan daily in his cell and planned to do so today.

This week Wirin will ask Presiding Judge Richard Schauer of Los Angeles superior court to call on the Los Angeles Bar Association and other legal groups to obtain a defense attorney.

Superior Judge Arthur Alarcon rejected Wirin's motion at the arraignment for "one or more outstanding lawyers" to be appointed to defend Sirhan but indicated he would reconsider the request later.

Wirin emphasizes that the ACLU has not undertaken the defense of Sirhan and has commended the courts and prosecution for vigorously protecting the defendant's rights, rare praise from the ACLU.

Sirhan presently is represented by Wilbur F. Littlefield, chief deputy trial lawyer in the public defender's office. At his request, entering of a plea of guilt or innocence was continued until June 28.

Sirhan has indicated to Wirin he would prefer to be defended by a private lawyer, although he is not opposed to Littlefield in particular. Wirin hopes that a lawyer of the caliber of Melvin Belli, who defended Jack Ruby in Dallas, would be sought by the court.

Meanwhile, Sirhan remained under heavy guard in the second floor hospital ward of central jail. Newspapers are distributed in the ward and deputies said Sirhan probably had seen photographs of the funeral of the man he is accused of killing, June 5.

While legal efforts continued to find a defense attorney for the suspect, police and prosecution attorneys were busy seeking answers to several questions, including whether the slaying was the work of a lone assassin or of a conspiracy.

Authorities are proceeding on the assumption that Sirhan acted alone but are tracking down all leads, no matter how frivolous. "We're not throwing anything into the wastebasket," one detective said.