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Columbus Day Unit Criticizes Sirica

United Press International

The chairman of the National Columbus Day Committee charged that U.S. District court Judge John J. Sirica violated federal law yesterday by starting the Watergate cover-up trial on a holiday.

"We feel that Judge Sirica has desecrated Columbus Day," said Mariano A. Lucca, head of the committee that claims credit for getting Congress to declare an annual Columbus Day holiday beginning in 1968.

Lucca, of Buffalo, N.Y., said his committee received protests by telephone and telegram from across the country when Sirica's plans to begin the trial Monday were first publicized. He said the committee has many supporters, including members of the Knights of Columbus and several labor unions.

"He (Sirica) owes an apology to the American people, to the people of Italy, and the people of Spain," Lucca said. "We are going to get satisfaction. The law specifies that all federal buildings must be closed. If Sirica has violated the law he should be censured."