

Watergate jury has banquet

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Watergate cover-up trial jurors, sequestered from their homes for 2½ months, joined with more than 30 grandchildren and other family members Wednesday in Christmas gift-giving and a big turkey banquet.

A spokesman for the U.S. Marshal Service, Horace Webb, described the mood of the gathering at Washington's Sheraton Park Hotel as "a typical family Christmas afternoon. It was sort of like one big family coming together."

Webb said 11 members of the Watergate panel, which consists altogether of 12 regular jurors and five alternates, took part in the dinner along with 31 guests and 21 deputy U.S. marshals.

The marshals were on hand to make sure there were no conversations about the trial, due to resume Thursday with final arguments before the jury begins its deliberations. The jury has been kept

sequestered since Oct. 11.

In a hotel banquet room decorated by bubbling fountains spurting champagne and cold duck, they feasted on shrimp cocktail, young Vermont roast turkey, celery dressing, cranberry sauce and a choice of mince pie, pumpkin pie, ice cream pie or cheesecake for desert.

The Marshals Service spokesman said the guests—among them about 20 youngsters, mostly grandchildren—began arriving shortly after 2 p.m. for the holiday celebration and were permitted to stay as late as 9 p.m.

"Some guests did bring gifts," Webb said. "The gifts were all in the line of something the jurors can use between now and the time they go home—articles of clothing and things of that nature."

He said the other six jurors and alternates chose to have their Christmas dinner privately, dining on the same turkey meal.

The Watergate jurors moved recently to the Sheraton-Park from the Midtown Motel, a less expensive residence closer to the courthouse. The move was aimed to make the jurors as comfortable as possible while they start final deliberations, according to the Marshals Service.