

First Prosecutor on Watergate Sworn as Acting U.S. Attorney

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 2 — Earl J. Silbert, the prosecutor of the seven Watergate conspirators, was sworn in today as Acting United States Attorney for the District of Columbia.

Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court here, who joined Congressional leaders last year in criticizing Mr. Silbert for his prosecution of the original Watergate case, presided over the ceremonies today, calling it a "happy occasion."

The 15 judges of the District Court for the District of Columbia including Judge Sirica, voted unanimously to name Mr. Silbert the temporary United States Attorney, until President Nixon, as prescribed by law, fills the post.

A White House spokesman in San Clemente, Calif., with the President said that Mr. Nixon would make his choice "soon" and that Mr. Silbert, who is an Assistant United States, was under "serious consideration" for the higher post.

Concerns Denied

Gerald L. Warren, the White House spokesman, denied published reports that the White House had delayed choosing Mr. Silbert for the United States Attorney's job for fear that Congress might turn his confirmation hearing into yet another Watergate inquiry.

Mr. Silbert, along with Seymour Glazer and Donald E. Campbell, resigned as the first Watergate prosecutors last June, after their handling of the case was criticized by many prominent lawyers and members of Congress.

Even though the assignment



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Earl J. Silbert after he was sworn in as Acting U.S. Attorney yesterday in Washington.

as United States Attorney is temporary, scores of judges, lawyers and friends of Mr. Silbert paked Judge Sirica's courtroom at noon to congratulate Mr. Silbert. He is replacing Harold H. Titus, his former chief, who resigned last week because of illness.

Mr. Silbert's admirers, including many who believe that he prosecuted the case of the bugging of the Democratic party headquarters here in 1972 in the best possible manner, formed a long line through the courtroom to wish him well. Mr. Silbert, 37 years old, was named principal Assistant United States Attorney here three years ago. He will now lead the 154 lawyers in the United States Attorney's Office.