

Black Woman Loses Post at State Dept. To a G.O.P. Activist

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WASHINGTON, March 26—
Barbara M. Watson, the first
black woman to attain a rank
equivalent to Assistant Secre-
tary of State, has been removed
by the White House as admin-
istrator of the State Depart-
ment's Bureau of Security and
Consular Affairs.

Without any advance notice
to Miss Watson, the White
House announced on Friday
that she would be succeeded
by Leonard F. Walentynowicz,
a Buffalo, N. Y., lawyer.

The White House had sought
earlier to ease Miss Watson out
by offering her an ambassado-
rship to a Central American
country. Miss Watson had de-
clined on ground that the am-
bassadorship would rank below
her present job.

According to Administration
sources, Miss Watson's removal
was prompted largely by White
House desires to fulfill political
obligations. Mr. Walentynowicz
has been active in the Republi-
can party in Buffalo and,
according to Congressional
sources, is a friend of officials
in the ethnic division of the
Republican National Committee.

Another factor, according to
State Department sources, was
Miss Watson's long-standing
rivalry with Frances G. Knight,
director of the State Depart-
ment's passport office. As the
nominal superior of Miss
Knight, Miss Watson waged a
long and eventually successful
fight to revamp passport proce-
dures.

Miss Watson, a Democrat,
came to the State Department
in 1966 and was named to her
present post by President John-
son in July, 1968.

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