

Friend of Nixon Seeks License Of Washington Post TV Station

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Jan. 3 (AP)—A Republican fund raiser who is a friend of President Nixon heads one of three companies trying to get the Federal broadcast license from television station WJXT in Jacksonville. WJXT broke the story of a 1948 white supremacy speech by G. Harrold Carswell when Mr. Carswell was a nominee for the United States Supreme Court.

The speech, which was found in 1970 by WJXT newsmen in a 1948 newspaper, became a factor in the Senate's rejection of President Nixon's nomination of then United States District Court Judge Carswell to the nation's high court.

WJXT found that Mr. Carswell said in a speech printed in *The Irwinton (Ga.) Bulletin*: "Segregation of the races is proper and the only practical and correct way of life in our states."

Mr. Carswell later repudiated the statement.

George Champion Jr., finance chairman for Mr. Nixon's campaign in Florida last year, is president of the Florida Television Broadcasting Company, which filed application yesterday with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington to take over WJXT's license.

At the White House, Ronald L. Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary, was asked whether Mr. Nixon or any of his aides had discussed or encouraged Mr. Champion to file the application. "No, absolutely not," Mr. Ziegler replied.

Two Other Applicants

Other applicants filing just before the deadline were Trans Florida Television, Inc., headed by George Wallace's 1972 area coordinator, Fitzhugh Powell and the St. Johns Broadcasting Company, headed by Winthrop Bancroft, who is an investment banker, and two industrial executives.

A Columbia Broadcasting System affiliate, WJXT has been owned and operated by Newsweek magazine and the Washington Post Company since it began operation 20 years ago. The Washington Post Company is also the owner of *The Washington Post*, a frequent critic of the Nixon Administration.

This is the first challenge to renewal of the license, a triennial process under F.C.C. regulations.

Asked if political considerations were a factor in his application, Mr. Champion replied: "Absolutely not." He said he had not consulted President Nixon about it because "my friendship would never enter into it."

"We are a group of concerned citizens who, feel the needs of the community will be served better by a television

station which is community owned. Many community leaders feel that Channel 4, WJXT, is not responsible to the community."

Mr. Champion said he believed that his group had an excellent chance of getting the license because the F.C.C. stresses local ownership of stations.

Mr. Champion, 43 years old, has lived in the Jacksonville area since 1960 and heads Champion Companies, which deal in real estate developments.

He became acquainted with President Nixon through his father, George Champion Sr., now retired as chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City.

Mr. Champion is joined in the television application by Edward Ball, 84, one of Florida's wealthiest financiers. He is a trustee of the Alfred I. duPont estate.

WJXT has carried several special reports on a fence across the Wakulla River on Mr. Ball's estate near Tallahassee. Conservationists say it blocks access to a navigable waterway.

The station also carried a series on dangerous railroad crossings, which led to a state law requiring signals at all crossings, including those on Ball's Florida East Coast Railway, a station spokesman said.

Also in the corporation are Raymond Mason, an investment banker; J. T. McCormick, a contractor, and Mary Singleton, a black legislator.

Each of the three groups seeking the license stressed the benefits it could bring to the community with local ownership and criticized in a broad way current operations.

"I think everybody is dissatisfied with the way it is operated now," Mr. Bancroft said.

Robert Schellenberg, vice president and general manager of WJXT, expressed confidence the current ownership would win renewal of its license.

"WJXT's performance has been of such high quality that it has a national reputation for its journalistic accomplishments," he said.

"It has been locally managed and is a strong force for good in the Jacksonville area, consistently placing the public welfare above its own private financial interests."

"By every objective standard that the F.C.C. has considered for television broadcast stations and by specific guidelines recently proposed by the F.C.C., WJXT's service meets the standard of excellence," he said.