

Watergate Judge

John Joseph Sirica

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WASHINGTON, March 23 —When John Joseph Sirica was a young man struggling to put himself through Georgetown Law School, he worked as an athletic instructor at the Knights of Columbus gymnasium. He was also an amateur boxer.

Man in the News

He has since traded his boxing gloves for golf clubs and his sweat shirt for judicial robes, but he is just as tough now as he

was in his college days. Judge Sirica, who has presided over the Watergate trial aggressively, had one lawyer and one newsman put in jail while a preliminary part of the case was being heard. Today he meted out stiff sentences to six of the men guilty in the case.

Judge Sirica is known by lawyers in Washington as a man impatient with the diversions of court proceedings. He has been a Federal judge for 15 years and gained the reputation of being rigorously above political considerations.

The judge, son of an Italian immigrant, was born in Waterbury, Conn., on March 19, 1904. He grew up in Jacksonville, Fla., and New Orleans, and then set out for Georgetown.

"I don't really remember why I wanted to go into law school, I guess I always had the idea of a trial lawyer," the judge said.

Exhibition boxing matches gave him a little extra money, but the judge said he never thought seriously about boxing as a career. However, his boxing background led to a long friendship with Jack Dempsey, with whom he toured the country on bond drives during World War II.

The judge, whose black

wavy hair make him look much younger than his 69 years, began his legal career in private practice.

"I lost a lot of cases back appointed Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Columbia."

then," he recalled, "but I was Before being appointed to the Federal bench in 1957 by President Eisenhower, Judge Sirica practiced law in just about every imaginable Washington setting. He was a Federal prosecutor, a counsel to the House committee that investigated the Federal Commission and later a partner in Hogan & Hartson, one of Washington's most prestigious law firms.

Judge Sirica was well on the road to prosperity before he decided to marry Lucile Camalier. He married late, at the age of 47, and the three Sirica children who still live in the family's comfortable buff-brick home in an expensive neighborhood in suburban Silver Springs, Md.

"Before I met my wife at a cocktail party," he said, "I thought I would be a confirmed bachelor, but it didn't last."

Since Judge Sirica has been on the Federal bench he has gained the reputation of being unquestionably honest, even among critics, who doubt the depth of his intellect.

For all the attention that the Watergate case has focused on him, Judge Sirica does not regard it as the most important he has ever presided over. For 10 months in 1960 he heard a \$90-million antitrust case brought against the nation's railroads by a trucking concern in Kansas City.

"I venture to say this case [Watergate] will not even begin to touch that case as to complexity," the judge said.

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