

Wx Post MAY 2 1973

# Law Has Prevailed, Kleindienst Asserts

By Lawrence Meyer and John P. MacKenzie

Washington Post Staff Writers

In one of his last acts as Attorney General of the United States, Richard G. Kleindienst told an audience of judges and lawyers yesterday that "these days . . . so far as the law is concerned are days of sorrow, but they are not days of despair. The law has prevailed."

Discarding prepared text as "not quite relevant, not quite appropriate," the man who resigned Monday as the nation's top law enforcement official because of the Watergate scandal said he wanted to "extemporaneously and from my heart say a few things about the circumstances we now find ourselves in."

But Kleindienst touched repeatedly on the theme of his prepared text and the theme of the Law Day observance that inspired it—that this is a government of laws, not men.

"I'm proud that here in my country there is a chief judge named John J. Sirica . . . who, with great courage under most difficult circumstances, has assured the citizens of this country that justice will be done."

As Kleindienst spoke, Sirica—who presided at the trial of the seven convicted Watergate conspirators—sat a few feet away in the U.S. District Courthouse ceremonial courtroom.

With pride, Kleindienst again cited the statistics he referred to in the past when discussing the Justice Department's investigation of the Watergate affair—2,500 interviews conducted, 20,000 hours spent on the case, 500 agents involved and 53 of the FBI's 59 field offices.

Kleindienst resigned Monday, telling the President that "persons with whom I had had close personal and professional associations could be involved in conduct violative of the laws of the United States. Fair and impartial enforcement of the law requires that a person who has not had such intimate relationships be the Attorney General of the United States."

He continues to serve as Attorney General until his

successor, Elliot L. Richardson, is confirmed. Included in the prepared speech Kleindienst no longer found quite appropriate were the following expressions of pride in the Nixon administration's record:

"When men usurp the law, then government is subject to their whims, their personalities and their varying ethical standards."

"Beginning in the early 1960s, a wave of lawlessness swept across the United States. It showed itself in the increase of general crime, in mob disorders, and in such spectacular incidents as assassinations, bombings and hijackings."

"These trends showed that a relatively small but growing number of Americans, far from recognizing their duties as citizens, were putting themselves above the law."

"We saw this most dramatically in cases where witnesses to a crime refused to testify because they did not want to become involved—even to the point where they would not even call the police while a crime was being committed."

"I am pleased to point out that we are witnessing a reversal of this alarming trend . . . In short, what seemed to be the growing popularity of lawlessness, where Americans put themselves above or outside the law, has been halted."

Those were the remarks that Kleindienst did not deliver. Instead, he concluded his off-the-cuff remarks by expressing another kind of pride.

"As I make this, my last Law Day speech as Attorney General of the United States, my belief rather than being lessened has been strengthened" in the promise of the United States. "There will be another Attorney General 200 years from now who can say we have prospered because we have been true to that promise."

Outside, where the television cameras waited for him, Kleindienst repeated his message again. "We are a country of law, not of men," he said. The events of the past few days "prove that the law prevails. It works its will."