

NYTimes
White House Defender

Joseph Fred Buzhardt Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 28—Twenty-three years ago, Joseph Fred Buzhardt Jr.'s career was advancing on course. In World War II he had served in the Army Air Corps for two years. He had graduated from West Point in 1946. In 1950, as a first lieutenant in the Air Force, he was piloting troop carriers

Man
in the
News

was piloting troop carriers from Japan and was determined to make his future with the military. But

at 26 years of age he was forced to alter his course because his ears could no longer endure the pressure of flying. He went home to South Carolina and studied law.

The shift in plans has led him to the White House, where he is now a special counsel to the President on Watergate matters.

Mr. Buzhardt directed preparation of the White House statement and questions presented to the Watergate committee yesterday and today. The material attacks John W. Dean 3d, the former White House counsel and the principal witness against Mr. Nixon and his top aides.

Pentagon Papers Witness

Today the White House refused to support Mr. Buzhardt's work, when Ronald L. Ziegler, the Presidential press secretary, said that the statement was "not reviewed" by President Nixon and that the document "does not represent a White House position."

Today was not the first time Mr. Buzhardt (pronounced buzz-ARD) found himself under the hot lights of political controversy.

Earlier this year, when Mr. Buzhardt was the general counsel and a chief trouble shooter at the Defense Department, he was called to the witness chair in the Pentagon Papers trial.

The defense lawyers for Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo had been trying to prove that a Government analysis of the Pentagon Papers after their publication in newspapers had concluded that part of the documents were not injurious to national defense. For about a year, the Government insisted that no such analysis existed. On Jan. 30, Mr. Buzhardt told the judge that the analysis did exist and that it had been made at the direction of Mr. Buzhardt's office.

Nor is today the first time that Mr. Buzhardt has found himself sparring with Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., chairman of the Senate Watergate committee.

In 1971, Mr. Buzhardt, as general counsel at the Pentagon, refused to let generals appear before Senator Ervin's constitutional rights subcommittee, which was investigating the Army's domestic intelligence activity regarding civilians.



United Press International

Used to the hot lights
of the political arena.

His wife, Imogene, "can't think of a thing besides his work" that her husband considers exciting. "He used to play a little golf," she added, "and he likes to listen to soft music on the radio."

Mr. Buzhardt, who calls himself a "country lawyer," was born in Greenwood, S.C., on Feb. 21, 1924. He grew up in McCormick, S.C., where he met his future wife. They have four children.

After his military career ended, Mr. Buzhardt decided to follow his father's advice and study at the University of South Carolina, where he was graduated magna cum laude in 1962 from the law school.

For the next six years, he practiced law in rural South Carolina with his father, who was a friend and law partner of Senator Strom Thurmond.

It was Senator Thurmond, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, who brought Mr. Buzhardt to Washington. Mr. Buzhardt worked on the Senator's staff for eight years. First as legislative assistant and later as administrative assistant, before he returned to his father's practice in McCormick.

Again in 1969, Mr. Buzhardt was lured to Washington, this time to fill the post of special assistant to the assistant secretary of defense.

'Enormous Amount of Work'

His rise in the Pentagon began when he was appointed to serve as special assistant to the chairman of the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel, which after a year of study proposed major cutbacks in the Defense Department's bureaucracy.

One longtime friend, another lawyer from McCormick, describes Mr. Buzhardt as a man who "bores easily and is always looking for a new challenge."

The next challenge came when he was appointed general counsel of the Department of Defense in 1970.

"Laird used him as his key trouble shooter," said Frank A. Bartimo of Mr. Buzhardt's staff. "He has a capacity to take on an enormous amount of work and Laird knew it."

One friend says Mr. Buzhardt is not suited to his rise to public notoriety.

"He doesn't have an outgoing personality—he's withdrawn," said the friend. "That's why he was never a good trial lawyer."

Mr. Buzhardt has acquired a few frills now that he is a Presidential adviser. A White House chauffeur picks him up each day about 7 A.M. and takes him home again some time after 9 P.M. A special white telephone has been installed in his living room.

Friends and colleagues portray Mr. Buzhardt as a man unimpressed by frills. They say he is a "prodigious worker" and an "excellent lawyer."