

Sirica Takes Over the Cox Files**Washington**

Chiew U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica, acting on a request by the Watergate prosecutors, took control yesterday of the voluminous evidence compiled by Archibald Cox before he was fired last weekend.

Sirica signed a protective order declaring the evidence "to be in the custody of this

court" and forbidding anyone to remove anything from the files except government lawyers assigned to the case who need materials for "conducting legal proceedings, interviewing witnesses or otherwise discharging their official duties."

**LAWYERS**

The only persons to be permitted access will be at-

torneys for Cox's former Watergate special prosecution force, who have been transferred to the Justice Department, and assistant Attorney General Henry E. Petersen, who has been put in charge of the Watergate case.

Petersen and members of Cox's former staff asked Sirica for the protective order Thursday, saying the fate of the files was "uncertain"

since President Nixon fired Cox last Saturday as the special prosecutor and abolished the office.

The White House dispatched FBI agents to seal the voluminous files immediately after Cox was fired. But the agents were replaced by U.S. marshals on Sunday and they were withdrawn that night by acting Attorney General Robert H. Bork.

It was unclear whether Sirica's order would preclude the House Judiciary Committee, which is considering whether there are grounds to impeach the President, from obtaining evidence from the files. But it was believed that they could petition the court for needed materials.

In another development yesterday, Sirica postponed for one week, because of last week's Watergate upheaval, a hearing scheduled for Monday on the requests of six convicted Watergate conspirators to re-open their cases. Five of the men—E. Howard Hunt Jr., Bernard L. Barker, Frank A. Sturgis, Virgilio R. Gonzalez and Eugenio R. Martinez—pleaded guilty and are seeking to switch their pleas to innocent. The sixth, James W. McCord Jr., was convicted by a jury and is asking for a new trial.

*United Press*

**Sirica Honored****Boston**

Watergate Judge John J. Sirica was given the American Judges Association's award of merit for "judicial courage," Thursday.

*Associated Press*