

Justice Douglas' Record Tenure on High Court

Washington

The judicial career of Supreme Court justice William O. Douglas, the champion of the rights of the individual, passed a milestone yesterday — an event for which the 75-year-old associate justice professes a mild distaste.

Douglas has now served on the country's highest court longer than any justice in history — 34 years and

196 days. There will be an official celebration next Saturday, although he said in an interview last week that he would have preferred to have it "slip by without notice."

The white-haired justice said he saw "no particular virtue in longevity per se."

Douglas did, however, mark the occasion by expanding on his recent startling opinion that the confer-

ence room of the Supreme Court has been "bugged."

Asked about that reference, Douglas said: "I don't know how many times Hughes (Charles Evans Hughes, Chief Justice from 1930 to 1941) detected that there was a bug . . . he discovered it was placed there by a District of Columbia policeman and two court employees. He had the bug removed and discharged the two court employees within the hour."

Douglas said that Warren "had the conference room 'swept' when he took over as Chief Justice," but that the court had not made such precaution a practice, because "the court has never had anything in its budget to do that."

He believes that the justices' conference room is still being invaded in some way: he has read reports in Monday or Tuesday newspapers concerning the court's preceding Friday conference, that he said are "explicable only on the basis that somebody other than members of the court were in on the conference."

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