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Jaworski Takes Oath of Office as New Prosecutor

By William Claiborne
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Leon Jaworski was sworn in as Watergate special prosecutor yesterday, moving from 42 years' experience in the board rooms of some of the nation's most powerful corporations into a \$38,000-a-year job that he described as the most important in his life.

In Texas business and politics, long friendships and the fierce loyalty of "good old boys" are enduring qualities, so it was not surprising that the man Jaworski selected to administer the oath of office was U.S. Court of Claims Judge Byron G. Skelton.

Jaworski and Skelton attended Baylor University in the 1920s and grew up together in the Texas Democratic politics of Lyndon B. Johnson and John B. Connally.

In a crowded ceremonial courtroom of the Court of Claims yesterday, Jaworski held a tattered Bible loaned by the judge, and said, "I have a feeling that in the days to come I will need it more than I've ever needed a Bible before."

Jaworski vowed to conduct his investigation independently of the White House and then left the courtroom to meet with the investigating staff left over by fired Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox. He said he planned to meet with Cox as soon as it could be arranged.

Jaworski could not be reached after the staff meeting, but James Doyle, spokesman for the special prosecutor's office, said last night that Jaworski told the investigators "he was not precluded from taking any action against the President he deems necessary, and that he had the right to move immediately if he chose."

Jaworski, according to Doyle, said he had no plans to make staff changes, and

asked their help in an "awesome and gigantic task."

Legal and business associates of Jaworski in Houston, Austin and Dallas described Jaworski in telephone interviews as a brilliant and aggressive trial lawyer who has an intense reverence for the rule of law.

But the same associates also pictured the new prosecutor as a loyalist of the corporate establishment whose consummate skill is in smoothing antagonisms and settling controversies out of court in an unsensational, businesslike manner.

If there is a conflict between Jaworski's background and his new duties of prosecuting any misdeeds of the Nixon administration, the associates said, it will be a highly personal one, based, for the most part, on his long association with the fraternity of wealthy businessmen and powerful politicians.

For his part, Jaworski has taken what he regards as the first step in divorcing himself from associations that could give the appearance of conflict.

He has resigned as head of the Houston law firm of Fulbright, Crooker and Jaworski, which with 180 attorneys is the fourth biggest law firm in the nation.

He has also resigned as a director of the Bank of the Southwest, an institution with assets of more than \$1 billion; Anderson Clayton & Co., a food processing firm; Gulf Publishing Co. of Houston; Houston Intercontinental National Bank; Village National Bank of Houston, and Coastal States Gas Co.

In announcing the resignations on Thursday, Jaworski said, "There actually is very little chance of conflict of interest because of the narrow scope of the (Watergate) matter . . . Nothing involves any of our clients or could possibly involve any of our clients."

Coastal States Gas Co., however, was a defendant in an antitrust suit brought by

the government last June, charging that the firm entered into an agreement with Texaco, Inc., that illegally restrained the sale of gasoline to independent distributors.

The civil suit filed by the Antitrust Division of the Justice Department was the first federal action against an oil company resulting from the gasoline supply controversy of the energy crisis. Still pending, it asks that contracts between the two firms be set aside.

Jaworski was a board member of Coastal States and he owns 200 shares of the firm's stock, which he said he plans to sell. The firm of Fulbright, Crooker and Jaworski is listed as one of the defense counsels of Coastal States.

It was learned yesterday that Jaworski also was the trustee of a Houston foundation with close ties to the business community, and that in that capacity he approved in 1958 the use of the foundation as a conduit for about \$700,000 in covert Central Intelligence Agency contributions to a New York City legal foundation.

As trustee of the M.D. Anderson Foundation, Jaworski approved a CIA request that the money be passed along to the American Fund for Free Jurists, Inc., apparently without that organization's knowledge.

The president of the Anderson Foundation, John H. Freeman, a partner in Jaworski's law firm, yesterday confirmed the link between the CIA and the foundation, saying that he briefed Jaworski and other trustees on the arrangement in a meeting in 1958.

"This man from the CIA, whose credentials we examined, said that what we were doing was approved by the government. Where the money originated from, I don't know for sure, but I've got my idea that it came somewhere from the government," Freeman said.

The trustees of the Anderson Foundation, which owned major blocks of stock in the Bank of the Southwest and Anderson Clayton & Co., regarded the jurists' organization as "a patriotic organization headed by men known to us," Freeman said.

The main function of the jurists' organization was to raise money for the International Commission of Jurists of Geneva, a group of 31 legal scholars from non-Communist countries. The latter group promulgated the belief "that lawyers and jurists in the Free World should be as independent as they could of government influence," Freeman said.