

## Richardson Says Press Was Unfair In Agnew Inquiry

By The Associated Press

Former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson said yesterday that the news media's investigative reporting of the Federal inquiry that led to Spiro T. Agnew's resignation as Vice President had been unfair to Mr. Agnew.

When a prosecutor's office conducts a case in such a way that "there is no reason to suspect it is being improperly handled, you do not have a situation that calls for investigative reporting," Mr. Richardson said at a news conference.

He called on the press to establish its own code of fairness to balance the public interest. He said the alternatives to self-regulation would be "some kind of judicial intervention or some kind of legally enforced code."

"I would have the press exercise restraint in publishing allegations affecting potential charges against an individual when the charges are unproved

and when there's no reason to believe the investigation itself is not being honestly pursued," he said.

The former Cabinet member made the comments at a news conference preceding a National Institute of Social Sciences dinner at the Plaza Hotel.

Mr. Richardson said he believed investigative reporting about the Nixon Administration should bring the press "a great deal of credit for pursuing situations which for a time were being pushed aside."

But he said the reporting of the Agnew investigation in Baltimore was not "entirely fair to someone like the Vice President or someone in a highly visible situation."

Asked if he was saying press treatment of the Agnew investigation had been "unfair," Mr. Richardson said, "yes."

At the dinner, Mr. Richardson was one of four persons to receive the 1973 gold medals of the institute.

The other recipients were Brig. Gen. John P. Flynn of the Air Force, who was the senior prisoner of war in Hanoi; the Right Rev. Paul Moore Jr., Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, and Mrs. Jean Kerr, author and playwright.