

## Decisions on Kleindienst

### Washington

The U.S. Court of Appeals here has declined to rule that the crime to which former Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst pleaded guilty is a "serious crime" requiring suspension from law practice.

In a one-sentence order, the court, which has the final power to disbar or suspend Washington attorneys, has referred the Kleindienst case to the District Bar's Disciplinary Board "for whatever action it may deem warranted."

Under court rules, sus-

pension pending further disciplinary action is mandatory when a lawyer has been convicted of felony or a misdemeanor that the court regards as "a serious crime."

Kleindienst received a suspended sentence last month following his plea of guilty to withholding testimony from the Senate Judiciary Committee at his 1971 confirmation hearings.

The charge, a form of contempt of Congress, was widely regarded as a substitute for a charge of perjury, a felony that would have

brought automatic suspension from the bar both here and Arizona, where Kleindienst also is licensed.

Kleindienst admitted withholding from the Senate committee the fact that President Nixon had ordered him to drop a government anti-trust appeal against International Telephone and Telegraph Corp.

The one-sentence court order, issued July 3, did not give the judges' reasons for treating the misdemeanor as less than "serious."

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