

Ziegler Quits With Nod to Press

Washington

Ronald L. Ziegler, President Nixon's controversial press secretary, bowed out last night with an accolade for the "diversity and strength of the American free press."

In an emotional valedictory from the podium in the White House press center where he had stood under fire so often for the past 5½ years, Ziegler told reporters, "We've been through many difficult times together and historic times. Whatever our differences, I know there are no simple answers."

"I take away a deep sense of respect for the diversity and strength of this country's freedom of expression and for all of you in the press."

"It's been an honor to be here," he added, his voice breaking.

"I've been proud to be President Nixon's press secretary over the last 5½ years."

"I've tried to be professional and I've never underestimated the energy or intelligence that the press brings to its job."

Ziegler, 34, was the youngest press secretary in White House history.

He began his career as a press spokesman during Mr. Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign and took the press secretary's post after the election.

He fared well until the



RONALD ZIEGLER
A final briefing

re-election campaign of 1972 when he found himself lashing back, mainly at the Eastern press for Watergate scandal revelations.

In April, 1973, when Mr. Nixon accepted the resignations of his two top aides, H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman as Watergate began to unravel, Ziegler, with some humiliation had to come out and tell reporters that everything he had said on Watergate for the past ten months was "inoperative."

The word "inoperative" stuck with him the rest of the way.

But Mr. Nixon absolved Ziegler of any involvement in Watergate, and gave him the additional title of assistant to the President.

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