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Tries to strive for knowledge, humor and respect
(Mr. Nessen being presented by President Ford yesterday)

New Press Secretary

Ronald Harold Nessen **SEP 21 1974**

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 20—
In early 1970, the name of Ron Nessen, a National Broadcasting Company correspondent covering urban affairs in Washington, was submitted to the White House for appointment as a public affairs director for the Food and Drug Administration. The Nixon White House refused to approve the appointment, without an explanation to the F.D.A.

Today, President Ford walked into the briefing room at the White House and announced that Ronald Harold Nessen had been appointed press secretary to the President.

And to emphasize the shift from the White House with Richard M. Nixon as President and Ronald L. Ziegler as press secretary, the 40-year-old Mr. Nessen, with Mr. Ford at his side, told reporters, "I am a Ron, but not a Ziegler."

The trim, dark-haired Mr. Nessen is the first television newsman to become a White House press secretary. He steps into the \$42,500-a-year job that J. F. terHorst left on Sept. 8 in protest against Mr. Ford's pardon of Mr. Nixon.

"I will never knowingly lie to you, never knowingly mislead the White House press corps," Mr. Nessen said. "If I do," he added, "you'd be justified in questioning my usefulness in this job."

His Job Concept

He said his concept of the highly visible job of press secretary was that he did not always have to agree with the President or be a salesman for the President, but that he would try to get as much news as possible to the American people.

"I've been assured I will,"

he added.

Mr. Nessen decried himself as apolitical and said he last voted for President in 1960—for John F. Kennedy. He said he would try to emulate the "knowledge and information" dispensed by William D. Moyers, who was President Johnson's press secretary; the good humor of Pierre Salinger, who was President Kennedy's press secretary, and Mr. terHorst, for the respect in which he was held by reporters as Mr. Ford's first press secretary.

"I know it's too late for a honeymoon, but I hope we can at least have a trial reconciliation," he said in paraphrasing Mr. Ford's remarks to Congress on Aug. 12.

Mr. Nessen began covering Mr. Ford as Vice President late last year, and accompanied him on most of the 118,000 miles that Mr. Ford traveled. Mr. Ford said he had admired Mr. Nessen's skill and objectivity and had "enjoyed his company."

They developed a close rapport on the long trips, although Mr. Nessen peppered Mr. Ford with difficult questions, particularly on Watergate at news conferences across the country, and displayed some irreverence.

Mr. Nessen and his wife were guests at Mr. Ford's first state dinner and the President and Mrs. Nessen drew applause when they danced to the pop tune, "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown." Last month, Mr. Ford attended a

poolside party at Mr. Nessen's home in suburban Bethesda with reporters and aides who had traveled together when Mr. Ford was Vice President.

Mr. Nessen said he was called a week ago by a White House recruiter who asked if he was interested in the press secretary's job. He said he later talked with a White House adviser, whom he did not identify, and was offered the job yesterday by the President.

Mr. Nessen was born in Washington on May 25, 1934. He majored in history at American University and worked for United Press International in Washington from 1956 until 1962, when he joined NBC.

He covered the White House under President Johnson until 1965, when he went to Vietnam. He was wounded by a grenade fragment in 1966, returned to Washington and then went to New York, where he did a five-minute daily report on Vietnam for the "Today" show. He did a series of foreign assignments for NBC in 1967, and returned to Washington for the 1968 Presidential campaign.

He is married to the former Young Hi Song of Seoul, South Korea, whom he met in Vietnam. They have a son, Edward, who is 18 months old. He also has an 18-year-old daughter, Caren, by a previous marriage. She attends the University of Iowa.

Colleagues who have worked with Mr. Nessen at NBC describe him as a solid, professional newsman.

He also has a quick temper, according to a friend. One friend recalled an incident in an Austin, Tex., hotel when Mr. Nessen, while covering President Johnson, threw a glass against a plate glass mirror in a moment of anger.

"He has managed to lengthen that short fuse over the years," a former associate said today.