

Watergate Trial Jurors Sworn In

Washington

A jury of nine women and three men was chosen yesterday to decide the criminal charges growing out of the Watergate scandal against former President Nixon's top aides and campaign advisers.

U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica cautioned the jurors repeatedly to reserve any judgment until they

have heard all of the evidence and to decide the case "without bias, prejudice or sympathy of any kind" toward either Watergate prosecutors or the five defendants.

"I don't know of any case I've been connected with in 47 years — 30 years as a lawyer and 17 years I've been on the bench — that I consider more important than this case," Sirica said.

"Not because of the names of the people involved, but because of the importance of the issues involved."

The 12 jurors, most of them middle-aged, most of them black, and most of them registered Democrats, took their oaths shortly before noon, completing nine days of closed-door maneuvering over their selection. The defendants — H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, John D.

Ehrlichman, John N. Mitchell, Robert C. Mardian and Kenneth Wells Parkinson — stood quietly and faced them as they were sworn in.

The pattern was repeated about an hour later after six alternate jurors, all of them women, had been separately chosen.

Federal marshals took them all to their homes yesterday afternoon to pack their bags for an expected three to four months of living together in a downtown motel under round-the-clock guard.

They are being lodged in separate \$22-a-day rooms at the Mid-Town Motor Inn, where the government has rented an entire floor. All Watergate stories will be snipped from their newspapers. Their television watching will be confined to a community room and closely monitored. Their room phones will be cut off.

A spokesman for U.S. Marshal George K. McKinney said the cost of sequestration is expected to run about \$50,000 a week, not counting the salaries for deputy marshals assigned to maintain security.

The regular jurors include six black women, two black men, three white women and one white man. Eight of them are over 55.

The youngest is Roy V. Carter, 27, a logistics coordinator at George Washington University; the oldest is Thelma L. Wells, 68, who is listed as unemployed. The occupations of those in between range from hotel doorman to loan specialist at the Department of Agriculture. One lives in an apartment at the Watergate.

The six alternate jurors are all black women, ranging from a 23-year-old housewife to a 67-year-old retired accounting clerk. They will sit through the trial — until deliberations over a verdict begin — in case illness should force any of the regular jurors to step down.

Both defense lawyers and Watergate prosecutors expressed satisfaction with the 18-member panel after a final elimination round before Judge Sirica in open court yesterday morning.

Washington Post