



Henry Ruth gets kiss from wife, Tina, after swearing in ceremonies

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Jaworski's successor aims to finish in '75

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WASHINGTON — Henry S. Ruth, Jr., the new Watergate special prosecutor, intends to carry on the investigations and prosecutions launched by his predecessors, and hopes he can wind up his work sometime in 1975.

"It's important that we don't miss a beat," the 43-year-old Philadelphia lawyer, who succeeded Archibald Cox and Leon Jaworski, said just before taking over his new job yesterday.

"We still have a number of active investigations going on. Since I've been here from the beginning, and helped to formulate the policies we've followed, we're going to continue them."

Ruth, the deputy prosecutor under both Cox and Jaworski, declined to discuss specific cases. But he talked in general terms about the role of the Special Prosecution Force, formed 16 months ago as the Watergate scandal burst over Washington.

The creation of a separate, independent investigative body was essential at that time, when the government was, in effect, trying to investigate itself, Ruth said. "It was the right thing to do."

But he does not agree with some lawmakers and political scientists who advocate a permanent special prosecution force to ride herd on high-level wrongdoing.

"I'm scared about putting a permanent institution outside the normal process of accountability and command," Ruth said.

Furthermore, reliance on a special outside organization avoids the need to reform and strengthen the regular institutions of government, like the Justice Department, he said.

"We ought to put more stress on how to make our permanent institutions more accountable," he said.

Ruth thinks an independent prosecution force will be needed as long as the Watergate investigations are underway. After they are completed, however, independence from the administration will be less necessary. Although the trials and appeals of Watergate figures may drag on for years, Ruth said they could be handled by outside lawyers hired by the Justice Department, as has happened in previous cases.

Under the charter creating the Watergate force, the special prosecutor is supposed to report to the Attorney General when he thinks his job is finished.

"It's hard to tell when that will be," Ruth said. "I hope it will be sometime in 1975, but it depends on some iffy questions involving our access to White House tapes and documents."

He noted that the Ford Administration has custody of tapes and documents belonging to former President Nixon, which the prosecutor feels are necessary evidence in his investigations.

His office is engaged in a complicated three-way negotiation with lawyers for Nixon and Ford to get the materials.

Ruth said Ford's lawyers are "always available for discussion" and are "genuinely trying to work things out." But he implied that there are differences of opinion between himself, as prosecutor, and the President's men, who have other considerations in mind.

Ruth declined to criticize Ford's pardon of Nixon, and said he agreed with Jaworski's decisions not to indict the former President or to seek to overturn the pardon.

"I was part of that decision process," he said. "I did and do (agree with it)."

Ruth acknowledged that historians, the press and the public should be able to learn as much as possible about what Nixon did wrong and what happened in his administration. But he said there are legal problems about asking him, as special prosecutor, to issue a final report spelling out "the full story of Watergate," as some lawmakers have proposed.

Ruth, sworn in yesterday by Judge Byron Skelton, placed his right hand on a family Bible, held by his wife, Tina, as he repeated the oath. Nearby were their daughters Laura, 17; Diana, 15; and Tenley, 12.

Although Ruth was born into a staunch Republican family, he is now a Democrat.

He graduated from Yale University, and the University of Pennsylvania Law School where he later was an associate professor.

In 1969 he headed the Justice Department's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.