

(Last few lines [6?] in each column accidentally lost.) OVER  
(Coleman was sworn in 7 Mar 75.)

# Nominee to DOT Has Built in Caution Light

By Aaron Epstein

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PHILADELPHIA—President Ford has named a Secretary of Transportation with built-in caution lights.

The nominee, William Thaddeus Coleman Jr., was asked in a recent interview here, for example, which part of his multifaceted career has given him the greatest satisfaction.

In response, he proceeded to list just about everything in the 2½ page biography he dispenses to inquisitive reporters these days.

Coleman, who has been a part-time consultant to four presidents, also was asked for his views on the most recent occupants of the White House.

He professed "enormous respect" for Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower, said he knew John F. Kennedy "from Harvard days" and "admired him very much," declared "there is no man that I admire more than Lyndon Johnson (gesturing toward the photograph of him and Johnson on his law office wall), and expressed "great admiration" for President Ford ("We were together on the Warren Commission, you know").

Reminded that he had not mentioned the latest ex-President, the 54-year-old Cabinet nominee replied coolly:

"Well, you know, I've got to go before the Senate and I don't want to go into that, please."

If he is confirmed, Coleman will become the second black Cabinet member in American history (the first was Robert C. Weaver, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Johnson administration).

In the interview at the prestigious Philadelphia law firm of Dilworth, Paxson, Kalish, Levy & Coleman, the nominee revealed himself to be a sometimes liberal, sometimes conservative Republican with high-level

rooms and as a man who says he admires labor unions and their leaders.

Coleman was born in 1920 into a family which lived modestly in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. His father, a social worker, earned about \$6,000 in his best year.

Coleman went to Harvard Law School, where he was first in his class. His classmate and close friend, Elliot L. Richardson, recalls, "Brother, he was sharp!"

As a leading lawyer for the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Coleman worked on the frontiers of the courtroom wars against racial discrimination.

He was one of the authors of the brief that persuaded the Supreme Court to outlaw segregation in public schools in 1954. He struggled successfully to help win integration for Philadelphia's Gerard College, worked to knock out laws against racial intermarriage, and defended victims of civil rights sit-in arrests in the South in the early 1960s.

He was the first black law clerk to a Supreme Court justice, serving along with Richardson on the staff of the late Felix Frankfurter beginning in 1948.

And Coleman has served in many part-time federal posts since then. He was a staff lawyer for the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy. President Nixon named him to the Price Commission and to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations General Assembly.

Until now, Coleman has rejected all permanent job offers from the White House.

He said that he could have been an under secretary or legal adviser to the State Department, that he got two offers of judgeships from President Kennedy, and that President Johnson wanted him to be a judge on

be used in the private sector.

"I thought corporations would pay a lot of attention to my recommendations [on civil rights] when they saw me function in things that had nothing to do with race. I could get companies to be more responsible."

Why, then, did Coleman accept President Ford's offer of a Cabinet post?

"President Ford really wants to make a change," Coleman said. "In 15 minutes' conversation, he told me how important transportation is to him. I felt the guy really wants to do it."

Do what? "I don't think I ought to comment on that."

Coleman dresses impeccably and conservatively. He is rarely seen without a vest and a gold watchchain draped across it. His face is round and his eyes are magnified by round, oversized glasses that give him a slightly owl-like appearance.

Considered a national expert on transportation law, Coleman has long been the attorney and negotiator for the agency that runs public transit in the Philadelphia area, and has advised other cities on transportation problems.

Coleman's last public statement about the travails of Richard M. Nixon was published Aug. 7, 1974, one day before Nixon announced his resignation. In it, Coleman urged congressional leaders of both parties to avoid a drawn-out, disruptive impeachment trial and, instead, to induce Nixon to resign by passing a law.

The legislation proposed by Coleman would have guaranteed Nixon his federal pension, granted him immunity from all prosecution, and permitted him to destroy all Watergate-connected tapes and papers.

Coleman said he wrote and submitted that article before Aug. 5, the day that Nixon released transcripts of conversations with former aide H. R. Haldeman, which showed