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## GURNEY DEFENDS ACTIONS ON FUND

### Asserts He Does Not Recall Hiring Money-Raiser

Special to The New York Times

TAMPA, Fla., July 1—Saying that he has "a very poor memory for details," former Senator Edward J. Gurney testified in his own defense today that he had no recollection of having hired Larry E. Williams, a fund-raiser, in 1971.

Mr. Gurney, a Florida Republican who was a member of the Senate Watergate committee, also reiterated from the witness stand his previous assertions that he did not learn until June, 1972, that Mr. Williams, of Orlando, had been raising campaign funds in Mr. Gurney's name during the previous 18 months.

Mr. Williams, who has served time in prison for his role in the 1971-1973 unreported fund-raising operation, testified earlier at the trial of Mr. Gurney and three co-defendants in United States District Court that Mr. Gurney personally hired him as a fund-raiser in a telephone conversation on Jan. 19, 1971.

Mr. Williams's testimony was corroborated by two other prosecution witnesses, James L. Groot, Mr. Gurney's former administrative assistant, and Earl M. Crittenden, former chairman of the Florida Republican party. Both Mr. Groot and Mr. Crittenden have pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the case and await sentencing.

### Final Stages of Trial

Mr. Gurney, 61 years old, took the stand in his own behalf as the four-month-old trial moved into its final stages. He is charged with seven felony counts of conspiracy, bribery, unlawful compensation and making false statements under oath to a grand jury.

As he raised his right hand to take the oath, Mr. Gurney held in his left hand two beige cushions on which he sits to ease the pain from wounds suffered in World War II. He then walked, with a visible limp, to the witness box, placed the cushions on the chair there and sat down.

Mr. Gurney, a native of Maine who was elected in 1968 and served until 1974 in the Senate, said that during his trips to Florida from Washington Mr. Williams, who is 30 years old, would often arrange transportation for him and otherwise help him as a volunteer aide.

However, Mr. Gurney testified, he did not know how Mr. Williams made a living.

"He never told me and I never asked him," Mr. Gurney testified. "I'm not a person who pries into people's private affairs. It's part of my heritage from New England."

Mr. Gurney said that Mr. Groot never told him that Mr. Williams was raising funds, although a plan of "legal, honest" fund-raising to cover Mr. Gurney's travel expenses had been discussed at a meeting in Mr. Gurney's home in Winter Park, Fla., on the same day that Mr. Gurney allegedly hired Mr. Williams on the telephone.

### \$400,000 Fund Alleged

Mr. Gurney said he always made it a practice to isolate himself from his campaign fund-raising efforts, in case of possible "irregularities." He explained, "If they do happen, there is always the possibility the candidate could be knocked out on a violation; that's why you keep the candidate from knowing."

Mr. Williams testified that he had raised about \$400,000 for Mr. Gurney's planned reelection bid, to take place in 1974, from Florida builders seeking special treatment from Federal housing agencies.

Mr. Gurney did not seek reelection after being indicted on July 10 last year.

Mr. Gurney referred to the events that brought about his indictment as "this horrendous Williams' affair."