

Sirica: 'Oriented and alert'

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Watergate Judge John Sirica was reported "alert and oriented" and his breathing, pulse and blood pressure normal today after a near-fatal heart attack.

Said Dr. Joel Gorfinkel, associate director of the coronary unit at George Washington University Hospital, "We couldn't ask for more considering what he's been through . . . excellent support and superb emergency care at the scene . . . saved his life."

The doctor said Sirica still was listed in critical condition but his breathing, heart rate and blood pressure were normal and doctors considered his progress satisfactory.

Sirica, 71, was stricken with a massive heart attack yesterday while delivering a luncheon speech.

Almost immediately after the judge collapsed, a deputy U.S. marshal, a military doctor and ambulance rescue workers gave mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and applied pressure with their hands to Sirica's chest. This kept the blood flowing to Sirica's brain, the doctor said.

Gorfinkel said 80 per cent of such heart attack victims never make it to a hospital, but among those who do, four of every five survive, he said.

Gorfinkel said if Sirica continues to breathe easily, suffers no pain and if his blood pressure remains normal, he could be released from the hospital in three or four weeks.

The hospital also reported receiving two bomb threats Thursday night.