

Sirica Suffers a Heart Attack While Giving Speech in Capital

NYTimes

FEB 6 1976 76

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5 (AP) — Federal District Judge John F. Sirica, who gained national recognition for his dogged pursuit of the truth in Watergate, suffered a massive heart attack today. His condition is critical. But hospital spokesmen who disclosed that diagnosis said that within a few hours Judge Sirica was awake and able to breathe unaided.

"All things considered, he is doing as well as one can hope for so soon after a massive heart attack with cardiac arrest," said Dr. Joel Gorfinkel, associate director of the George Washington University Hospital's coronary care unit.

The judge, a month shy of his 72d birthday, pitched over a lectern while delivering a speech on lawyers' obligation to professional ethics. His audience was 270 alumni of George Washington University Law School, including many fellow judges.

A military doctor was summoned from another part of the

building, the Army-Navy Club, and he administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

The hospital said that an electrical shock was administered to Judge Sirica while he was in the emergency room, and that "the shock caused his heart to resume effective pumping action."

A statement in early evening said that Judge Sirica "appears to have suffered no neurological damage as far as his doctors can tell. His blood pressure is normal and does not require the support of medication. His condition remains critical."

The first 24 to 48 hours after a heart attack are deemed the most crucial.

Judge Bruce Mencher of the District of Columbia Superior Court, who was in the audience, said: "His face was flushed and he just keeled over straight into the rostrum."