

Martha Mitchell, 57, Dies Of Bone-Marrow Cancer

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By JOHN T. McQUISTON

Martha Mitchell, the outspoken estranged wife of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, died early yesterday at the Memorial Sloane-Kettering Cancer Center. She was 57 years old.

Her physician, Dr. Klaus Mayer, attributed her death to multiple myeloma—a rare type of malignancy that attacks bone marrow—complicated by hemorrhage and terminal bronchial pneumonia.

Mrs. Mitchell had suffered from the malignancy since early 1975 or before and had been unconscious since her hospitalization Sunday following a cardiac arrest, according to Dr. Mayer, who is director of the blood bank and hematology laboratory of the cancer center.

None of Mrs. Mitchell's family was present at her death. Her son, C. Ray Jennings, who had been in close touch with her, was out of town and could not be reached yesterday, Dr. Mayer said. Mr. Mitchell had been apprised of her condition but did not come to the hospital because she was unconscious and because he might have been in the way in the intensive care unit, said Dr. Mayer, who added that Mr. Mitchell had been "very concerned."

Mrs. Mitchell, whose candid



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Martha Mitchell

views were widely reported by the press, had ruffled the staid Nixon Administration both before and after the exposure of the Watergate scandal.

As a Southern conservative, she enjoyed criticizing liberals, urged "discipline" for Vietnam war protesters and suggested that the American press might be suppressed if it continued to reveal Government secrets. When the Watergate scandal broke, she did not hesitate to turn her barbs on the Nixon

Continued on Page 28, Column 3

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3

Administration, urging its officials "to tell it the way it really is."

It was not unusual for Mrs. Mitchell to telephone a reporter late at night and tell what was on her mind. In one such call to The New York Times in March 1973, she said that she thought somebody was trying to make her husband "the goat" for the Watergate scandal and that she was "not going to let that happen."

Mrs. Mitchell insisted that the scandal originated at the White House and that President Nixon was to blame. However, her sometimes burlesque use of the telephone and the press reduced her credibility.

When the former Attorney General was on trial in New York City in March 1974 for alleged influence peddling, Mrs. Mitchell repeated her contention that her husband had been "framed" and that some day she would document the Watergate scandal in a book—a book that has never been published.

During one of her Watergate interviews, Mrs. Mitchell charged that the White House, in an effort to discredit her, had spread "lies" and "rumors galore" about her that suggested she had been in an insane asylum.

Mrs. Mitchell had complained that on the weekend the Watergate break-in was discovered in June 1972, she was being held as a "political prisoner" at the Newport Inn at Newport Beach, Calif. She had also contended that she had been given injections and held in her room against her will by Steve King, a security official.

This was later confirmed by James W. McCord Jr., a convicted Watergate conspirator

who was Mr. Mitchell's bodyguard before he became chief of security for President Nixon's re-election campaign. Mr. McCord said Mrs. Mitchell was "basically" kidnapped in 1972 to keep her ignorant of the Watergate break-in.

At the time the Watergate scandal broke with the break-in and burglary of the Democratic national headquarters at the Watergate office and apartment complex in Washington, Mr. Mitchell was Mr. Nixon's national campaign manager. He had resigned as Attorney General to assume the campaign post, a post he was later forced to give up because of the scandal.

In subsequent trials, he was acquitted in New York of alleged influence peddling, but convicted in Washington of perjury and conspiracy to obstruct justice. He was disbarred from practicing law in New York State.

4 Top Aides Convicted

Mr. Mitchell was one of four Nixon Administration officials who were convicted on Jan. 1, 1975, of all counts in the Watergate cover-up trial. The others were H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and Robert C. Mardian. The three-month trial culminated the principal investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the political scandal.

On Aug. 9, 1974, President Nixon, facing impeachment charges in the House for his part in the Watergate cover-up, resigned. A month later, he was pardoned by his successor, President Ford.

The Mitchells' 14-room Fifth Avenue apartment was expensively decorated and comfortable, but it eventually became a place of confinement. During the height of the public interest

in Watergate and Mr. Mitchell's trials, the mood was bitter.

Hour after hour, Mr. Mitchell's chauffeur-bodyguard stood at the living-room curtains, peering down on newsmen in parked cars on the street below. Mrs. Mitchell would tell visitors in the summer of 1973, a few months before their separation, "Four years ago we had everything, and now we have nothing."

In May 1976, Mrs. Mitchell won a judgment of \$36,000 in back alimony from Mr. Mitchell in the New York Supreme Court in Manhattan. Justice Manuel Gomez, in making the judgment, said the former Attorney General had submitted no proof that his finances were "as precarious as he contends."

The public first learned that Mrs. Mitchell was ill of cancer in October 1975, when she was hospitalized in Washington for treatment of a bone marrow disease that her doctor described as a "type of malignancy." The disease was later defined as myeloma, a rare form of bone cancer that is always fatal, most frequently attacking the pelvis, spine and ribs.

Mrs. Mitchell had suffered fractures of the ribs, vertebrae and a femur. She was released in January 1976 after two months of chemotherapy at the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research, but was readmitted in May to the Hospital for Special Surgery for treatment of a broken arm suffered in a fall at her Fifth Avenue apartment. Doctors said she had progressed from a wheelchair to a walker.

Mrs. Mitchell was born Martha Elizabeth Beall on Sept. 2, 1918, in Pine Bluff, Ark. She attended the University of Arkansas, graduated from the

University of Miami and taught school in Mobile, Ala. She quit after a year, saying she "despised it."

During World War II, she married Clyde W. Jennings, a businessman, but the marriage ended in divorce. The couple had a son, C. Ray Jennings, now 28 years old, who during the last several months has been caring for her and serving on occasion as her spokesman.

She met Mr. Mitchell in New York City in 1954, and married him in 1957. They had a daughter, Marty, now 14 years old. Mr. Mitchell won custody of her in another highly publicized court battle after their separation.

It was in the mid-1960's that the Mitchells became friends with the Nixons. Both Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Nixon were then with the same Wall Street law firm.

Mrs. Mitchell, a Presbyterian, often went to the Marble Collegiate Church and praised its pastor, the Rev. Norman Vincent Peale.

The funeral and burial are scheduled for Thursday morning in Pine Bluff, Ark.

75-Foot Flag Is Flown

NORWALK, Ohio, May 31 (AP) — Norwalk Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2743 showed its colors today with what members contend is one of the largest flags ever flown. The 13-star flag, fashioned for a specially built, 160-foot tower, measures 46 by 75 feet. It weighs 94 pounds and will get additional support from a helium-filled balloon floating above.