

# A Low Key Legal Chief

William Ramsey Clark

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 28— On warm mornings in Washington, bystanders are occasionally intrigued to see a 1949 Oldsmobile convertible drive into the Justice Department parking area and occupy the position reserved for William Ramsey Clark. Often, they do not recognize

the rangy, 6-foot-3-inch young man who steps out. Ramsey Clark (he never uses his first name) was Acting

Attorney General for five months before President Johnson named him Attorney General today. But despite a remarkable record in six years of subcabinet duty with the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations, he has gained little public attention.

His pattern of success has been consistently low key, and low visibility has been his style.

As an Assistant Attorney in charge of the lands division under President Kennedy, he got less publicity than did the touch football stars of Robert F. Kennedy's new Justice Department.

Most people who knew of him at all knew of him only as the son of Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark and as a longtime family friend of a fellow Texan, Lyndon B. Johnson.

But Mr. Clark was building a solid reputation as a lawyer and administrator. Each year he turned back \$300,000 of his division's \$3.5-million budget, and he finally asked Congress to cut the size of his staff and cut his annual budget by \$200,000.

#### Backlog of Cases Cut

At the same time, he reduced by half the backlog of 32,000 cases he had inherited. By January of 1965, when President Johnson appointed him Deputy Attorney General, he was known in official Washington as a good man to have tending the governmental shop.

Mr. Clark remains an individual. He refuses to travel to and from his home in suburban Virginia in a chauffeur-driven limousine. When the weather keeps him out of his heaterless convertible, he rides in with his fellow Texan, Assistant Attorney General Harold Barefoot Sanders Jr.

For years he moved comfortably in Washington's top social - Government circles without owning evening clothes. Finally, his mother gave him a tuxedo.

Mr. Clark and his Texas-born wife, Georgia, try to avoid an extensive social life. They succeed to a certain extent by having it known that regular Saturday dinner dates



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with Justice and Mrs. Clark take precedence over other social invitations.

At home he is a voracious reader who listens to Beethoven and Sibelius as background music. He scorns television. He refused to have a set in his home until last Christmas, when he relented and gave one to his 12-year-old son, Tom. The Clarks also have a daughter, Donda Kathleen, 13.

Mr. Clark married Georgia Welch, a University of Texas coed, shortly after their graduation in June, 1949. He then went to the University of Chicago, where he received a Master's degree in history and a law degree.

In his official contacts, Mr. Clark is so unpretentious that some mistake his diffidence for disinterest.

Recently, a delegation of American Bar Association leaders paid a ceremonial visit to his office as he took time out to record a Law Day statement for radio use.

Afterward, one of the group complained that Mr. Clark had not seemed sufficiently impressed with the importance of the occasion.

"He was like a big teddy bear—friendly but vague," the association representative said.

Mr. Clark's performance as Acting Attorney General gives almost the opposite impression.

Mr. Clark moved forward in several areas that would have been touchy even to a confirmed Attorney General.

When instances of electronic eavesdropping by the Federal Bureau of Investiga-

tion came to light, he instituted a review of cases. He followed a policy of publicly notifying the appropriate court about each case that might have contained tainted evidence.

He also moved aggressively into the arena of antitrust law. He brought antitrust complaints against bank mergers in Houston and Philadelphia, pushing the cases quickly to the Supreme Court and encouraged his attorneys to fight the proposed merger between the International Telephone and Telegraph Company and the American Broadcasting Company.