

New President of the A.B.A.

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Leon Jaworski

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By LESLEY OELSNER

He's Texas born and bred and his life story, true to the stereotype, is one of splashy success. He started out as a minister's son in rural Texas, became the youngest lawyer in the state's history and got to the point, a few years back, where he was invited to spend the night at the

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White House but chose instead to fly home to Houston for a grandson's birthday party. But yesterday, a few minutes after Leon Jaworski was elected president of the American Bar Association, it was his profession, not his success, that showed the most. Other than a large pair of gold cufflinks shaped in a rancher's brand of the letter "J," there was nothing to detract from the image of a confident, conservative and experienced member of a big-time law firm.

He was traditional. At a news conference after his election by the bar association's House of Delegates, he would specify only one project that he hoped to organize in the coming year — an educational program in which elementary and high school students would be taught the need for and the role of law.

"This was taught in the home much more in the past than it is now," he said, possibly remembering the devout Evangelical home into which he was born on Sept. 19, 1905.

'Part of Our Function'

And he was concerned with the ethics of his profession. "We must do a better job" at disciplining errant lawyers, he said. "We simply have not done a good job of house-keeping as I feel we should do."

Above all, he was adept at fielding questions.

What did he think of Chief Justice Warren E. Burger's suggestion that the A.B.A. create a "legislative implementation committee" to present Congress with court-related programs? Did he think the bar association would become a "conveyor belt" for the Chief Justice if it did so?

"I look upon it differently," he replied. "Frankly, if there were things in which we



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could be of use, and we've overlooked the area, I think it's our duty, I think it's part of our function to get busy on it."

Mr. Jaworski has in the past defended men charged with crime. His first case, as a 20-year old lawyer in Waco, where he was born, was a successful defense of a bootlegger charged with operating a still in nearby Moonshine Valley.

He has also been a prosecutor — in post-war Germany, as Colonel Jaworski of the Judge Advocate General's department of the Army, he won convictions of numerous war criminals.

As a result, some of his views sound distinctly prosecutor. A member of the President's Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, he joined in the minority opinion of the panel's 1967 report, siding with those who thought the Warren Court had gone too far in some of its decisions regarding defendants' rights.

Mr. Jaworski was appointed to the commission

and to four other Presidential panels by President Johnson, the man whose invitation to the White House Mr. Jaworski declined in favor of his grandchild's party.

The new bar association president, a long-time Democrat, has never been directly involved in politics; he has had something of a behind-the-scenes political role, though, by handling lawsuits for politicians.

His friendship with the former President, for example, began in 1960, when he successfully defended him against a suit filed by a number of Republicans who sought to enjoin him from running for Senator and Vice President.

Some Hints Offered

Mr. Jaworski, who takes office July 20, has come a long way from his childhood as the son of the Rev. Joseph and Marie Jaworski. But even as a youth, his record shows, he offered some hints of what he might become. He received a Bachelor of Laws degree from Baylor University of 1925, at 19; he got a Master's of Law from George Washington University a year later.

He is married to the former Jeanette Adam and the father of two daughters and a son. He is a partner of the Houston law firm of Fulbright, Crooker, Freeman, Bates & Jaworski, for which he has worked since 1931.

During his year-long term as president, which he won, in A.B.A. tradition, in an uncontested election, he is expected to have little time for the firm — and even less for his 400-acre ranch, where, in free moments, he passes his time catfishing and barbecuing.