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The Other Fortas Lawyer Is a Tax Expert

By PETER GROSE

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WASHINGTON, May 15 — The other lawyer in the Fortas family is a director of a local bank, is regarded as one of the city's sharpest tax experts and reads Vogue.

The name on the office door is Carolyn E. Agger; socially she is known as Mrs. Abe Fortas.

The Fortases live interlocking but distinctly independent professional lives.

In submitting his resignation, Justice Fortas disclosed that under his agreement with the Wolfson family foundation his retainer was to go to his wife if she survived him. This fee of \$20,000 a year was to have been for services only vaguely defined in his case, not at all in hers.

Mrs. Fortas is a partner of his old law firm, which therefore could have retained the title Arnold, Fortas & Porter when he went on the Supreme Court in 1965—except that the dainty and diminutive Mrs. Fortas becomes the tough and towering Miss Agger when she enters her richly carpeted office.

Mrs. Fortas, who smokes big fat cigars, drives the family Rolls Royce. As a highly successful tax attorney, she is the one who drew the six-figure annual income while her husband survived on the relatively modest \$39,500 paid to him as a Supreme Court Justice. This figure was raised to \$60,000 this year.

Over Georgetown dinner tables Mrs. Fortas made no secret of her annoyance that her successful lawyer-husband would give up his lucrative law practice for a job that provided



Mrs. Abe Fortas at the Fortas home in Connecticut

The secretary of the foundation, Harry S. Ashmore, promptly announced to the press that he would call in an independent analyst of the foundation's accounts to demonstrate themselves beyond reproach in what he called a "Caesar's wife" policy.

The analyst summoned was Mrs. Fortas. She reported nothing amiss in the Parvin Foundation's tax returns, the Internal Revenue Service dropped its investigation and Justice Douglas remained quietly as president of the foundation.

A Link to Wolfson

Many months later, the foundation's donor, Albert B. Parvin of Los Angeles, was named by the Government as an alleged co-conspirator in a stock manipulation case with Louis E. Wolfson, who paid the \$20,000 fee to Justice Fortas. Mr. Parvin was not indicted.

Mrs. Fortas is a director of Washington's Madison National Bank, a seat she assumed in her husband's place after he went to the Supreme Court. The chairman of the bank's board is Charles E. Smith, who also manages real estate ventures in which the Fortases have invested.

The Fortases have been married nearly 34 years. They have no children.

At 59 years old, Mrs. Fortas defers to convention to the extent of smoking only small and delicate cigars in public; at home, she indulges in the big fat variety and tells people, "My husband says I am the only woman he knows who can be trailed around the house by the aroma of a cigar."

more dignity than liquidity.

At least one episode is on public record when Mrs. Fortas's career was involved with another member of the Court. This occurred in the case of the Parvin Foundation.

In 1966 it came out that a colleague of Justice Fortas on

the Court, William O. Douglas, was receiving an annual fee of \$12,000 from the nonprofit California Foundation, which had vague ties to Las Vegas gambling interests and which was, at that moment, being investigated for possible tax irregularities.