

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 7, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND

EDWARD H. LEVI
AT THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY
OF EDWARD H. LEVI
AS ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

11:05 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Vice President, Mr. Justice Powell, Acting Attorney General Silberman -- your tenure is rather short, Larry -- Attorney General-designate Edward Levi, Mrs. Levi, employees of the Department of Justice:

It is really a great occasion for me to come to the Department of Justice and participate in this wonderful ceremony in the Great Hall of the Department of Justice and before making a comment or two about our new Attorney General, let me say that I am deeply grateful to the people of the Department of Justice who, in a period of great difficulty, turbulence and problems of unusual significance -- all of you -- have done a fine job, and on behalf of 213 million other Americans, let me express my gratitude for them as well as for myself.

I do want to say also a word of appreciation to Bill Saxbe, who became the Attorney General at a very difficult time. I knew Bill Saxbe as a Member of the Congress. I knew him when he was Attorney General for the State of Ohio, and I wish to compliment Bill on the job that he did, again, during a period of great difficulty.

Obviously, he has new and difficult chores, but they are equally important, representing our country in another land almost halfway around the world, a country of some 600 million people, a vitally important country, not only in that part of the world, but elsewhere.

MORE

Bill, I am sure that I can speak for all of you in this Great Hall and all that worked with you in wishing you the very, very best on this new mission.

I was reviewing with the new Attorney General some of his past activities, and all of a sudden it occurred to me that although he had gone to the University of Chicago as an under graduate and gotten his legal degree from the University of Chicago Law School, he and I appeared in New Haven in the fall of 1935.

He came with a much more distinguished record, as a graduate of the University of Chicago and its law school, and I came to Yale as a graduate of the University of Michigan with a job as an assistant football coach.

I struggled for a couple of years to try and convince the Yale Law School that they would admit me, and struggled with the Department of Athletics to convince me that I could do both. All of the time, Ed, of course, was adding to his illustrious career as a legal scholar.

He went on to great achievements in the legal profession, the Department of Justice, as subsequently the Dean of the University of Chicago Law School, and finally as the President of a great educational institution, the University of Chicago.

I struggled and finally got through law school, and it is, I think, a wonderful experience for me to have the privilege, on this fine morning, to participate in a ceremony where the new Attorney General will be sworn into a very important job in this country, a responsibility of carrying out with conviction and dedication, integrity, the laws of the United States, protecting the rights of individuals, protecting the rights of the government, and making the Department the great Department that it has been and must be if all of our citizens are to have faith in the laws of our land.

So, it is a privilege for me to join with you in participation in the ceremony of a man who has earned the honor of being the Attorney General of the United States; participating in a ceremony for a person who will make certain that all of our fellow citizens believe this government, when laws are interpreted, when laws are carried out, and this faith is vitally important for our country at this very troubled time.

MORE

So, Ed, I congratulate you. I could not help but notice that you were immensely successful in your confirmation proceedings. You did much better than I. I spent about five days before a Senate committee and did not get unanimous support. You spent about a day before a Senate committee and were whisked through the Senate Chamber without a recorded vote.

I compliment you, but it is a compliment to you that the Senate of the United States has such faith in you, as your associates in the Department of Justice will, as I do, as President of the United States.

So, it is a privilege for me to ask the Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Justice Powell, to administer the oath.

Justice Powell, of course, in his own right, is a man of great legal stature, former President of the American Bar Association, and a man with a renowned reputation in the private practice.

Now I ask Justice Powell if he will administer the oath of office to our new Attorney General, Edward Levi.

(The Associate Justice administered the oath of office.)

MORE

ATTORNEY GENERAL LEVI: President Ford, Vice President Rockefeller, Justice Powell, Members of the Cabinet, distinguished Members of Congress, Deputy Attorney General Silberman: it was with a sense of responsibility I assumed this post. The mission of the Department of Justice is a great one.

The law is a servant of our society. Its enforcement and administration can give more effective meaning to our common goals. Among these common goals are domestic tranquillity, the blessings of liberty and the establishment of justice. These goals do not bring themselves into being.

If we are to have a government of laws and not of men, then it, particularly, takes dedicated men and women to accomplish this through their zeal and determination and, also, their concern for fairness and impartiality, and I know that this Department always has had such dedicated men and women. And I recall with great pride the years I spent in this Department.

We have lived in a time of change and corrosive skepticism and cynicism concerning the administration of justice. Nothing can more weaken the quality of life or more imperil the realization of the goals we all hold dear, than our failure to make clear, by word and deed, that our law is not an instrument of partisan purpose and it is not an instrument to be used in ways which are careless of the higher values which are within all of us.

Mr. President, when you spoke to me two months ago, you were eloquent and persuasive as to your high aspirations for this Department, and speaking literally, you moved me. I am sure that the able men and women of this Department will join with me in responding to your aspirations.

Thank you.

END

(AT 11:20 A.M. EST)