

Judge Parker: No Stranger to Controversial Rulings

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Barrington D. Parker, the U.S. District Court judge who dealt yesterday's blow to the Carter administration's wage-price guidelines, is no stranger to controversial and often politically sensitive judicial rulings.

Since his appointment to the bench by President Nixon in 1969—an appointment delayed for more than two months in the Senate because of political bickering—many of Parker's rulings have had distinct political ramifications.

Those who have stood before Judge Parker's bench include a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms, accused of lying to a Senate committee; a former

representative from Louisiana, Otto Passman, accused of taking bribes from a Korean businessman; and a former Chilean secret police agent accused of planting a bomb in the car of Orlando Letelier.

After an almost 10-year tenure as a District Court judge, Parker has been described by those who have dealt with him as "crusty," "strict," and "hardened." And Parker gained a reputation for personal resiliency and toughness after recovering from an automobile accident that required the amputation of a leg, resuming his caseload even while in intense pain.

Still, despite Judge Parker's familiarity with "political" cases, and despite his reputation as a strict legalist, Justice Department prosecutors and

defense attorneys alike saw some paradox in that the cornerstone of the Democratic president's anti-inflation policy was gutted by a black judge from Rosslyn, Va., a former member of the D.C. Republican Party, and an appointee of Richard Nixon.

Parker, a product of D.C. public schools and a graduate of the University of Chicago law school, has been a Republican since he was an alternate delegate to the 1952 and 1956 Republican national conventions. But he showed a strong liberal streak even then, recalls a former chairman of the District of Columbia Democratic Party who debated Parker. During the debate, the Democrat recalled, anyone listening would think Parker was for the Democratic candidate, Adlai Ste-

venson, until the last line, when Parker would say "vote for Eisenhower."

But it was in 1964 when Parker first showed his penchant for independence, breaking with the GOP by refusing to campaign for Barry Goldwater.

The then-District GOP chairman tried to force Parker off the Republican Central Committee for his anti-Goldwater stance, and it was Parker's 1964 rebuff of his party that led some unforgiving Republicans in the Senate to delay his confirmation to the federal judgeship five years later.

Since that appointment, Parker has been involved in a number of precedent-setting cases. He was, for example, the first judge here to allow the results of lie detector tests to be admitted as evidence in D.C. courtrooms.