



Department of Justice

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AG
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Attached are Attorney General Griffin B. Bell's remarks at the White House on August 17, 1977, announcing the selection of FBI Director.

The President has asked me to announce that the name of Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. of Montgomery, Alabama will be submitted to the Senate for confirmation as Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If Judge Johnson is confirmed, he will succeed Director Clarence Kelley upon his retirement in January, 1978.

The process of selecting a nominee for FBI Director has been a thorough and educational experience.

I want to take the opportunity to thank and commend the work, effort, and contribution to the country and to the FBI of the members of the Committee on Selection of the Director of the FBI. The Committee was superbly led by a distinguished chairman, Irving S. Shapiro. This group of nine distinguished citizens met for a total of twelve full days, devoting approximately 90 hours each to its work, including every Saturday in the month of May. It sent out over 460 letters to groups of all descriptions and interests requesting a recommended criteria to be applied in the selection process and of names of persons to be considered. More than 230 names were received. Of these, the committee interviewed 48. The committee recommended five outstanding individuals to the President on June 10, 1977.

That our ultimate choice is not among this group should not reflect adversely on the work of the committee or the

individuals whose names the committee sent forward. The President and I have met and talked individually with each of the persons recommended by the committee and they are capable, qualified persons with much to contribute to their communities and the Nation.

The process we have gone through has been a unique one. It has strengthened our perceptions of the particular qualities the position requires and our confidence in Judge Johnson as the nominee. The work of the committee has sharpened discussion and focused public attention on the qualities that must be possessed by the person who becomes the Director. In a real sense, their work has set the standard. In fact, Mr. Shapiro articulated in a letter to the Vice President a profile for the ideal Director of the Bureau. With Mr. Shapiro's permission, we are releasing that profile today. Mr. Shapiro has told me that Judge Johnson meets precisely the profile.

Our standards and expectations have been rigorous.

The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation must be a strong leader, an individual of personal strength and unimpeachable integrity. The Director must be intelligent, knowledgeable, committed, and experienced in law enforcement and the workings of our courts. And, importantly, the Director must be someone who understands our country, its aspirations

and, above all, the rule of law.

Judge Frank Johnson -- a combat veteran, a former federal prosecutor, a distinguished federal judge for 22 years -- has these qualities.

Both the President and I personally know Frank Johnson. His career is a matter of public record. Judge Johnson has personally and professionally been subject to the closest public scrutiny since 1953 when President Eisenhower appointed him the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Alabama. He was named a United States District Judge for the Middle District of Alabama in 1955. He is presently the Chief Judge of that court. He is well known nationally, highly respected by judges, lawyers, and law enforcement officers.

Frank Johnson will be a Director in whom the Bureau itself has confidence, and he has the qualities that should inspire the public to have confidence in the Bureau.

In accepting this nomination, Judge Johnson emphasized his commitment to the Bureau and the challenge the position offers to him and to the country. Both the FBI and the Nation will be the stronger for it.

I will be happy to answer your questions.