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Department of Justice

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

One hundred fifty years of progress in the administration of American justice will be marked on Sunday, September 24, when the Department of Justice observes its sesquicentennial.

"Upon this happy occasion the Department rededicates itself to the task of safeguarding human rights, civil liberties, and equitable justice," Attorney General Frank Murphy said, pointing out that one of the entrances to the Justice building bears a legend which reads, "Justice is the great interest of man on earth. Wherever her temple stands there is a foundation for social security, general happiness, and the improvement and progress of our race."

The post of Attorney General was created by the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789, which provided for a Supreme Court with a chief justice and five associate justices; a district court and a district judge for each of the states, and three circuit courts.

Governor Edmund Randolph of Virginia, legal adviser to President George Washington, was nominated to fill the position at an annual salary of \$1500, and occupied the office of Attorney General in the Federal capital in New York City.

With the removal of the seat of government to Washington, the various departments were housed in nondescript buildings grouped about President Washington's house. No accommodations whatever were provided for the Attorney General, who was expected to furnish his own quarters, fuel, stationery, and clerk.

In 1822 the Attorney General was furnished with his first official quarters--one room on the second floor of the old War Department building. There the office was maintained until 1839, when the Attorney General, whose staff now consisted of a clerk and a messenger, and who had acquired the nucleus of a library, moved into rooms located on the second floor of the Treasury Building.

Sixteen years later the office was removed to a brick building on the southeast corner of Fifteenth and F streets. Here it remained until 1861 when, upon the completion of the south wing of the Treasury, a suite of rooms was provided on the first floor of the new addition.

Finally, after 81 years of existence, the office of the Attorney General had expanded to such an extent, both in functions and in personnel, that it became in reality one of the executive departments of the Government.

In recognition of this fact, the Congress enacted the law of June 22, 1870, which established the Department of Justice. Today the Department of Justice--the largest law office in the world--is housed in a spacious building, opened October 1934, which occupies an entire city block between Ninth and Tenth Streets.

The affairs and activities of the Department of Justice are generally directed by the Attorney General who has, as his chief aides, the Solicitor General, the Assistant to the Attorney General, the Special Assistant Attorney General, five Assistant Attorneys General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Director of the Bureau of War Risk Litigation, the Director of the Bond and Spirits Division, the Administrative Assistant to the Attorney General, and the Assistant Solicitor General.

In addition, United States Attorneys and their assistants, United States Marshals and deputies, personnel in the field offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, field employees of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and others, are among the 9,000 persons employed by the Department of Justice.