

National

List not narrowed down

Court vacancy still open

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — President Reagan still is sifting through a list of names to fill an approaching Supreme Court vacancy and aides are seeking to discourage speculation on the possible nominee.

David Gergen, director of White House communications, told reporters Reagan has "not narrowed down" the list, as reported in some quarters, in the

search for a replacement for Justice Potter Stewart, whose retirement is effective Friday.

"It's not fruitful to speculate about names and dates," Gergen said. "It's not helpful to take the temperature every day."

Reagan's political adviser, Lyn Nofziger, has counseled the president he would make points by naming the first woman to the Supreme Court. Last October,

during the campaign, Reagan pledged to make the appointment of a woman to the high court a top priority.

Regardless of sex, the president's nominee is expected to be a political and philosophical conservative, aides indicated.

Reagan had a meeting with members of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Counties on tap today, apparently to seek more support for his proposal for block federal grants to the states, instead of categorical grants.

He also planned a Cabinet meeting to discuss immigration law revisions. Some aspects of the program relating to illegal aliens were discussed with Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo during his recent visit to Washington.

The president had no appointments Wednesday afternoon and planned to remain at the White House this weekend with a celebration of his wife Nancy's 58th birthday planned for Saturday.

With Congress away, Reagan

was preparing for the next onslaught against the House — this time to win passage of his 25 percent, 33-month, tax-cut proposal.

Rep. Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., called on Reagan at the White House Tuesday to discuss the "next step" in getting the administration's tax plan on the president's desk by Aug. 1.

"I think he certainly needs to do some lobbying," Kemp said, "and 'he's certainly willing to go all out.'"

White House aides, meantime, believe the bipartisan coalition that gave Reagan his budget victory in the House will pave the way for another triumph.

Reagan saw several congressmen Tuesday, some to thank for supporting his budget proposals. But Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., came to call with Shawn Weatherly, "Miss Universe," and Kim Seel Brede, "Miss USA," and said they did not talk business. "We discussed pulchritude," he said.

May economic indicators leave experts guessing in

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — An economy in transition still is sending conflicting signals, leaving the experts guessing about what's immediately ahead for unemployment and production.

A monthly drop in the leading economic indicators reported Tuesday by the Commerce Department triggered no alarm bells in or out of government, but also did little to establish any trends.

The index fell 1.8 percent for May — a relatively sharp drop, but less significant because it follows two months of positive movement.

The lone administration figure reacting to the figures, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, used the occasion to promote the president's economic proposals, suggesting they would provide a "boost" for the economy. Baldrige said the figures indicate the "economic recovery that began last summer has stalled."

At the same time, the department measured the pace of new business and found new orders and shipments of manufactured goods improved somewhat in May. Inventory levels, often an early warning sign of slackening demand, remained about the same with inflationary price rises accounting for most of the increase in the value of backlogs.

Although there are no bombshells in the latest

economic statistics, there isn't much good news either.

Unemployment figures to be released Tuesday are not expected to show any improvement. Among the unemployed are more than 800,000 construction workers, who, with auto workers, are among the hardest hit victims of high interest rates.

The Federal Reserve is not expected to alter a change in its present tight money policy after a July 7 meeting. Even then, any hardening of a loosening process could be a long time coming, since new policy is not formally discussed until weeks afterward.

In the background of all the current economic news are two new factors that keep growing importance — the progress of the administration's budget and tax cuts through Congress, what appears to be diminishing inflation.

Administration budget victories so far already being counted as influences driving up the price of gold and silver and, along with interest rates, making the dollar stronger in seas.

And private analysts are busy advising clients inflation has turned around and is slowing. But it remains to be seen how long it will last for that prospect to become an article of faith.

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Mobil ads claim news service story was not well researched

United Press International
 WASHINGTON — A Mobil Oil Corp. official says the firm bought newspaper ads criticizing a United Press International story that compared oil company tax rates with those paid by individuals to warn the media to research and report news accurately.

Tony DeNigro, Mobil's mana-

ger for media programs, said Tuesday that his company's multi-million-dollar campaign of advertising challenging media reports — begun 11 years ago — "has been effective" in influencing public opinion.

He said the company takes out the ads because it is convinced reporters, "not Mobil, are the ones out of step with the public."

DeNigro spoke on a panel on "Advertising as a Weapon" at a conference sponsored by Accuracy in Media, a conservative group that charges the news media is liberal-leaning.

H.L. Stevenson, UPI vice president and editor in chief, said UPI is standing by the story, written by Washington energy reporter Edward Roby. Stevenson protested the ads to Mobil and told the oil firm their quarrel was with the Department of Energy rather than the news service.

"Mobil contends the UPI story was misleading. It is the Mobil ad which is entirely misleading," Stevenson said.

He also said the oil company had mailed copies of the ad to others in the media with a cover letter from DeNigro saying the story was "erroneous."

"Mobil's rather heavy-handed attempt to discredit an accurate story ranged from calling it misleading to erroneous. It is neither," Stevenson said.

Mobil challenged a June 5 UPI story on an Energy Department report stating that the 26 biggest energy firms paid an effective U.S. tax rate of 12.6 percent in 1979, based on their net income.

The UPI story also quoted an Internal Revenue Service official as saying this would have put Mobil in the same tax bracket as a wage earner earning about \$20,000 a year.

"That's just way, way off the mark, and it made us — frankly — furious," DeNigro said.

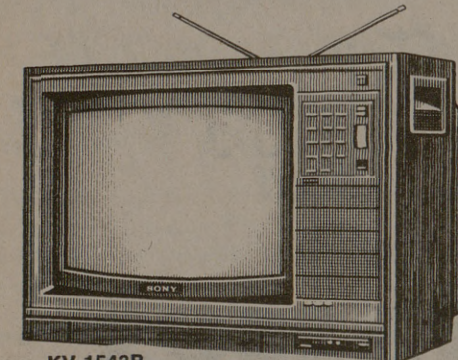
As a result, Mobil placed ads in about a dozen major newspapers, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal and The Christian Science Monitor under the title, "Won't they ever learn?"

"We said in the ad that the reporter was either confused himself, or gullible enough to accept a foolish interpretation of the report," DeNigro said. "The story added fresh fuel to the widespread belief that U.S. corporations are underpaying their taxes. They are not."

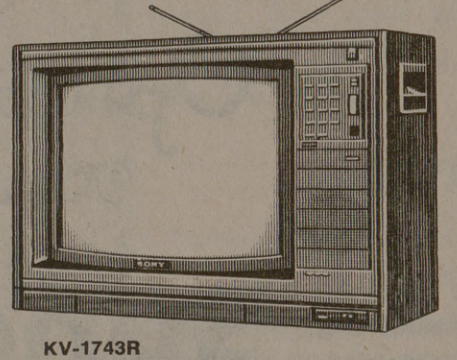
Without naming UPI, DeNigro told the conference the ad was published "in a way designed to embarrass the wire service — for not checking the real source to make sure the reporting is entirely

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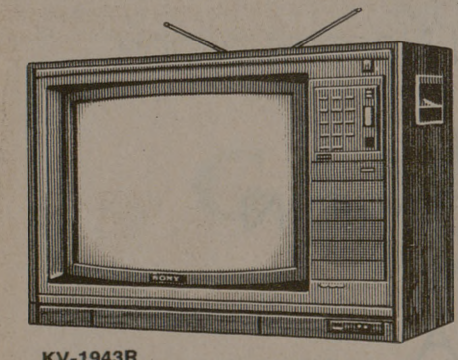
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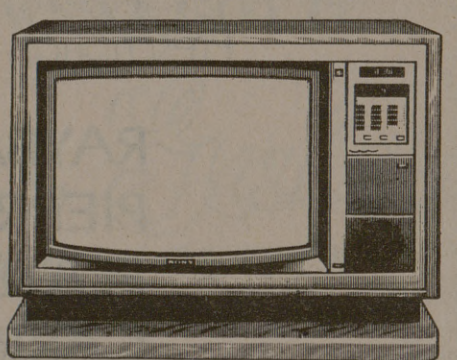
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