

THE FOUNDING OF NAFUSA: WHY AND HOW IT CAME TO BE

The office of United States Attorney was created by the Judiciary Act of 1789, preceding Congress's creation of the Department of Justice by 81 years.

In March, 1979, thirteen former United States Attorneys and one former Assistant Attorney General met in New Orleans to act on an idea that they and many of their colleagues had begun discussing even before leaving office. All were veterans of the Nixon and Ford administrations. All had held office during difficult times for United States Attorneys. Their experiences had left them firmly convinced that the office of United States Attorney is uniquely essential to the fulfillment of every president's constitutional obligation to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed," and that protecting the independence and integrity of the office they had held is a cause that transcends politics. Their deliberations in New Orleans resulted in the creation of NAFUSA, a non-profit organization whose charter reflects a non-partisan commitment to protecting and furthering the integrity, independence and effectiveness of the office.

The United States Attorneys of that era had led the forces of justice in the field through a troubled period of bitter and sometimes violent division over the Vietnam conflict, as reflected by mass protest demonstrations, draft card and flag burnings, and draft board bombings. Their duty to prosecute violations of the law by protesters made them targets of derision and hatred for many.

The Watergate scandal made matters even worse. The aftermath of the infamous Saturday Night Massacre led to a dizzying succession of Attorneys General, from Robert Bork (acting), to Elliott Richardson, to William Saxbe, and finally to Edward Levi. While storm clouds enveloped the Department of Justice, many criminal investigations and jury trials took place in a politically charged atmosphere.

Through these difficult times, and despite all of Washington's disarray, the United States Attorneys carried the flag into federal courtrooms every day, overcoming the unaccustomed obstacles and getting the government's legal and law enforcement business done. At the same time, those who served in that era were instrumental in enhancing and institutionalizing the status of United States Attorneys within the Department. They encouraged the creation of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, to ensure that their views were heard at the highest levels of the Department; and they were instrumental in the re-writing and re-codification of the previously inadequate and outdated United States Attorneys Manual, to better define the relationship between United States Attorneys' offices and the Department of Justice.

As a result of those shared experiences and the strong bonds they engendered, the United States Attorneys of the Nixon-Ford era began discussing, as their tenure drew to a close, their wish to perpetuate what had been accomplished for the historic office they cherished. It was in that spirit that the founders met in 1979. From the outset, NAFUSA was intended to honor, preserve and protect the *office* of United States Attorney, and in so doing to strengthen the bonds of friendship and professional respect among all who have held the office. Today, a thriving NAFUSA continues that effort.

The 14 founders

Raymon Child, Utah

John E. Clark, Texas

Scott P. Crampton, District of Columbia (Assistant Attorney General, Tax Division)

Allen L. Donielson, Iowa

Nathan G. Graham, Oklahoma

Ralph B. Guy, Michigan

Edward B. McDonough, Jr., Texas

William J. Mulligan, Michigan

Victor R. Ortega, New Mexico

Larry Semenza, Nevada

Dean C. Smith, Washington

James L. Treece, Colorado

Phillip M. Van Dam, Michigan

James B. Young, Indiana