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Former U.S. attorney to represent Feazell

By MIKE COPELAND
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Gary Richardson should know his adversaries well — he worked for them for three years.

The man hired to defend McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell on federal racketeering charges, Richardson compiled a 98 percent conviction rate prosecuting the government's criminal cases in Oklahoma.

Fezell, the county's chief prosecutor since 1982, was arrested Wednesday on federal charges alleging he accepted bribes from defense attorneys in order to influence criminal cases.

Richardson, a native of Caddo, Okla., was U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Oklahoma from 1982 until his resignation in September of 1984.

Once the "overall strategist lawyer" for convicted murderer Henry Lee Lucas, Richardson gained notoriety in Oklahoma for his involvement in the successful prosecution of 17 county commissioners charged with taking kickbacks from road material suppliers.

He also prosecuted Dan Draper, speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives, and House Majority Leader Joe Fitzgibbon on charges they tried to rig a race for a seat in the Oklahoma House.

The two were convicted in August 1983, but the convictions were overturned when two prosecution witnesses recanted their testi-

mony and were found guilty of perjury, according to Oklahoma newspaper records.

Richardson was accused of coaching the witnesses, but was cleared by the U.S. Justice Department after an investigation by the FBI.

Richardson said he "has known Vic Fezell long enough to know that these allegations are ridiculous — and that totals about eight years."

The two became acquainted when Fezell assisted Richardson with two lawsuits against the former Citizens National Bank of Waco, Richardson said. Fezell was then in private practice.

The lawsuits resulted in settlements of \$695,000 and \$1.3 million for the clients of Richardson and Fezell, the attorney said.

Richardson received his bachelor's degree from Bethany Nazarene College in Bethany, Okla., and his law degree from South Texas College of Law in Houston.

He ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978 and 1980 on the Republican ticket. He was assistant to the Oklahoma insurance commissioner from 1959 to 1963.

Richardson served as the assistant district attorney for Muskogee County in Oklahoma from 1975 to 1976.

The attorney said he was contacted by Fezell Wednesday morning, "right after they put the handcuffs on him." Richardson criticized the use of handcuffs during the arrest of his client.

"I was stunned," said Richardson. "I've prosecuted county commissioners and a speaker of the house, and I've never put handcuffs on any of them. I was shocked at that kind of conduct."



Richardson