Ronald K. Noble Biography

Ronald K. Noble

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Biography

Even as an international law enforcement official, Ronald K. Noble, elected Secretary-General of Interpol, the international criminal police organization, said that he knew well what it was to be a suspected criminal. As the son of an African-American G.I. and a German mother and raised mostly in Fort Dix, New Jersey, Noble was often detained by U. S. Custom officials who thought he fit the profile of an international criminal. He was mistaken for a terrorist, a drug trafficker, and even a jewel thief. For the man who was once the highest ranking law enforcement official at the Department of Treasury, and, consequently, overseer of the U. S. Customs Service, the irony was not lost.

Noble graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1979 and from the Stanford University School of Law in 1982. He began his career as a clerk for Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., former chief judge of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Noble's work led to the U. S. attorney's office in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Following a six-year tenure with the court in Philadelphia, Noble became the deputy assistant attorney general, special counsel, and chief of staff for the Department of Justice. He supervised several sections of the criminal division. In 1988, Noble was recruited to join the law school faculty of New York University, a tenured post he held despite his other activities, and in which he taught such subjects as evidence, money laundering, gun control laws, and federal criminal law.

Noble's academic life was interrupted when President Clinton nominated him in 1993 as assistant secretary of the Treasury, which is the chief law enforcement post. In 1994, Noble became the first undersecretary of the Treasury, a newly-created title, supervising the Office of the Assistant Secretary and all Treasury enforcement bureaus. In 1996 he was given the Alexander Hamilton Award, the Treasury's highest honor. Noble recommended closing Pennsylvania Avenue in order to maintain better security at the White House, and he served as the lead investigator of the ATF raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas in 1993. He returned to NYU for four years, and then Attorney General Janet Reno nominated him for the Interpol post.