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FILE ON

BOLDT-OBIT
LAKEWOOD, WASH.

Retired U.S. District Court Judge George H. Boldt, a colorful jurist who presided over a number of historic trials during some 25 years on the bench, died Sunday night at the age of 80.

Boldt died at the American Lake Veterans Administration Hospital near Lakewood, Wash., after a long illness, a hospital spokesman said.

A 1974 decision by Boldt changed the fishing industry in Washington state. It was his interpretation of an 1855 treaty between Indian tribes and the U.S. government that resulted in a ruling that Indian fishermen are entitled to half the state's salmon and steelhead harvest each year.

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Boldt also served as chairman of the Federal Pay Board under President Nixon and presided over the 1970 trial of the "Seattle Seven" involving defendants charged with rioting at the federal courthouse.

In that case, Boldt repeatedly warned the anti-war activists not to disrupt his courtroom. Then, saying he was guided by "divine providence," he declared a mistrial and sentenced the defendants to six-month jail terms for contempt.

In a 1959 case, Boldt called former Teamsters Union leader Dave Beck a common criminal, saying he had plundered his union, his friends and his country. Boldt sentenced the labor leader to five years in prison and fined him \$60,000 for income tax evasion.

Boldt also castigated mobster Mickey Cohen when he sent him to prison for income tax evasion after a lengthy trial in Los Angeles where he served as a visiting judge. Boldt also presided at the extortion trials of gangsters Franki Carbo and Blinky Palermo in Los Angeles.

He was often the object of blunt criticism himself. At his Senate confirmation hearings for the Federal Pay Board post, Boldt was called "incompetent" by Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wisc., and "an idiot" by former labor leader Leonard Woodcock.

Boldt was born in Chicago on Dec. 28, 1903, the son of a Swedish immigrant who came to this country at the age of 18. The family later moved to Stevensville, Mont.

He earned his law degree at the University of Montana in 1926 and moved to Washington state in 1928.

During World War II, Boldt served from 1942 to 1945 with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), forerunner of the CIA.

He was appointed to the U.S. District Court in Tacoma in 1953 by President Eisenhower and became chief judge of the Western Washington District in 1971.