

Garrison States Hopes That D.A. Career Over

But Suggests Further Efforts Possible

By PAUL ATKINSON

Unpredictable Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison Thursday said he personally hopes he has reached the end of his career, but also suggested there are other grounds in his fight to retain the DA's job.

Garrison was interviewed at the Civil Courts Building shortly after Civil District Court Judge Thomas A. Early threw out his suit against the apparent Democratic runoff victory of challenger Harry Connick. As he was speaking, the wheels were turning to appeal the verdict to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeal.

Judge Early surprised some court viewers by observing that "it gives the court no great joy to ring down the curtain on the career of the colorful and illustrious DA."

Asked if this were indeed the end, Garrison answers, "I personally hope so. But I can't say yet."

"I have said before, the best thing that could possibly happen to me would be to lose so I would be free to go into private practice. But you aren't always free to do what you want to do. The responsibility of leadership to an organization requires you to think of the men and women in your organization."

Connick, surrounded by numerous wellwishers including his brothers, William and Paul, who embraced him almost tearfully after the court session ended, called it "a very fair decision."

"We felt all along it was no justification in filing the suit," said Connick. "The judge reached the proper verdict."

APPEALS QUESTION

Questioned as to whether he is concerned or worried about further appeals, Connick said, "I am confident we won the election. I was confident that we would win this phase of the proceedings, I am confident we will win in the court of appeal and the Supreme Court."

"But I am concerned about it."

I think these accusations that have been leveled against the commissioners and the people who voted are very strong. They are without substance in my opinion and I am naturally concerned, though. I would like for this election to be over — there's a general election we want to get working on."

Asked about Judge Early's remark about presiding over the end of a colorful and illustrious career, Connick's attorney, state Sen. Fritz Windhorst, chimed in, "The judge did not bring an end to that career. The voters did that — remind the judge if you see him the voters did that."

Connick said it was people in the community who really did it. "I am grateful to them for helping me do it," he said.

Windhorst lashed out at Garrison's contention that he had no commissioner, because he had no organization. "That's ridiculous," said Windhorst. "He didn't want to get any; he didn't care because he was arrogant enough to believe he could win without them."

Garrison resumed, "But in the final analysis, what I think doesn't matter because if my lawyers pursue the normal course of election cases, the election contest is just essentially begun. It's in the Supreme Court of Louisiana that particular Sugar Bowl is played."

'PERSONAL OPINION'

Garrison said, "My personal inclination is such that I am not unhappy with Judge Early's decision. But that's my personal opinion. In other words in this case, I am forced to be two people in this case — Jim Garrison, an attorney, and Jim Garrison, an attorney who happens to be district attorney."

Asked if he believes he can win an appeal, Garrison replied, "It is impossible to predict. And I am not trying to be coy."

"There are too many imponderables if you heard the judge cite cases on either side. There are cases to support either position. It depends on the unspoken predisposition of the Supreme Court judges. That's where it is going to be resolved."

Garrison said he was not surprised at Judge Early's decision. "It was generally predictable," he said. "A fine judge wrote an honest opinion but now it is a question of whether my lawyers agree with him. I don't say I was surprised at the decision."