

GERTLER BACKS NON-ENDORSING

T-P 10/9/69
Says Effort Made to
Force DA Choice

Mayoral candidate David Gertler said Wednesday afternoon that "vested interests" are trying to force the candidates for mayor in the Nov. 8 Democratic primary to endorse a candidate for district attorney, and that he is not going to give in to the pressure.

He reiterated his position of non-endorsement and said he had given the matter long and thoughtful consideration.

After reading a prepared two-and-a-half page announcement, Gertler said he will not endorse a candidate for DA even if he gets into the second primary.

He seemed to indicate by his praise of DA Jim Garrison, however, that if he did endorse anyone, it would be Garrison.

Gertler said, "The present district attorney has established a very healthy tradition of independence in the DA's office. To break with that tradition would be to give in too quickly to those long-established forces that have controlled New Orleans.

"It is unfortunate that the vested interests who control one of our most important media and who have already endorsed a candidate for district attorney now seek to force mayoral candidates to break with that important tradition of independence and to make this

race political in support of their chosen man."

REFERS TO T-P

Gertler said afterwards he was referring to The Times-Picayune Publishing Corp. and the endorsement by its two papers of Harry Connick for DA.

He said that the vested interests, "under the guise of leadership, seek to re-establish the very political union they have sought in the past to separate."

"True leadership," said Gertler, "must be based on the capacity to withstand pressure from any special interest group."

Gertler said he has concluded that the best interests of the city will be served by his not endorsing a candidate for DA.

He charged that other mayoral candidates who have endorsed candidates for DA have done so for political reasons.

He added that his reason for not endorsing was not politically motivated.

SEES CHECKS, BALANCES

"Under our charter and the laws of Louisiana," Gertler said, "the mayor and the DA have the effect of checks and balances that was the intent of the Constitution of our country.

"I further feel that since this election is highly charged by personal reactions to a single case (the Clay Shaw trial), the decision should be left to the people."

He said any effort to involve the DA's office in the mayoral race would be a "serious challenge to the better government New Orleans so badly needs."

Gertler said that had there not been a Clay Shaw trial, there probably would not now be any pressure on the mayoral candidates to endorse a candidate for DA.