

Petre Supports Connick for DA

Councilman John J. Petre, a candidate for mayor in the Nov. 8 Democratic primary, last night endorsed Harry Connick as a candidate for district attorney, declaring he felt Connick "will make a strong and effective DA."

Petre thus became the first mayoral candidate to announce support of a candidate opposing incumbent Jim Garrison for the district attorney's chair. He called Connick a man "with the ability and the determination to use the full authority of that office to forcefully combat crime in New Orleans."

COUNCILMAN PETRE said he believes candidates

for mayor who are not taking a position in the district attorney race "are doing so as a matter of expediency, and not for any other reason." He said they are "afraid to face the issue, as many of the community leaders are afraid."

The complete text of Petre's statement of endorsement follows:

"After carefully studying the candidates for the office of district attorney, I have decided to support Harry Connick, a man who I believe has the ability and the determination to use the full authority of that office to forcefully

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combat crime in New Orleans.

"I AM CONVINCED that he can operate the office more effectively than it has been run for the past several years.

"I feel that the candidates for mayor who are not taking a position are doing so as a matter of political expediency, and not for any other reason. They are afraid to face the issue, as many of the community leaders are afraid.

"I feel, therefore, that it is incumbent upon me, as a mayoralty candidate who is sincerely interested in what is best for New Orleans, and not what is most politically expedient, to lead the way and take a position in the DA race.

"IF WE ARE really con-

cerned about doing something about the very serious problem of crime in New Orleans, then we must be concerned about who the best man is to run the DA's office.

"The one man most influential in reducing the crime rate in our city is the district attorney. No one, from the man on the street on up, can stand by and say he isn't going to take an active interest in this vital post.

"The pretext about the separation of the office of mayor and the office of DA has no validity. I am endorsing Mr. Connick because I feel that he is honest and able, and I am convinced that he will make a strong and effective DA.

"WITH THE PRESENT crime rate, it would be shirking of duty for a prospective mayor not to take a keen interest in the DA race. I am not asking for anything from Mr. Connick in return.

"I am impressed with Mr. Connick's fine work as chief of the criminal division in the U.S. attorney's office, and his successful record of prosecution of narcotics, tax, mail fraud and bank embezzling cases. He has the distinction of having been commended by FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover.

"I believe in his assertion that organized crime, bail bond jumping and the rising crime rate in New Orleans are all intimately related, and I approve of his determination to set realistic bonds and to effect swift prosecution.

"I further approve of his plan to set up an organized crime division in the DA's office and to vigorously prosecute such organized crime activities as gambling, narcotics, loan sharking, and to fight against gangster influence in legitimate businesses."