

Mayor's Aide Declines Comment on Word He Has Been Dismissed

Philip M. Baptiste, the only Negro aide to Mayor Victor H. Schiro, Friday night declined to comment on reports that he had been fired by the mayor for political reasons.

According to reports at City Hall, Baptiste was dismissed by the mayor as the result of his presentation of a mayor's certificate of merit to Harry Connick, a candidate for district attorney in opposition to Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

The presentation was made by Baptiste at a dinner given in honor of Connick by his supporters.

"I am not ready to make a

statement about what the situation is," Baptiste said when asked if it was true that he had been dismissed.

"Nothing as far as I am concerned is official," he said.

Baptiste was appointed as an aide to the mayor May 5, 1968.

Orleans Can't Keep Garrison, Connick Says

New Orleans "cannot afford (Jim) Garrison for another four years if we are going to survive in our battle with crime," Harry Connick said last night in asking for support in his effort to unseat the incumbent district attorney.

Connick was honored at a testimonial dinner sponsored by the Concerned Citizens Against Crime. He will run against Jim Garrison in the Nov. 8 primary election.

Present to lend their support to the candidate were his attorney wife, the former Anita Livingston; Sheriff Alwynn J. Cronvich of Jefferson Parish, State Rep. Ernest "Dutch" Morial and Attorney Moise Steeg. Morial is permanent chairman of the CCAC, which presented the former assistant U.S. attorney with an award for "faithful service to the fair administration of justice."

Connick also was presented a certificate of merit award by the office of Mayor Victor H. Schiro through Mayor's aide Philip M. Baptiste.

"I am prepared to set aside my private practice of law and become a full-time district attorney," Connick said. Garrison's office "is the worst in the history of this city," he added.

Connick is "just the man who will temper law enforcement with justice," Cronvich said. Steeg said Connick represents what law-abiding citizens of the community stand for.

Presenting the CCAC award, Rep. Morial said Connick is "uniquely qualified to champion the cause of justice." He is qualified as a citizen and lawyer to serve this city, he added.

"With your help, we can cause people to respect the law . . . and with God's help, justice will be returned to New Orleans," said Connick.