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Skolnick strikes out

Judge Otto Kerner of the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals has conducted himself with dignity and restraint in the face of charges made by legal researcher Sherman H. Skolnick that he has been guilty of judicial impropriety.

Skolnick charged on Dec. 2 that Kerner had received an "apparent gift" of $50,000 worth of stock from the Civic Center Bank and Trust Co. and the Civic Capital Corp. Skolnick said that a subsequent court opinion by Kerner after the "gift of stock" gave the "appearance of impropriety."

JUDGE OTTO KERNER

When Skolnick made his charge The Sun-Times contacted the bank president, Harold Stout. Stout said Kerner had paid for the stock with his own funds.

On Tuesday Kerner exploded Skolnick's charges by making public his personal financial affairs to establish that he had sufficient funds to buy the stock in question. He presented a copy of a cashier's check as proof of purchase.

In the past Skolnick has struck pay dirt with similar charges involving stock from the same bank that led to the resignation of two Illinois Supreme Court judges. This time, however, Skolnick struck out. U.S. District Court Judge Edwin A. Robson, on Tuesday, dismissed Skolnick's charges against Kerner as "reckless" and "sensational libelous accusations."

Judge Kerner has been subjected to considerable personal distress, which he has borne well. He has said he would not press charges of libel against Skolnick. Skolnick should bear this in mind as well as Judge Robson's scathing denunciation of his charges against Kerner the next time he embarks on his crusade against the judiciary.