

Hanrahan lawyers' public fees

By Art Pelacque

The three lawyers who represented former State's Atty. Edward V. Hanrahan in the Black Panther trial shared more than \$63,000 in public funds for handling a civil case given to them by Hanrahan as state's attorney, a Sun-Times investigation has disclosed.

The \$63,300 paid to attorneys Leonard R. Hartenfeld, Camillo F. Volini and John O. Tuohy from 1970 to 1972 came from Hanrahan's contingency fund.

The three were retained as outside counsel by Hanrahan in litigation challenging Northwestern University's exemption from real estate taxes, even though three members of Hanrahan's own staff also were assigned to the case.

The three outside lawyers billed the county for a total of 1,800 hours work on the case at \$35 an hour. The litigation proved to be a costly exercise in futility. The Illinois Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of Northwestern's tax exemption. That marked the fourth time since 1873 that NU had survived a tax challenge in the top state court or the U.S. Supreme Court.

The payments were made to the outside lawyers at a time when Hanrahan was complaining publicly that his office was not receiving sufficient funds to attract and keep top-flight staff members.

Hanrahan hired the three lawyers as his personal counsel after he was indicted in 1971 on a charge of conspiring to obstruct justice in connection with the Dec. 4, 1969, raid on a Black Panther Party apartment on the West Side that resulted in two deaths.

Hanrahan was acquitted in October, 1972, following a 3½-month trial. The following month he lost his bid for re-election as state's attorney.

And early in 1973 he returned to private law practice — sharing office space with the same three lawyers, Hartenfeld, Volini and Tuohy at 111 W. Washington. Last August, Hanrahan moved his law office to 39 S. LaSalle.

In an interview, Hanrahan defended his re-



Former State's Atty. Edward V. Hanrahan with attorney Leonard R. Hartenfeld (left).

tion of the three lawyers in the Northwestern case and said there was no conflict between that action and his subsequent hiring of the three to defend him against criminal charges in the Panther case.

"That (NU) case was an extremely complicated one involving millions of dollars in tax revenues," Hanrahan said. "The Northwestern case was generated long before the other (Panther) case."

Hanrahan said he retained Hartenfeld and his associates in the NU case because of Hartenfeld's proven expertise in tax cases.

Furthermore, said Hanrahan, he considered the three men underpaid at \$35 an hour. The former state's attorney added that he personally spent long hours on the NU case, working with the other lawyers, because he considered it of prime importance.

Hanrahan, a Democrat who is seeking his

done for Hanrahan during the long trial was worth at least \$65,000.

Several of Hanrahan's co-defendants in the Panther trial still are holding moonlighting jobs in an effort to pay off their lawyers. Among them are three Chicago policemen — Sgt. Daniel Groth, Patrolman James Davis and Investigator George Jones — who gained part-time jobs as racetrack security men.

Volini, in an interview, said he continued to work on the Northwestern case even after he was retained by Hanrahan in the Panther case.

"But I never billed the county for any work done on the Northwestern case after September, 1971," Volini said. "I didn't want any reflection on Ed."

Hanrahan was indicted in August, 1971.

In the Northwestern case, Hanrahan's office sought to collect taxes on Loop property owned by the university and leased as a parking facility. But the state Supreme Court upheld the university's unique state-granted corporate charter which says NU's "property, of whatever kind or description . . . shall be forever free from taxation for any and all purposes."

The former assistants of Hanrahan — James Rooney, Paul Biebel and Arthur Belkind — put in extensive work on the NU litigation in addition to that carried out by Hanrahan's outside trio of lawyers.

After losing the case before the Illinois Supreme Court, it was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court by Hanrahan's office. But that court declined to hear it.

