

CLEAR OWN HOUSE, LAWYERS TOLD

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Garrison Tactics Rapped

By HARRY MOSKOS

HONOLULU (AP) — Three prominent lawyers say the law profession should put its own house in order to preserve its prestige.

W. O. Shafer of Odessa, Tex., immediate past president of the Texas State Bar, mentioned tactics used by New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

"Garrison has flooded the news media with a number of accusations but has produced a rather limited quantum of proof, and much of it of a doubtful nature," Shafer said yesterday during a panel discussion on criminal trial publicity and public relations during an American Bar Assn. session.

"HE (GARRISON) had managed to provoke a national television show to question his motives and the veracity of his case.

"I do not make a judgment of whether he is right or wrong. I do make a comment that he has not done a great deal for public relations in the legal profession up to this time."

Another speaker, John J. Stamos, states attorney for Cook County, Ill., said, "We have an obligation to put our own house in order—prosecution, defense and court."

THE THIRD member of the panel, attorney Morris A. Shenker of St. Louis, Mo., said, "We cannot breed contempt for our orderly system by resorting to tactics unworthy of the standards set by the bar and expect public respect."

Shenker said "capable, intelligent lawyers shy away from handling the unpopular cases for fear that their names will be linked through guilt by association in the mirror of public opinion."

"It is indeed ironical," Shenker added, "that part of the fault rests with attorneys themselves."

IN THE TRIAL of a sensational case, Shenker said, almost inevitably either the prosecutor or defense counsel will consult with the press and

do whatever else is necessary to have his case viewed favorably by the community.

"When this occurs, the other side, of necessity, goes to the press in order to prevent the barrage of unfavorable comment induced," he said. "The end result can only mean that our orderly courtroom procedure will be reduced to a shamble.

"The case ceases to be tried by a jury of 12, but rather is tried by an arena of gaping, gaffawing and unsavory spectators."

SHENKER ADDED that he

believes "until prosecutors and defense attorneys learn to say only two words—no comment—the plight in which we find ourselves will continue."

Stamos said his office has had its differences with the news media and noted "this is proper."

"If both our office and the news media existed without occasional collision it would mean neither our office nor the representatives of the news media were performing their duties."

He said a "cozy relationship" between news media and a public officer or office "breeds an evil and dangerous climate."