D.A. Violated 'Sacred Rule,' Connick Says

District attorney candidate Harry Connick told a high school assembly today that Jim Garrison "violated a sacred precept of his office when he knowingly prosecuted a man although his evidence was clearly not good enough to obtain a conviction."

Connick, addressing Metairie Park Country Day students, in an apparent reference to the Clay Shaw case, said, "When a district attorney accuses someone, he must be fair and he must have the evidence. To do less goes against the very grain of our democratic society."

CONNICK ADDED: "I am very sorry to say that we have all been the victims of a district attorney who has placed his own desires ahead of the good of the people of New Orleans."

The DA candidate told the students that Garrison has often indicted but rarely convicted. He said Garrison has at various times accused the criminal court judges, the Legislature and Clay Shaw of misdeeds but has convicted none of these.

Connick charged that Garrison has "enjoyed a seven-year reign of fear."

He told the students that Gov. John J. McKeithen has said publicly he would not want to cross Jim Garrison. "Every day, responsible businessmen tell me they are glad I'm running against Garrison but they are afraid to publicly support me," Connick said.

HE ALSO PRAISED John J. Petre, the first mayoral candidate to endorse Connick.

"John Petre told me he feared how Garrison might react against him if Garrison were returned to office, but Petre said he felt the endorsement of me was a matter of principle," Connick said.

Connick said if he is elected, he will introduce a program of prosecution, rehabilitation and education into the DA's office.

He said he would prosecute professional criminals, fight for rehabilitation programs for first offenders and develop educational programs for young people "who may be considering trying their first pill or marijuana cigarette."