

Controversial Florida Lawman Defeated, Faces Further Inquiry

By Martin Dyckman

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Lake County Sheriff Willis McCall, Florida's most controversial lawman for most of his 28 years in office, was defeated by a Republican challenger Tuesday.

McCall, who had been suspended by Gov. Reubin Askew, trailed former Detroit policeman Guy Bliss 11,895 to 13,877 votes in complete but unofficial returns.

McCall symbolized an almost legendary terror to blacks in the rural, citrus-growing county near Orlando. Most sources attribute his defeat to the effects of his indictment and suspension at Askew's hands.

McCall was acquitted in August of a second-degree murder charge brought by Askew over the death of a black prisoner in McCall's jail, and outpolled three other Democrats for renomination in the Sep-

tember primary election. He remained under suspension, however, as Askew called for an investigation of other charges against him.

Bliss, meanwhile, waged a vigorous campaign in which he called McCall "the Bunker of Lake County politics" and "a 17th-century character."

Had McCall won, it would have taken a new suspension order for Askew to keep him from resuming office in January. A sharp debate in the state Senate, which reviews suspensions, would have followed, and there was a question as to whether Askew legally could oust McCall from a new term for charges dating from an old one.

McCall's problems are not over with his defeat. Askew said today the investigation in which the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice reportedly is cooperating, will continue.

Among the charges is the alleged violation of the civil rights of a mentally retarded youth who was confined 14 years in a mental hospital after confessing to rape, and reports that McCall illegally carried a gun, while under suspension, during his murder trial.