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Wrone says critics failed in Kennedy investigation

Left wing critics of the Warren Commission report have "thrown a pall of crazed theory about events at Dallas," according to David Wrone, a history professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Wrone, who spoke at the UW-SP assassination symposium Friday afternoon, said left wing critics have distorted the truth about John Kennedy's assassination by trying to make facts fit their ideology.

Civilization has built criticism into the system, Wrone said, in order to help "get a better grip on reality." But criticism malfunctioned in the Kennedy assassination investigation and consequently, "the picture of Kennedy's assassination remains as

cloudy today as it was 12 years ago," he said.

The left has "stood up" in crises throughout history, but people like Mark Lane have distorted facts to promote books and appeal to other members of the left, Wrone said.

One left wing theory, he said, is that the assassination was the work of the CIA, the Mafia, organized crime or any combination of the three. The left fears that a good investigation will lead to Castro's Cuba, Wrone added, but there is no supporting evidence.

Right wing critics have been equally detrimental, according to Wrone, because they base insight on ideology and insist that the assassination was part of a Communist plot. But "there is

no red thread" in the evidence, he said.

"Sinister" critics theorize that big business was responsible for the assassination because "Kennedy was going radical on them," Wrone said, adding that books published by "sinister" critics have been connected to the intelligence agencies of eight countries.

It is only the responsible critics whose careful research and presentation will "establish a fund of knowledge to help ward off this confusion," Wrone said.

Warren Commission supporters also are at fault by "distorting the facts and the name of scholarship." Supporters, he said, include bureaucrats, academic people and members of the national media. Their belief is that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, assassinated the president.

People reading books written on the assassination must be critical, Wrone said. They must make sure the author makes sense, that he doesn't provide facts to fit his theory and that he doesn't devise a "devil" in order to prove guilt.

Readers must beware of forced and false connections, especially when the book is written around a theory of who did it, Wrone said. Assertions should be double checked and readers must make sure isolated facts are not distorted by omitting related events.

Finally, he said, when asked to choose between a simple and complex explanation, readers should remember that the simple explanation usually is correct.