

# Women-Juror Law Hit in DA-Probe Defense

By PATSY SIMS

Louisiana's dearth of women jurors is now a factor in defense attorneys' maneuvers against Jim Garrison's assassination probe charges.

Lawyers for both Clay Shaw and National Broadcasting Co. reporter William Sheridan have included the exclusion of women from grand and petit juries here in their moves to have charges dropped against their clients.

The first motion was knocked down yesterday.

The motion to quash Sheridan's subpoena to appear be-

One of a Series

fore the grand jury, overruled by Criminal Court Judge Bernard J. Bagert, called the exclusion of women "violation of the equal protection and due process clauses of the U. S. and Louisiana constitutions."

Sheridan's lawyers hit Louisiana's law that women must volunteer to be called for jury duty as "unconstitutional in that the same requirement is not made of male citizens."

Sheridan has been charged by Garrison with bribing his key witness, Perry R. Russo of Baton Rouge.

IN A MOTION, filed some weeks ago and then returned

to them by Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr., Shaw's attorneys also included the absence of women from grand and petit juries among the reasons their client's indictment should be thrown out.

They are expected to include the provision in an amended motion to be filed later this summer.

F. Irvin Dymond, Shaw's leading counsel, told The States-Item:

"I see no reason why this exclusion should be granted to women. Historically, I suppose basis for the exemption was the necessity for women to remain in the home. But nowadays, courts are taking hourly wage earners, commission workers and others who are deprived of their incomes by jury service.

"Certainly, a woman is not needed in the home now anymore than the breadwinner, so I don't think that reason is valid. Besides, having women on juries gives you a better cross-section of your peers, before which you should be tried."

JUDGE BAGERT based his decision at the Sheridan hearing on Hoyt vs. Florida, in which the Supreme Court of Florida upheld that state's law, similar to Louisiana's, because "it is not constitutionally impermissible for a state to conclude that a woman should be relieved of jury service

unless she herself determines that such service is consistent with her own special responsibilities."

But some lawyers charge that womanless juries deprive a defendant of his right to be tried by a cross-section of his community, guaranteed last summer when the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals here overturned the rape convictions of Clifton Poret and Edgar Labat.

An increasing number of jurists, legislators and lawyers here are anxious to see Louisiana pass a statute making jury duty as mandatory for women as it is for men.

The States-Item Women's Department, the Criminal Court judges and the Jury Commission have lauded a campaign jointly to get more women to volunteer for jury duty.

It has been pointed out that if a number of women volunteer for jury duty, the frequency of calls for men will be lessened.

In Orleans Parish, a woman must go to the Criminal Court Bldg., 2700 Tulane Ave., Room 286, and in St. Bernard to the office of Clerk of Court Sidney Torres, St. Bernard Courthouse, Chalmette, to volunteer.

In Jefferson, she must send a written request to serve to Clerk of Court William M. Justice Jr., in care of the Gretna Courthouse, Gretna, La. She will be sent a questionnaire, which must be returned by mail to his office.