

Ex-Klan Figure to Defend Ray

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — The office of J. B. Stoner said today that Stoner, an attorney with past connections with the Ku Klux Klan and the National States Rights party, will represent James Earl Ray in his fight for a new trial in the slaying of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A spokesman, Edward S. Fields, said Stoner is en route by automobile to Nashville where he plans to confer with Ray tomorrow morning.

RAY WAS imprisoned in Nashville after pleading guilty in Memphis to King's slaying and receiving a 99-year sentence.

Fields said Stoner was hired to help Ray change his plea to innocent and to defend him if he wins a new trial.

Fields said Ray contacted Stoner shortly after Ray's arrest in London and there has been correspondence between the two since.

Fields said Stoner visited Ray in Memphis and is scheduled to visit him again tomorrow morning.

STONER, who was a vice presidential candidate for the National States Rights party, has in the past styled himself

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as "imperial wizard of the Christian Knights of the Klan."

He once published a Klan paper in Louisville, Ky., and Atlanta and authored a book entitled "The Gospel of Jesus Christ Versus the Jews."

Stoner also was involved in litigation in Montgomery, Ala., over outbreaks of violence during the "freedom rides."