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FREDERICK FURTH
Attorney is concerned

Defenders of Protecting News Sources

A San Francisco attorney yesterday announced the formation of the Citizens Right to News Committee.

Its purpose: To protect a newspaperman's right to protect the confidential sources of news.

Frederick P. Furth, San Francisco attorney and chairman of the national, non-political group, said the founders were concerned because the issue is closely related to the public's right to know.

'CORNERSTONE'

"An informed electorate is the cornerstone of a free society," he told a press conference in his office in the Russ Building.

He said a recent Supreme Court decision had "at best left unclear the extent to which sources must be disclosed and at worst eliminated the confidential privilege altogether."

On the group's board of directors, besides Furth, are Richard L. Gilbert Jr., of Santa Barbara, a publishing consultant; and three other lawyers — James F. Fitzpatrick of Washington, D.C., Robert L. Bluemle of Phoenix, and William C. Barnard of Indianapolis.

CENTER

Furth said the group had asked the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara to examine the whole question.

He also said the committee hopes to testify next week before a Senate hearing, and to solicit public support for its campaign.

"We have the great virtue of being a limited-issue, self-terminating committee," Furth said. "Once the reporter is assured confidentiality, we will disband."

"As (Judge) Learned Hand once said, 'The hand that rules the press . . . rules the country.' That hand cannot belong to a prosecuting attorney, a grand jury, or any limb of government. That hand must belong to the people and their right to know."