

Connick Blames DA in Tait Case

District Attorney candidate Harry Connick said today Michael Francis Tait would not have been sent to Parish Prison if DA Jim Garrison "had ever exhibited even one degree of concern about the weaknesses of our penal system and criminal justice."

Connick referred to the case of Tait, the 21-year-old law student who says he was beaten and sexually assaulted during a 10-day stay in Parish Prison.

Connick made the statement today at a rally at 8400 Sycamore St.

THE CANDIDATE said the DA's office could have let Tait out on recognizance or released him under the committing magistrate system rather than "putting a young college student in a cell block with hardened criminals."

Connick charged "there is a parallel between the case of Tait and the 1,100 convicted criminals who have skipped bail bonds in the last three years of the Garrison administration.

"It is an ironic comment on Garrison's sense of justice that

a college student accused of a minor offense goes to jail while 1,100 burglars, armed robbers, child molesters and rapists are set free on skimpy bonds commit more crimes, are arrested again and set free on more skimpy bonds."

CONNICK SAID Garrison is now promising "an investigation of conditions in Parish Prison but the investigation should have begun seven years ago when Garrison was first elected."

The candidate charged Garrison has never appeared before the City Council or any elected body to complain about conditions in Parish Prison.

"I promise that if I am elected I will work every day to do something about Parish Prison and to be certain there are no more Michael Francis Tait cases," Connick said.

Also appearing at the meeting was John J. Petre, mayoral candidate, who said "evidence is accumulating every day that the DA's race is too important for mayoral candidates not to take a position on it."

Petre, who has endorsed Connick, particularly chided candidate James E. Fitzmorris Jr. for holding aloof from the DA's race, saying Fitzmorris is "tiptoeing through the tulips on the DA's election."

Nixon