

Haggerty Career In Hands of Court

The controversial career of Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr. is in the hands of the Louisiana Supreme Court today as it considers his removal from the bench.

The New Orleans Criminal District judge — who presided at the Clay L. Shaw conspiracy trial — was one of 13 persons arrested in a 1969 vice raid on a party in a motel room. Haggerty said it was a bachelor party, and the 56-year-old judge was declared innocent in district court of soliciting for prostitution, obscenity and resisting arrest.

The high court yesterday heard arguments from attorneys for Haggerty and the Louisiana Judiciary Commission. The commission is asking for Haggerty's removal from the bench.

ROBERT J. Zibilich, Haggerty's attorney, told the Supreme Court that if the judge is removed from the bench, it should be done by the people who elected him.

Some of the activities of the judge may be immoral and may shake the confidence of the public "but it may not affect his ability," said Zibilich.

He asked the court to overturn the recommendation of the commission, which conducted six days of closed hearing into the Haggerty matter last May.

IN JUNE, the commission released a report, saying that Haggerty associated with race-horse bookies, was frequently absent from the bench and disability caused by excessive

drinking all contribute to evidence that the judge's "willful misconduct" relates to his official duties.

Robert LeCorgne, attorney for the commission, dealt with at length during the hearing the relation of the judge to the motel party, and arrangements for stag films to be shown.

"They (the films) leave nothing to the imagination," LeCorgne told the High Court.

"WHEN THE judge took office he took an oath to uphold the laws of Louisiana. And two types of cases he may be obliged to hear are cases relating to obscenity and gambling," the attorney said.

LeCorgne also mentioned Haggerty's association with women at the party who the attorney said were prostitutes brought there by the judge; his known dealings with a hand-book operator; and his being seen by authorities coming out of a dice game.

But Zibilich countered that even if any one of those charges were proved "it would not be denounced by the constitution. They may violate the canon of judicial ethics. But they are not in themselves violations of the (state) constitution."

HE SAID the judge has a record of being competent, industrious and fair-minded and handles his workload speedily.

Justice Albert Tate of Ville Platte was absent from the Supreme Court bench at the hearing. Tate recused himself because he is a member of the commission.