



CHARLES R. WARD

Ward Enters DA's Race on Note of Change

Declaring that changes "are needed to restore confidence in the district attorney's office and to return to the rule of law and reason," Charles R. Ward, former executive assistant to District Attorney Jim Garrison, today announced his candidacy for the DA's post.

He claimed "many questionable practices have taken place in the last two years" which he said must be eliminated.

The complete text of Ward's announcement follows:

"IT HAS NEVER been more evident than now that a change is needed in the district attorney's office — that a new district attorney should be elected for the parish of

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Orleans — that there is a need to return to reason and justice.

"Because I am the best qualified man to be district attorney I am announcing my candidacy for that office. I have seven years experience as an assistant district attorney in what once was one of the finest offices in the history of the city of New Orleans. I know what changes are necessary to restore confidence in the district attorney's office and to return to the rule of law and reason.

"Although there were unquestionably some major achievements by the present district attorney's office, there are many questionable practices which have taken place during the last two years which must be eliminated. The district attorney's office must be re-directed along the course of solid law enforcement and away from political expediency for personal gain. To accomplish that I propose these changes.

"I PROMISE that there will be tough and vigorous prosecution of criminals for the crime charged and elimination of the current practice of coddling criminals by accepting easy pleas of guilty to less serious crimes. Now that there are ten judges in Criminal Court it is not necessary that the district attorney's office continue to bargain with criminals. It is time for a tougher prosecution program.

"There are too many suspended sentences given to criminals who are freed and return to the same neighborhoods to commit new crimes. I believe in rehabilitation, and there must be rehabilitation and training of criminals. To confine a man and let him sit idle is shameful neglect of duty. But I believe in rehabilitation during incarceration, utilizing minimum security institutions and halfway houses so that young offenders are not returned to the same environment. A minimum security institution is needed in New Orleans and should be located near the Criminal Courts Building."

"I do not believe that bail bonds are a necessary evil and I believe they can be entirely eliminated. Accused persons who are local residents may be released on their own recognizance bond; but even better, on local property bonds if they deserve release at all. In other cases where an accused has the funds to pay for a bond, the Clerk of Court's office may be used to receive the bond premium. The district attorney's office should not have to depend upon receipts from bond forfeitures and they should not receive these receipts.

"PORNOGRAPHY DISTRIBUTION and sales have increased to an alarming point, particularly the sale of pornography to minors. The complete absence of any prosecution by Jim Garrison and

his staff only encourages pornography. I promise to try pornography cases in Criminal Court and to make use of injunctions in Civil Court to stop the increasing flow of pornographic literature.

"The grand jury system has been abused by Jim Garrison's office, particularly in the use and abuse of the grand jury during the Kennedy assassination investigation. The practice of the district attorney's office must be changed so that any witness, including any defendant, will have the right to appear before the grand jury. I also believe that a defendant should have the right to be accompanied by his attorney. And I will always permit any reliable, reputable person who calls for a grand jury investigation the privilege of testifying before the jury.

"The police officers assigned to the district attorney's office should be re-assigned to serve all of the people of the city of New Orleans. Today they serve only as the personal servants of Jim Garrison — as his chauffeur, as his bodyguard and as his valet. These 13 police officers with the 13 cars presently assigned to protect and promote Jim Garrison should be placed on patrol to protect and serve all of the people of New Orleans.

"PRIOR TO THE Kennedy investigation, crimes of vice and narcotics were at an all-time low. There was much work to be done but the record was good. Today, organized crime is a problem and there must be constant efforts made to reduce vice and narcotics.

"I will create a perma-

nent section of the District Attorney's staff to combat organized crime — one that has the very serious duty of fighting vice and narcotics and which will cooperate with all other state agencies in the battle. This department will not be used to sweep charges under the rug or to defend the district attorney's office. I will expect this department to act vigorously, using the grand jury as an investigative body, to attack organized crime.

"I promise that I will be a full-time district attorney. The office will not be run from the steam room of the New Orleans Athletic Club, but will be run from the district attorney's office in the Criminal Courts Building.

"I further promise that I will never use the district attorney's office to further my own ambitions or to undertake investigations designed to gain publicity — but I will conduct the office in a businesslike manner designed to serve all of the people of the city of New Orleans."