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Letters to the Editor

Phantom DA

Editor, States-Item:

On a recent TV spot Jim Garrison criticized the States-Item for calling him the "phantom DA," pointing out that he has been present at most of the debates featuring the candidates for district attorney.

Big Jim misses the point. The label "phantom DA" fits him like a glove, not because he has passed up some campaign debates but because of his extraordinary record of absenteeism over the years, caused by forays to such places as Las Vegas to prowl for Kennedy assassination witnesses, incredibly long lunches in the French Quarter followed by therapy at the New Orleans Athletic Club, and so on. The talent to delegate authority is an important

one but it must be distinguished from the abdication of one's responsibilities.

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Rabin Failed To Visit Prison, Minyard Says

By ALLAN KATZ

Coroner candidate Dr. Frank Minyard charged that incumbent Dr. Carl Rabin failed to inspect Parish Prison as required by law and indirectly contributed to the recent prison scandal that shocked the city.

Addressing the Carrollton Rotary Club at Lenfant's Restaurant yesterday, Dr. Minyard said the coroner is required by law to periodically inspect Parish Prison and issue a report.

"The incumbent has never visited the prison and certainly has never issued a report," Dr. Minyard said.

"IF I AM ELECTED coroner," he promised, "you can be certain that I will both inspect the prison monthly and issue reports that will be available to the press."

Dr. Minyard said if he were coroner, the scandal, involving charges of sexual molesting by a 21-year-old prisoner, would have been avoided.

"If the coroner had made a report on conditions at the prison public before the tragic incident, the community could have expressed its indignation before the situation got completely out of hand," Dr. Minyard said.

ON OTHER TOPICS, Dr. Minyard said he is personal physician to Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

Dr. Minyard said he has been Garrison's friend for a number of years as well as his personal physician. Dr. Minyard said he performed a hernia repair operation on Garrison.

"As for my being an independent coroner, I'm an honest man and Jim Garrison is an honest man. There would never be anything dishonest between us. I would not do anything dishonest for anyone and I am confident Mr. Garrison would never ask anything dishonest of me," Dr. Minyard said in reply to a question.

DR. MINYARD emphasized that in cases where the DA's office had a particular interest, such as the death of David Ferrie which figured prominently in the Clay Shaw case, "you can be certain that I would be scrupulously honest."

The candidate for coroner told the Rotary meeting he hopes to establish a coroner's office that goes beyond the basic functions assigned to the office.

He told of the need for public information programs in traffic safety, anti-drug programs, public safety and organ transplants. He also stressed the need for methadone programs to help rehabilitate drug addicts.

"I'm not suggesting that the coroner's office take over these areas from presently responsible agencies," Dr. Minyard said. "I do believe the coroner's office should be a key participating partner in these areas with the goal of preventing needless loss of life."