

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Haggerty 'Snake Dance'

Editor, States-Item:

Although I have no legal training, I feel that common sense is a binding tie in our system of law. From this reference point I would like to make these observations about the Judge Haggerty snake dance.

The trial judge refused to allow the majority of the district attorney's evidence on the grounds of "probable cause." One wonders if the observation by experienced police officers of a judge of Mr. Haggerty's position entering a motel room in the company of streetwalkers and known hoodlums is not "probable cause."

The trial judge did allow the eye-witness testimony of an undercover agent to be admitted as evidence. He then discounted the weight of this evidence because this officer "had an interest in obtaining a conviction." On this basis every Criminal Court decision of record could be set aside because the DA has an even more vested interest in obtaining convictions: No convictions, no re-election.

Perhaps Judge Haggerty's pre-trial statement, "I wasn't doing anything everybody else in New Orleans isn't doing," demonstrates, more than anything, his contempt for society.

The good judge may have been declared innocent on a legal technicality, but one wonders if his own conscience will declare for a similar verdict. What thoughts will pass through his head the next time he has occasion to find a person "in contempt of court"?

The Rev. Perry Ray Johnson,
Bridgedale Baptist Church

No Surprise

Editor, States-Item:

Too many judges these days can't see the law because they're so busy looking at the loopholes. Thus, lawbreakers are turned back into society unpunished, having proven that crime does pay.

When the defendant is a fellow judge, the outcome is no surprise. After all, if legislators can overlook the evidence against their fellow congressmen and say, "He did no wrong," can a judge be any less noble toward his own kind?

Now the verdict is rendered so, folks, let's forget all the pictures we saw. After all, those women at the "stag party" had a judge for a chaperone. So it was all very honorable, I'm sure.

As a layman, I only wonder at the oversight of the search warrant in an otherwise well-planned arrest. Is it because a judge has to sign a search warrant and they (the police) were afraid of a leak?

At any rate, the Braniff-Haggerty production, this

"staged" farce of a trial, leaves me rather contemptuous of the court.

Shirley G. Darius

He's Disgusted

Editor, States-Item:

I was disgusted with the innocent verdict of Judge Haggerty. All of the evidence indicated a cut-and-dried case for conviction.

I believe the citizens deserve better treatment from their judiciary. . .

E.H.

N.O. 'Disgrace'

Editor, States-Item:

What a disgrace for New Orleans to have two . . . judges like Braniff and Haggerty. They are laughing tonight at our po-



lice officers who do their jobs.

He was caught with the goods and is going free. Well, for only a while. . . I admire the undercover agent and his work needs rewarding, not to be cast in a corner as trash. . .

Mrs. Ruby Candies

Congratulations!

Editor, States-Item:

Congratulations on your courageous editorial, "The Haggerty Case." His very presence at that party at a time when the decent people of New Orleans have launched a concerted drive against pornography makes him completely unfit for his office—the Braniff ruling notwithstanding.

Thank God, he is not cleared by the heavenly tribunal. Like Ted Kennedy, the judge did not have the decency to resign — or the courage.

W. G.

'Shocking, Disgusting'

Editor, States-Item:

Shocking, disgusting, and revolting was the case involving the "honorable" Judge Edward A. Haggerty. I use the term "honorable" rather loosely — befitting a man held in esteem in our city.

He is a disgrace to the legal profession and, even more sickening and disgusting, is the decision rendered by his col-

league, Judge Matthew Braniff.

Mel M. Moore

'Oh, Calcutta'

Editor, States-Item:

"Haggerty is found not guilty. . ."

Nowadays we are looking at the stage productions of "Hair" and "Oh, Calcutta" showing us the "bare facts" and a vast display of our own sex habits, something that has been frowned on by our elders for eons, the same elders who frowned on works of art of yore. What is happening to us and who are we to try to guide our youngsters the "right" way when the newspapers can display headlines like the above, when we are trying so hard to condemn the newspaper, books and magazine vendors for peddling their wares to the public?

I don't believe we have any white wings on our backs nor halos over our heads, no, but we can be a bit more prudish in our little peccadilloes. My belief is that people in the public's eye, people who serve the same public, people who are trying to pattern an example for us and our new generation should keep their positions in mind before they show their desires as human beings and get caught in the act.

Even if I hate to see it happen, Judge Haggerty should be reprimanded if not punished to set an example of how our democratic justice works.

Julio Castro

Back Schools

Editor, States-Item:

Congratulations on your editorials calling for support of our public school system in Louisiana. The full news coverage you are giving to the groups of leaders in our state who are calling upon citizens to support their school boards and public officials in their efforts to obey the law and meet the deadline for the desegregation of our schools is encouraging.

The League of Women Voters of Louisiana wishes to join those calling for the orderly and peaceful desegregation of our schools. We believe in the principle that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all. We actively support measures to strengthen public education at all levels, which includes improving the quality of education through an effective, enforceable compulsory attendance law and adequate financing of public schools.

We commend state Superintendent of Education William J. Dodd and the five state organizations: PAR, CABL, AFL-CIO, the state Chamber of Commerce and the Louisiana Manufacturers Association for their leadership in calling for the preservation of our Louisiana public school system while complying with desegregation orders.

May we repeat the words of state School Superintendent Dodd and call upon citizens to give "vocal, literal, tangible support" to their school boards and law enforcement agencies during this time of crisis for our public schools.

Mrs. Charles F. Hunter,
President