

PLAN PROBE OF HAGGERTY

The Judiciary Commission of Louisiana today decided to investigate the conduct of Criminal District Court Judge Edward A. Haggerty Jr. to determine whether it will ask the state Supreme Court of Louisiana to remove him from the bench.

Judge Haggerty last week was acquitted by a fellow criminal district court judge, Matthew S. Braniff, on three charges after he was arrested in a raid on a stag party at the Motel DeVille last month.

Judge Haggerty had been accused of obscenity, soliciting for prostitution and resisting arrest.

The Judiciary Commission's action was announced this afternoon by Robert E. LeCorgne Jr., chief executive officer, at a press conference in the Supreme Court building.

"THE COMMISSION did meet this morning and decided to investigate the conduct of Judge Haggerty. Pursuant to that decision, Judge Haggerty has been notified of this investigation," LeCorgne said.

LeCorgne, who is also Louisiana judicial administrator,

said that after the investigation has begun, it will be determined whether a hearing shall be held.

But he said if such a hearing is held it will be confidential, under a 1968 constitutional provision.

LeCorgne parried questions concerning the investigation, and said several times "I cannot answer that."

WHEN ASKED if Haggerty will be allowed to remain on the bench during the course of the hearing, he said there is nothing in the law which gives the commission the authority to remove or suspend a judge pending the final recommendation of the commission to the Supreme Court.

The commission is composed of seven members, including four state judges. The decision was made today by the judges. Three nonjudge members were not present at the meeting.

Making the decision to begin the investigation were Judges Albert Tate Jr. of Lake Charles, Third District Court of Appeal; Alexander E. Rainold of New Orleans, Civil

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District Court; Ben N. Tucker of Hammond, 21st Judicial District Court, and William Logan Crowe of Monroe, City Court of Monroe.

COMMISSION members absent from the meeting were Clarence L. Yancey of Shreveport and James L. Davidson Jr. of Lafayette, both attorneys, and Murray Fincher of New Orleans.

The commission can recommend removal or voluntary retirement of Judge Haggerty if it finds him unworthy to remain on the bench.