

'It's Wonderful to Be Free,' Gremillion Declares

By FERREL GULLORY

Louisiana Attorney General Jack P. F. Gremillion stuffed his hands in his pockets and his jaws were twitching as a federal jury handed its verdict today to U.S. District Judge Alvin Rubin.

When he heard the first "not guilty," Gremillion plopped back in his chair and seemed to be trying to contain a slight smile. As the court clerk recited the litany of not guilty on all other counts, Gremillion counted them off with short jabs of his fingers.

"It's wonderful to be free of something you didn't commit in the first place," Gremillion explained after being found innocent of all charges against him in the Louisiana Loan and Thrift Corp. fraud and conspiracy trial that ended in federal court here this morning.

CODEFENDANTS Rep. Salvador Anzelmo of New Orleans and Arkansas businessman Ernest Bartlett also were found not guilty on all counts.

Gremillion, his wife Doris and Anzelmo all broke into sobs after the verdicts had been read. Bartlett showed less emotion though his eyes appeared reddened.

"Wonderful, wonderful," said Anzelmo as he ducked out of the courtroom with a friend slapping him on the back.

Gremillion embraced chief defense attorney F. Irvin Dymond.

"See you in church Mr. Barnes," yelled Gremillion to Edward J. Barnes, one of the government's prosecuting attorneys.

OUT IN THE CORRIDOR someone congratulated Bartlett, using the freed defendant's nickname.

"Eagle, are we going to party?" he asked.

"We are going to party!" Bartlett said firmly.

After he had regained his composure and his buoyancy, Gremillion faced a battery of television cameras and reporters and declared, "I am running for re-election."

He expressed confidence in his political future.

He called the verdict "not guilty," "two sweet little words."

"**MY CONSCIENCE** is still clear," said Gremillion.

"I've been sick for two and a half years—with mental anguish. We're going to go home and relax and get two tons of bricks off our shoulders."

Asked by a reporter about his tears as the verdict came in, Gremillion responded, "Wouldn't you have cried if your life had been saved?"

State Sen. Adrian G. Duplantier, reacting to the acquittal of Gremillion, Anzelmo and Bartlett, said, "I'm very pleased for them. That's really marvelous."