

## Garrison Will Need Stunning Comeback to Win Fight of His Life

By JACK WARDLAW

With little fanfare, little debate and precious little public notice, a dead-serious political drama is being played out to a Saturday climax.

At stake is a highly important office, a seat on the Louisiana Supreme Court for a long term. But the drama centers around the political career of the state's most controversial politician since Earl Long, Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison.

Garrison, hitherto considered unbeatable at the polls, is locked in the fight of his life with a most uncommon opponent, a quiet, unexcitable judge named Walter F. Marcus Jr.

**GOING INTO** Saturday's Democratic runoff, the redoubtable DA has to be rated a distinct underdog. In the first primary, he lost to Marcus every ward in New Orleans as well as all four parishes in the district which elects the high court justice.

It will take a stunning comeback to put Garrison on the Supreme Court.

With a light turnout expected Saturday, such a comeback is certainly not impossible. But an analysis of the magnitude and composition of Marcus' lead shows clearly that a Garrison victory would be indeed a remarkable upset.

How did Garrison, political superstar of the recent past, get into this situation? A poor choice of opponents might be one reason. Marcus, in his unassuming fashion, is a seasoned pro who has never lost an election.

**BUT THERE IS** also the matter of Garrison's personal problems. He is under indictment for bribery and gambling in connection with a pinball case, and thus has placed himself in the curious position of campaigning as a "law-and-order" candidate while he himself is accused of a felony.

The political careers of Marcus and Garrison are dissimilar but in some ways parallel. Both first won public office in the same election in 1962, Garrison as DA and Marcus as city councilman from District B.

Both were re-elected four years later, Marcus without opposition, Garrison in a tough race with former Criminal District Judge Malcolm V. O'Hara.

**IN 1963**, both played prominent roles in the first gubernatorial campaign of former Gov. John J. McKeithen, being, along with councilman Clarence O. Dupuy, the governor's leading New Orleans supporters. Marcus stood clear of the subsequent struggle for patronage between Garrison and Dupuy.

By 1967, the legislature had created a new division (I) of Civil District Court. Marcus, through his connection with McKeithen, presumably could

have had it by appointment. He didn't ask for it.

"I didn't want it that way," says Marcus. "I had never run citywide before and I thought it would be a great experience." He ran and won over several opponents.

**GARRISON**, meanwhile, was a busy man. It was in 1967 that he began his much-publicized investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a probe that shot Garrison into international prominence.

But it also shot him down in flames on March 1, 1969, when a state court jury lost no time in acquitting Clay L. Shaw, the only man Garrison ever brought to trial as a result of the probe.

Despite this legal fiasco, Garrison managed to retain his political power.

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Later that same year, he won a first-primary victory in his bid for a third term as DA. He put together an unlikely coalition of working-class white and Negro voters and held onto his position.

**DUE TO HEALTH** setbacks, Garrison was seldom seen during this third term and only in recent months has re-emerged in public. His name remained in the headlines, however, though not in a manner of his choosing.

Late last year, a federal grand jury indicted Garrison along with nine others. The four-count indictment charged the defendants with illegal gambling, use of bribery to obstruct law enforcement, interstate travel to aid in racketeering and conspiracy to violate these laws.

An affidavit filed by the government alleges that payments of up to \$1,500 a month were made to Garrison to protect certain illegal pinball gambling activities.

**LATER**, THE DA also was indicted for filing false income tax returns for the years 1965-67. All of these charges are still pending and voters will have to make their decision before Garrison's guilt or innocence is determined in the courts.

Garrison has quipped that he has judicial experience "on both sides" as both a prosecutor and defendant. In his campaign, he has steered clear of attacks on Marcus, but has inveighed against the federal government which he claims is persecuting him because of the Kennedy probe.

He also has come down heavy on the law-and-order theme, citing his years as a prosecutor, again not mentioning Marcus but with the implication that experience in criminal law should carry more weight than civil, Marcus'

long suit.

**GARRISON**, 50, is a law graduate of Tulane University and served in the Army Air Corps in World War II. He published a book, "A Heritage of Stone," about the Kennedy probe.

Marcus, 44, is a graduate of Yale University with a law degree from Tulane. He served in the infantry in both World War II and Korea, coming out as a first lieutenant.

Marcus stresses the variety of his experience, as a practicing attorney, a city councilman and a civil judge, with a side tour of duty on the First Circuit Court of Appeal by assignment.

He chose to leave the council, he says, because of a strong belief that much public service can be accomplished in the judicial branch.

**AS A SUPREME COURT** justice, Marcus said, he feels he can help bring reforms to the judicial system, pointing out that the court has the power to discipline lower courts, including clearing up dockets to assure speedy justice.

On that point, Marcus says when he became a civil judge, the dockets were such that it took up to two years to get a case to trial. In his court, he says, it takes five to six weeks.

A check of current civil court dockets last week showed that even while conducting his campaign, Marcus has kept his docket well up to date.

**IN THE FIRST** primary, Marcus collected 75,997 votes to 51,997 for Garrison, or about 37 per cent for Marcus. In Orleans Parish, Marcus got 45 per cent of the vote.

In so doing, he carried all 17 wards, including the ones in which Garrison traditionally has run strongly. In his last race, Garrison ran away with the black precincts, but Marcus has the support of some important black organizations this time.

The race was closer in suburban Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes, but Marcus led there, too. His lead over Garrison in Jefferson was 19,488 to 18,752. The only Jefferson man in the race, Judge L. Julian Samuel of the Fourth Circuit, had 18,438 votes in that parish and this block will make a big difference in the runoff.

**MARCUS HAD A** similarly narrow lead, 7,370 to 6,317, in St. Bernard, but won Plaquemines going away, 3,937 to 782.

Marcus has the support of the Jefferson Democratic Association, the Rowley organization in St. Bernard and the Perez group in Plaquemines. Jefferson Assessor Lawrence A. Chehardy apparently is taking no position.

Garrison traditionally comes on strong in the closing days of a cam-

paign and already has started a heavy media schedule.

THE DA IS depending heavily on his ability to run against the federal government and blaming his legal troubles on federal persecution. This approach has worked in various times and places, but the last politician to try it in Louisiana was former Atty. Gen. Jack P. F. Gremlion last year. He lost.