

Dallas Judge Tells JP's Of New Law

A new law which protects both the landlord and tenant is virtually unknown among most justices of the peace, a Dallas jurist declared here Monday.

Judge Joe B. Brown Jr., told justices and constables attending the annual Justice of the Peace and Constable School, that although they cannot administer the new law, it "is useful to advise the irate landlord who is complaining of deception."

Enacted in 1967, the law, Article 1553A of the Penal Code, makes it a violation for any person to obtain occupancy of premises by fraud, trick, deception,

false or fraudulent representations, Brown said.

"It includes especially the giving of payment for rental by a worthless check or a stop-payment check," Brown added. He pointed out the law provides a penalty of a maximum fine of \$200, or not exceeding 30 days in jail, or both.

JUSTICE COURTS do not have the power to assess a jail sentence except for non-payment of fines.

"We have to send persons to the district attorney and the case goes to county court," Brown explained.

Brown said the law provides that any landlord who shall grant occupancy of any premises under the same conditions, or "who gives in refund any sum, a check that is worthless or shall stop payment, shall be guilty in a like manner."

The Dallas justice said the new law "punishes the tenant and landlord who might be unscrupulous."

His office has not become involved in many such cases.

"I guess people just don't know the law exists," he reasoned.

BROWN, WHOSE office handles an estimated 800 eviction suits a year, cited a second law passed in 1967, Article 5236A, which does not change eviction procedures, but does specify the "time length of notice that a tenant shall have."

In other words, Brown said, a tenant paying his rent on a monthly basis, must be allowed a month to seek new quarters if asked to move.

"This does not apply in cases where the tenant breaches his rental contract, for example — failure to pay rent," he continued.

Brown noted that the statute was adopted to "clarify the common law. There had never been a statutory provision defining 'reasonable notice' which previously prevailed."

"THERE WAS SOME doubt about what was sufficient," he added.

Brown was one of several speakers opening the three-day conference here studying changes and procedures in the law. Ninety persons attended Monday.

The school is sponsored by the Engineering Extension Service's Police Training Division. Sessions will be held in the Memorial Student Center through Wednesday noon.

The program is directed by Ira E. Scott, chief of the Police Training Division.

Directors To Dine With Faculty-Staff

Texas A&M's annual Board of Directors - Faculty - Staff Dinner will be held April 25 in Sbis Hall, announced President Earl Rudder.

Rudder appointed a committee, headed by Robert G. Cherry, assistant to the president, to plan the stag dinner.

While listed as a stag event, the A&M president emphasized that women faculty-staff members are invited.

"A dinner such as the one planned next month offers us an excellent opportunity to become better acquainted with other members of the A&M family, and particularly with our board of directors," Rudder observed. "We feel it is important to get together at least once a year."

Tickets for the dinner will soon be available through department heads, Cherry noted.

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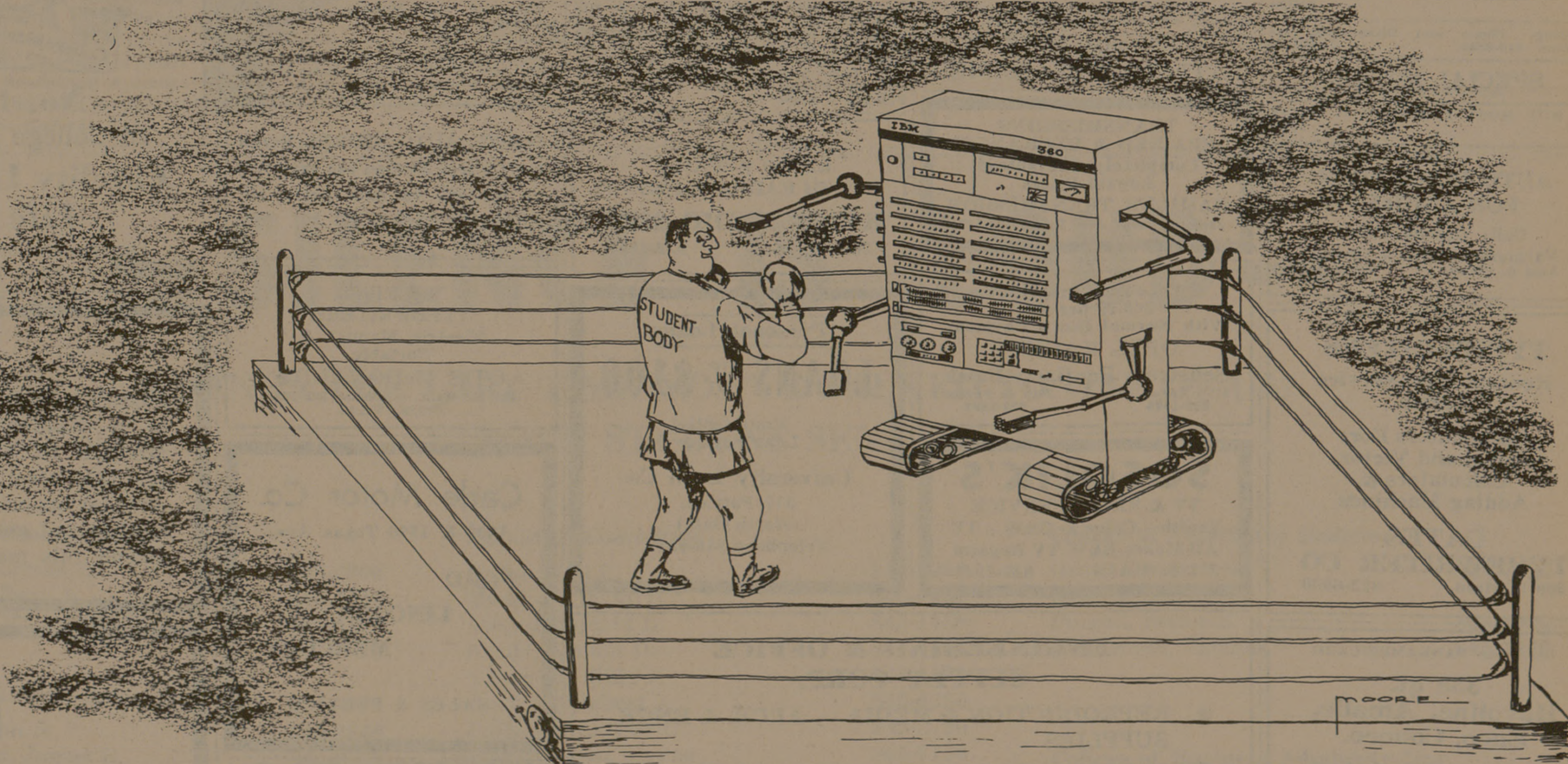
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