

'Doctor X' acquitted of murder

United Press International
HACKENSACK, N.J. — Dr. Mario E. Jascavech Tuesday was acquitted of murder in the deaths of three hospital patients 12 years ago, bringing to a close the longest criminal case in the state's history.

Jascavech, the surgeon who was nicknamed "Doctor X" when his case was first publicized by a news-

paper reporter, was cleared of charges he killed the patients with overdoses of curare — a muscle relaxant originally used by certain South American Indians to poison arrows — while they were hospitalized for routine surgery.

The jury returned the verdict after deliberating for less than three hours over a two-day period.

Jascavech, who was declared innocent on all three counts, sat calmly at the defense table as the six men and six women on the jury were polled.

Spectators in the courtroom broke into applause when the verdict was announced shortly after 11 a.m.

The panel began deliberations Monday in the 8-month-old trial of the Argentine-born physician.

Jascavech, 51, of Englewood Cliffs, N.J., had been on trial since February for allegedly murdering the patients at Riverdell Hospital in Oradell, N.J., in 1965 and 1966.

After deliberating for 45 minutes Monday, the jury recessed to a local motel where it was sequestered.

Before retiring, however, the panel asked for the transcript of testimony from Dr. Frederic Rieders, a Philadelphia-area toxicologist who said curare was an unstable com-

pound and could not have survived in the ground or embalmed tissue for 10 years.

Rieders, who examined the remains of the three alleged victims, said his tests determined there was no curare in two of the bodies and he said the curare he detected in the third must have been planted there after it was exhumed by authorities when they reopened the case in 1976.

The case was reopened following a series of investigative articles by New York Times reporter Myron A. Farber, who was jailed for refusing to turn over his notes to the court.

The jury had to decide if Jascavech was the innocent victim of a frame-up, as the defense claimed, or if, as the prosecutor charged, he was a "calculated murderer" who spent more than 10 years covering his tracks.

New idea of old stuff

Constitution faces tough test

By DILLARD STONE
Battalion Reporter

Depending on who you talk to, Texas A&M University's proposed student government constitution is either necessary, or it's an unnecessary rehash of the same old student government. And then there are those who favor both the constitution and other major reforms at the same time.

"We need this document," said Bobby Tucker, student body president.

On the other hand: "It doesn't do enough," said Laura Brockman, president pro tempore of the senate. "It doesn't do anything to make student government more substantial."

Students will vote on the proposed document in Thursday's fall elections.

Upon two-thirds vote of the senate, the executive vice president would assume the presidency. If he fails to receive the required vote, a president would be chosen from among the five vice presidents.

"Other than that, it doesn't change much," Paterson said.

Joe Beall, vice president for external affairs, is against the new constitution on the grounds that it does not make any substantial changes in student government.

And therein lies the crux of the matter.

Joe Beall, vice president for external affairs, is against the new constitution on the grounds that it does not make any substantial changes in student government.

"I've been in student government for four years," he said. "Every year I've seen a new document. It really isn't necessary. If we really needed changes, we could present amendments."

A new constitution, if proposed, should make major structural changes in student government, Beall said.

"I've been exposed to several different systems of student government, and I think we should look into other possibilities for the arrangement of student government," Beall said.

He currently is serving as president of the Texas Student Association, an organization of Texas university student governments.

Beall said that Texas A&M's student government is more inefficient than that of several Texas schools. One major inefficiency results from a question of jurisdiction between vice presidents and the executive branch.

"Vice presidents carry out executive functions, but they're legislative offices," he said. Legislative committees should concentrate on research, he said, leaving execution to the executive.

At the last student senate meeting, Beall unveiled his own idea of how student government should be organized.

He recommended that the five

vice presidents be abolished, replaced by three new ones: Internal Affairs, External Affairs, Projects. These three vice presidents would be placed under executive branch, instead of legislative branch, as is now done.

Beall also stated that he was opposed to the new constitution because there had been a lack of adequate research into alternative possibilities for student government.

However, Paterson said that constitutional conventions, open to any student, were held last year to consider a new constitution. Student input was significantly higher, he said.

In addition, Paterson said neither Beall nor any of the students in opposition to the constitution attended the conventions, so they propose any reforms to rules and regulations committees.

Beall said that he had been working with other projects at the time of the constitutional conventions.

He also said that he should have had to become involved in workings of the rules and regulations committee, since his knowledge is external affairs.

"Why should I, as someone interested in another area of student government, take it upon myself to draft another constitution?" he asked.

Tucker, student body president, takes yet a third view on the issue. He compromises between those who favor the constitution and those who oppose it and want to see a structural reorganization of student government.

"That's what the rules and regulations committee is for — to look at alternatives," he said. "I didn't."

Tucker, student body president, takes yet a third view on the issue. He compromises between those who favor the constitution and those who oppose it and want to see a structural reorganization of student government.

"Something does need to be done as far as reorganizing student government goes," Tucker said. "We need this document."

Tucker said, like the constitution's proponents, that he would like to see the discrepancies in old document discarded.

"We need it (the new constitution) so that we've got a date under what we've got now," he said.

Austin Sterling, vice president for rules and regulations, is also in favor of both the constitution and a reorganization of student government.

Sterling said that his main reason for pushing the new constitution is that the students approved it last year, and they should have a chance to do the same this year.

Sterling also stated that his sentiments during last year's elections were much the same as in favor of structural change.

"I urged rules and regulations year to take it slow and do it right," he said. "But my cries fell on deaf ears."

He, too, indicated that proposals such as Bealls were not presented last year's conventions.

Sterling also said he believes reform should be attempted in student government, but only after a new constitution is adopted.

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