



Clarifying the issue

staff photo by Diana Sultenfuss

An interpreter for the hearing impaired translates Gov. Mark White's inauguration address during ceremonies held at the Capitol Tuesday. The

newly sworn in governor emphasized problems facing Texas and established education as a priority of his administration.

Expensive elections questioned by profs

United Press International
AUSTIN. — University of Texas political scientists say there is no easy answer to the question of whether the cost of winning an election to public office undermines basic democratic principles.

Dr. John A. Gronouski, a professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, says the candidates who usually win are those with the most money.

Another professor, Dr. Janice C. May, of the same school, spending money is one way to increase the voter turnout.

"If you want accountability, if you want representative government, you're going to have to be concerned about people coming to the polls, people being aware of the issues," she says. "Spending money is one way of hand-

ling these actual mechanisms of getting accountable government.

Gronouski says one of the concerns about campaign expenditures centers around the vast amounts of money raised through political action committees, commonly called PACs.

"What we're talking about is outfits like NCPAC (National Conservative Political Action Committee), which raise \$5 million, \$6 million and use it as a negative campaign tool," he says.

Gronouski says PACs have grown in power and influence since the early 1970s when they were first authorized. May says the accountability of PACs concerns her, and that a distinction should be made between those committees sponsored by corporations, unions and trade associations, and the issue-

oriented groups.

"There's a much accountability here when you have a sponsor," she says. "Then you have the PACs, and here we get negative campaigning. Gronouski agrees that this distorts the political process, lessening the impact of the party itself, which amend conflicting opinions look at the whole candi-

PACs are limited to direct contributions to date, but if they want to and spend \$10 million negative advertising, they could do it, he says.

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Chagra plea bargain told

United Press International
JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Lawyers for Jamiel "Jimmy" Chagra and federal officials plea bargained on narcotics charges against Chagra just before the 1979 murder of U.S. District Judge John H. Wood, a former assistant U.S. attorney testified Tuesday.

The offer from The U.S. Attorney's Office remained in effect even after the indictment was returned on May 21, Ronald Guyer, who is now in private practice, told a federal court jury. Chagra is on trial here for arranging the May 29, 1979 murder of Wood.

Guyer said attorneys for Chagra and U.S. attorneys met twice in El Paso and San Antonio in April and May 1979. After Chagra was indicted in February 1979 on five counts of importing narcotics. The attorneys discuss the possibility of Chagra pleading guilty to one or more of the charges.

"We would be willing to accept a plea of guilty to one of the cocaine counts carrying a maximum of 15 years," Guyer told Chagra's brother, Joe Chag-

ra, who served as one of his attorneys.

Guyer said Chagra's attorneys said their client would be willing to plead guilty to two marijuana counts carrying a maximum 10-year prison sentence.

Chagra, 39, a licensed professional gambler from Las Vegas, is accused of paying convicted hitman Charles V. Harrelson \$250,000 to kill Wood who was scheduled to hear a narcotics case in which Chagra was the defendant.

Wood, known as "Maximum John" for the stiff penalties he dealt drug offenders, was fatally shot in the back as he left his San Antonio home to go to court in 1979.

Harrelson was convicted of the murder by a federal court jury in San Antonio last month after a 12-week trial.

Chagra's trial was moved to Jacksonville because of extensive pre-trial publicity in Texas.

On Monday, Ronald Collier, a confidant and bodyguard for Chagra, said Harrelson first met Chagra in the casino at Binion's Horseshoe Club during a poker tournament in early May 1979.

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