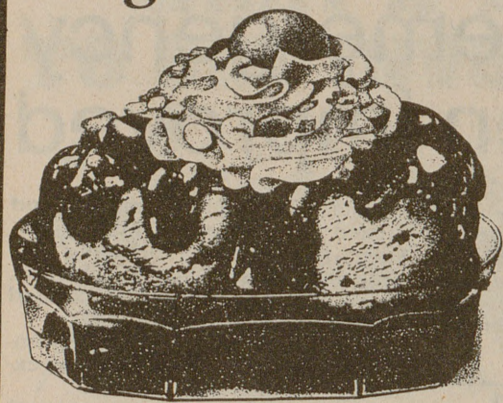


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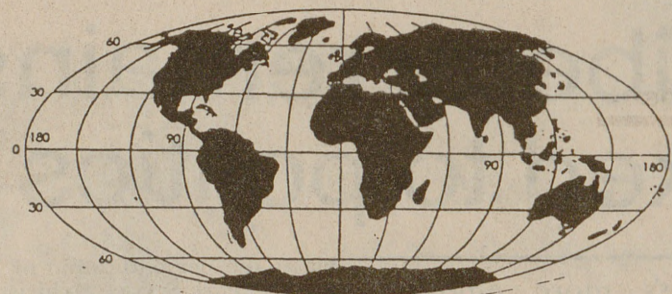
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## Dallas judges spend record to defend poor

DALLAS (AP) — Felony court judges in Dallas County are spending a record amount in hiring private attorneys to defend the poor, while the public defender's office provides the same service at a fraction of the cost.

By the end of the fiscal year, felony court judges will have spent an all-time high of \$4.5 million on legal defense for 13,000 indigent criminal suspects in Dallas County.

The amount exceeds the judges annual budget by \$1 million and breaks down to an average of \$296 per case paid to attorneys for often a five- to 15-minute court appearance.

By contrast, the public defender's office — a county agency that provides legal representation for accused felons with a staff of eight salaried lawyers — will have defended about 4,000 indigent defendants for \$175 or less per case, the *Dallas Times Herald* reported.

Since 1978, when county commissioners made their first major attempt to curb indigent defense costs, judicial spending on private lawyers for the poor has more than tripled.

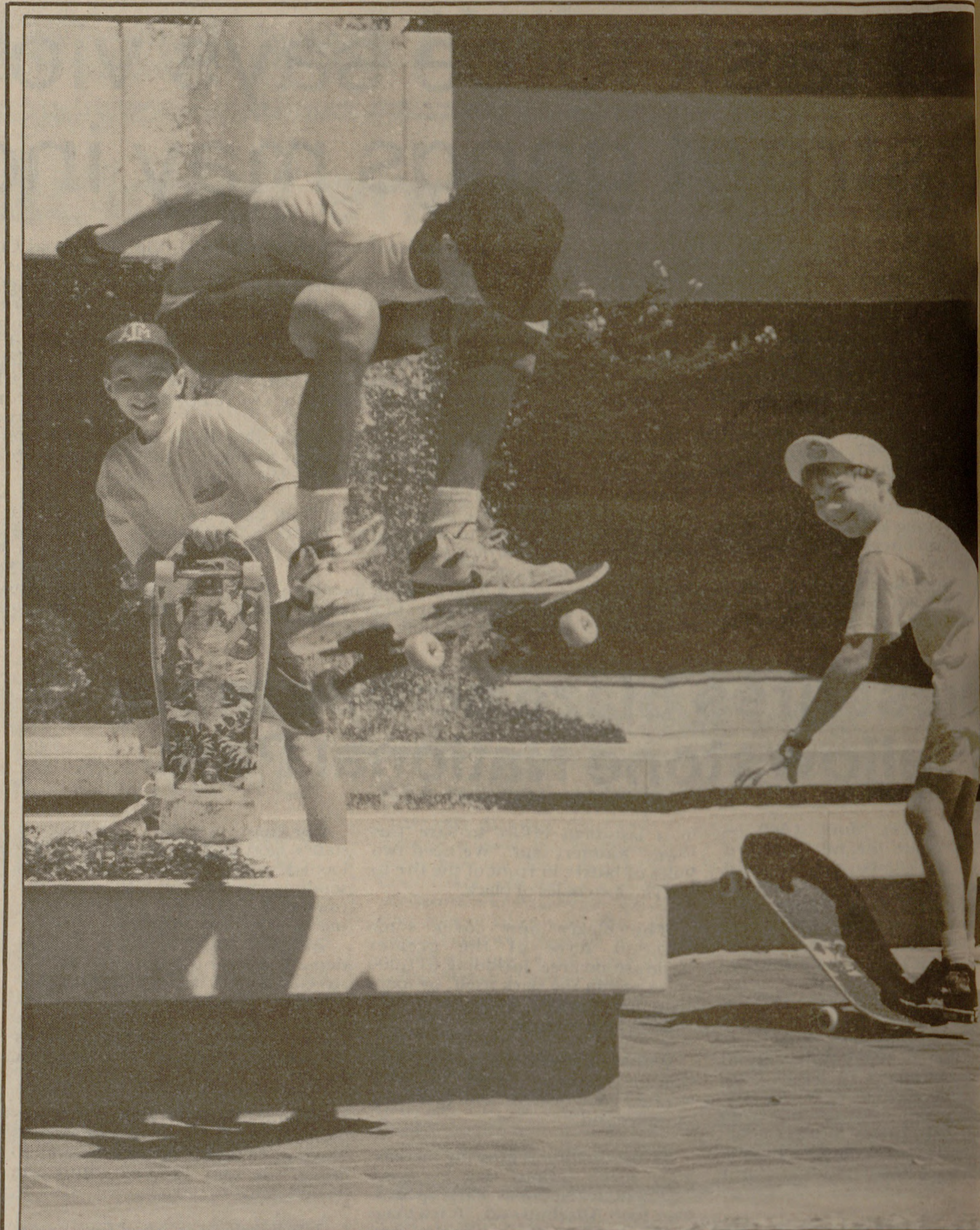
The 14 felony court judges blame the soaring cost of indigent defense on a rising crime rate, an increasing number of arrests by police, and a growing number of criminal cases filling their dockets.

Critics however blame the judges and say they use a system that costs twice as much as its competition and has fallen out of favor in major cities nationwide.

"The issue never changes; it's something we have never been able to solve," said lawyer Vincet Perini, who studied the rising cost of indigent defense in the 1970s for the Dallas Bar Association. "It's a cyclical matter that's been turned into a political football . . . and that's a damned pity."

Taxpayers began paying the expense of providing indigent criminal defendants an attorney after a landmark 1963 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

"The (taxpayers) who are being victimized by crime are getting a little bit upset that we have such tremendously escalating costs for representing criminals," Commissioner Chris Semos said.



### Don't look down

Tim Denton, an A&M Consolidated student, makes a jump on his skateboard Sunday afternoon by Rudder fountain as his friends David Denton and Randy Scamardo watch.

Photo by Kathy Havens

## Program tries to improve images of neighborhoods

DALLAS (AP) — Mary Neil spends most of her time on Detroit's West Side tending her flower garden, trying to make something grow from nothing.

The garden, dominated by pink petunias and cultivated from the rubble of a vacant lot next to her house, still has its fair share of weeds. But Neil says the weeds don't concern her. She's more concerned about planting seeds that will bloom in the future.

Neil's garden is symbolic of the surrounding neighborhood. The area still has a rundown look typical of many sections of Detroit—houses with broken windows and grass growing out of the cracks in the sidewalks. But thanks to projects sponsored by the 12th Street Missionary Baptist Church, the area about four miles northwest of downtown is edging toward a comeback.

"Particularly in the black community, we need economic development," Charlene Johnson, the administrator of the church-sponsored programs, said. "We need to be able to use our own resources to do as much as we can for ourselves."

Perhaps the church's most effective program has been REACH — Reach Everyone, Administer, Care and Help. Through REACH, the church has been able to help clean up the neighborhood by purchasing houses suspected of being drug dens.

Johnson said the program has helped reduce crime in the neighborhood but Detroit Police Department officials said there were no

*"There are plenty of places where (drug dealers) can go and find abandoned houses. They don't want any hassles, and they don't want to deal with an organization as large as a church."*

— Charlene Johnson  
administrator

available figures to corroborate the claim.

Johnson also said that evicted drug dealers have not caused any problems for the church.

"There are plenty of places where (drug dealers) can go and find abandoned houses," Johnson said. "They don't want any hassles, and they don't want to deal with an organization as large as a church."

The program also has had a noticeable aesthetic effect on the area.

"We're concentrating on renovating houses in a small area, so we can have a visual impact," Johnson said.

The neighborhood still has dilapidated homes with overgrown front lawns. However, houses with newly sodded lawns, fresh white paint, with beds of yellow and pink flowers can also be seen on the block.

Activity in the neighborhood stimulates the senses: the smell of fresh paint, the sounds of hammers banging away and power saws cutting through wood.

The church finds out about potential houses for sale mostly through word of mouth. It bought

its first house through REACH in 1982 and has purchased 12 buildings overall. The program has received \$299,000 in grants in the past 24 months, allowing for the purchase of five houses last year.

Johnson said the average cost of renovation is about \$18,000. The cost would be higher if the church didn't receive a lot of volunteer help, she said.

One who has benefited from the program is Philip Buggs. He said REACH sold him one of its homes for \$16,000 after he failed to get a loan from banks. REACH gave him a 15-year mortgage, which he hopes to pay off in seven years.

"Ownership is power," Buggs said. "That's part of the American dream. It trickles all the way down, and we want a little bit of it, too."

Buggs, his face and arms covered with tiny dots of paint, spoke from the porch of a house he was helping to renovate. He said he was painting as part of the church's "sweat equity program," in which a person indebted to REACH can work on church-owned houses to earn credit toward repaying the loan.

## Telethon has positive effect on MD disease

AUSTIN (AP) — Celebrities gathered Sunday for Jerry Lewis's annual Labor Day telethon, a drive to coax millions of dollars from viewers for a battle against crippling disease that touch one million American families.

The 2½-hour event, which concludes at 6:30 Monday, benefits the Muscular Dystrophy Association and is dedicated in large part to the young MD victims the comic calls his "kids."

Firefighters collected cash on street corners across America, teenagers sponsored dances and other events, and youngsters went door-to-door or held backyard carnivals to raise money for the fight against muscular dystrophy.

Ed McMahon, the telethon's long-time anchorman, was back again, along with co-hosts Sammy Davis Jr., Casey Kasem, Tony Orlando, Norm Crosby and Julius LaRosa.

Other celebrities scheduled to appear during the show included Ray Charles, Liza Minnelli, Engelbert Humperdinck, Brian Wilson, Marlene Mc Govern, Kool and the Gang, Charlie Callas, Chuck Mangione, Hirt, Rip Taylor, Pia Zadora, the Pointer Sisters, Harvey Korman, Charo, Randy Travis, Joe Williams, Del Shannon and the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders.

Lewis, who has helped raise \$1 billion for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, said he expected to be seen by 120 million viewers in the opening and closing hours of the telethon.

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## Snakes...

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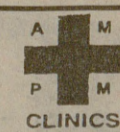
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