

Former speaker accused in land scheme

HOUSTON (AP) — Former Texas House Speaker Gus Mutscher — convicted of conspiracy in 1972 in the Sharpstown Bank scandal — is accused of culling at least \$700,000 from investors in a real-estate scheme, the *Houston Chronicle* reported in a copyright story Sunday.

The money was mainly gathered from former clients of late Houston developer J.R. McConnell who were recruited by McConnell's one-time top saleswoman, Rohini Divecha. Divecha later worked for Jarenco Investments of Texas Inc. of Houston, the newspaper said.

Forty-two investors in Jarenco have sued the company, Mutscher, Jarenco President Robert Patrick Renner and Divecha in state district court, seeking return of their money, plus at least \$1 million in punitive damages.

Federal investigators would not discuss the case, but documents obtained by the *Chronicle* show the FBI is probing Jarenco's and Mutscher's roles in investor losses exceeding \$1.2 million.

Mutscher, 55, who has been Washington County Judge since he finished four years probation in 1976, conceded that from January to September 1986 he was

paid \$733,000 by Jarenco and Renner. Renner also paid him \$500,000 for eight acres of land in Brenham in July 1985. Mutscher said he thought the \$733,000 was a loan.

"This is a situation I really don't deserve," Mutscher said. "Mr. Renner came to Brenham to buy my property, but failed to close on the contract."

The investors claim in their lawsuit that Mutscher knew or should have known where the money came from and that they relied on his name and reputation when they invested.

Mutscher said he never knew that a fi-

nanacial statement he gave to Renner was being shown to Jarenco investors with the promise that Mutscher would personally guarantee the return of their money, with interest, if they would buy syndicated shares in the property.

"As to the present allegations, I was never an investor in Jarenco, nor did I ever have any joint interest investments with Mr. Renner, nor was I to retain any interest in the sale of my property," he said.

Renner disappeared from Houston in early 1987 after his finances collapsed. State corporation records show Ja-

renco was formed in 1982 by Renner, 39, who had just moved to Houston from Wichita, Kan., with his bride, Jan Iris. Records on file in Harris County show Renner built and bought strip centers and other properties on money borrowed from banks and individuals.

Renner allegedly would multiply investors' cash by borrowing against it. He would buy certificates of deposit, then pledge them as collateral for a larger bank loan, according to lawsuits by banks that seized those investments after Renner defaulted on notes.

Mutscher and Renner signed a contract in July 1985 for the sale of 146 acres in Brenham for \$14.4 million and Mutscher's Coachlight Inn East, a motel, for \$3.2 million, Mutscher's attorney, William Ehler, said.

A purported copy of that contract shows Renner was given until January 1986 to find a buyer for the properties, for which he would earn a 5 percent commission. Renner immediately bought eight acres of the land for \$784,000, paying Mutscher \$500,000 cash borrowed from the Washington County State Bank in Brenham and signing a promissory note to Mutscher for the balance.

Renner had problems finding a buyer, and was granted extensions until February 1987, Ehler said. The motel was dropped from the deal, and the price for the remaining acreage was lowered to \$11.5 million.

The bank has since repossessed the eight acres after Renner failed to pay back the loan.

UH taking steps toward excellence

HOUSTON (AP) — After years of trying to upgrade its reputation with tougher admission standards and research breakthroughs, the University of Houston is taking steps up the academic ladder.

As recently as 10 years ago, the university produced good graduates but was not in the collegiate big league. A large gift from a corporation back then was a relatively measly \$10,000, and total research grants were under \$15 million.

But toughened admission standards and the research of faculty members like superconductivity whiz Paul C.W. Chu have helped changed things at the 30,300-student university.

Some achievements include a technology transfer pact with E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., growth of the school honors program and the increase of research awards to faculty members, which has soared to \$40.5 million in 1988, up from about \$13 million in 1983.

"Students clearly don't come here because we're a party school," university President Dick Van Horn told faculty members last week during a UH Faculty Excellence Day created by Houston Mayor Kathy Whitmire.

"It's the quality of our faculty that attracts the students," Van Horn said.

Juniors promote spirit, unity, events during Class of '90 Awareness Week

By Sharon Maberry
Staff Writer

The Class of '90 Council will promote spirit and unity during Class of '90 Awareness Week. Activities are planned for this week to make juniors more aware of the Class of '90 Council and the events they are involved in around campus.

Class of '90 Awareness Chairman Melinda Palmer said that class councils never before have designated a week to promote class involvement.

"This is the first time that anyone has done this," Palmer said. "A lot of people are apathetic. By the time they get to their junior year, they're looking to graduate. The last thing they want is a bunch of people telling them to get involved."

"We just want them to know that there is a class council. We're trying some new things to get people motivated because we're going to be seniors next year."

Activities for the week include dollar movies on Tuesday, happy hour at Dirty Juan's on Wednesday, dancing at the Texas Hall of Fame on Thursday, happy hour at Gizmo's on Friday and a Class of '90 yell practice sometime during the week, Palmer said. Also, juniors can get a special deal at DoubleDave's Pizzerias throughout the week.

Palmer said that the Class of '90 Council does not expect the awareness week to cause a drastic change in the number of juniors involved in class activities.

"We're not looking at this awareness week with hundreds and hundreds of people showing up to all the activities," she said. "We're not being idealistic, we're being realistic."

"We want to gradually begin with (increasing participation in) committees we've formed. It should be kind of like a domino effect. We're not meaning that every single junior should be on a committee, but we want to change the way of

thinking from, 'Oh, it's just a class activity,' to 'Oh, that sounds like fun.'"

Palmer said that Class of '90 President Katherine Smith generated a lot of participation in the class ball last year as class ball chairman.

Smith said the good turnout was achieved by a lot of planning and hard work. She combined the Class of '90 Ball with the Class of '89 Ball, which

had never been done before.

"We combined the sophomore and junior class balls to enable us to spend more money on them," Smith said. "We started PR three weeks ahead of time. We put flyers up all over campus and slid cards under the doors of all sophomores and juniors living on campus. We also paid for radio ads and we talked to different groups like sororities and fraternities and the Corps."

Serkin, Kim brought music alive

By Staci Finch
Entertainment Writer

Beethoven is touted as one of the best classical music artists. So it was only fitting that two of today's best classical music performers played Beethoven sonatas in their performance at Rudder Auditorium Saturday night.

Pianist Peter Serkin and violinist Young Uck Kim brought a breathtaking performance of Beethoven sonatas to Texas A&M. The two renowned musicians delighted the 1,500 audience members as they brought the centuries old music alive.

The best part of the show was the control the musicians brought to the music. The tempo slowed, pulsed and raced, but never was out of the reach of the performers.

The two musicians have performed together before, and this was evident in the harmony of the two instruments. The piano and violin exchanged melodies, complemented each other and blended together, all in perfect timing. Serkin and Kim were extraordinary as they displayed a range of musical emotions without ever missing a beat. If you couldn't tell

from the passion in the music that these two performers loved what they were doing, you could tell by looking at their faces, which reflected the emotions created by their fingers.

Peter Serkin began lessons in music more than 30 years ago, and in 1958 entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His first public performance was in the summer of 1959 at the Marlboro Music Festival, followed by a New York debut that fall. Since then, Serkin has appeared with many symphony orchestras, including those of Boston, New York and the London Symphony and Philharmonia. His talents were honored in 1983 when he was the first pianist to be awarded the Premio Accademia Musicale Chigiana Siena, an international prize in recognition of outstanding musical achievement.

Young Uck Kim also attended the Curtis Institute of Music, and studied under violin legend Ivan Galamian. He performs regularly on three continents, and also works on special projects. One of those was the premiere of the Hans Vogt Violin Concerto in 1983, a piece that was written for Kim, and one on which he collaborated. He has appeared with most of the major American symphonies, as well as at numerous festivals.

Construction Report

Houston and Hogg Streets, near Sbis Dining Hall, will be closed for two to three weeks beginning today while modules for a new residence hall are delivered.

The modules were scheduled for delivery on Oct. 20, but suppliers were delayed by problems in transit, Tom Williams, director of Parking, Transit and Traffic, said.

"It's probably better this way, anyway," Williams said. "We like to have those streets open during football game weekends."

Williams said the original delivery date was ahead of schedule, so he does not foresee delays in the rest of

the project's schedule. The residence hall should be ready for occupancy by Fall 1989.

Keith Chapman, manager of construction, said his main concern was the inconvenience caused by blocking the streets.

"When Hogg street got blocked off last week, we had the University Police help us guide traffic," Chapman said. "Not to mention the inconvenience for the students, who were wondering what was going on since nothing got delivered."

Williams said the modified shuttle bus routes will run until construction is complete, regardless of delays.

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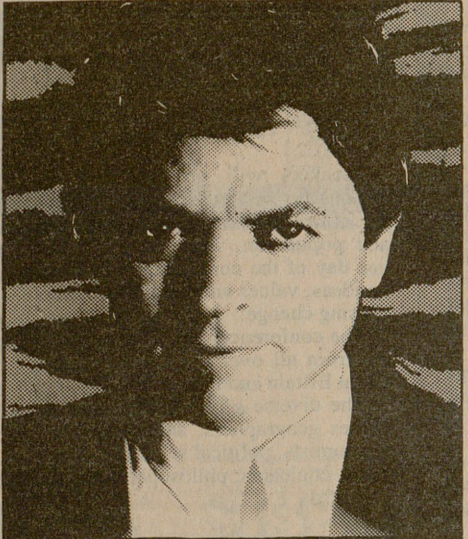
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