

Lewis cuts deal with prosecutors

AUSTIN (AP) — House Speaker Gib Lewis pleaded no contest Wednesday to two misdemeanor ethics offenses in an agreement with prosecutors who dropped earlier charges that had dogged Lewis for more than a year.



Gib Lewis

State District Judge Bob Perkins found Lewis, D-Fort Worth, guilty on two counts of failing to reveal in public financial disclosure statements his interest in a Tarrant County investment company. He fined Lewis \$1,000 on each count.

Under the plea bargain agreement, Travis County District Attorney Ronnie Earle dropped the earlier indictments just days before the case was set to go to trial. On those earlier misdemeanor charges, Lewis faced a maximum punishment of 18 months in jail and \$3,000 in fines.

The 15-minute hearing ended a legal struggle that started Dec.

Speaker's political accounts approach \$1M, paper says

AUSTIN (AP) — Retiring House Speaker Gib Lewis has about \$1 million accumulated in three political accounts and supporters still are soliciting donations for him, the Austin American-Statesman reported Wednesday.

In response, Lewis said, "I hope those numbers are right. I will continue to use the money as I have. We will continue using it for officeholder expense. My plan has always been if there is a surplus ... set up a scholarship fund."

Officials said more than \$421,000 of the total could be frozen because Lewis is no longer a speaker candidate, the American-Statesman reported. The money is in a fund which Lewis set up 11 years ago in order to run for speaker.

But state law might allow Lewis to convert hundreds of thousands of dollars from his other accounts to personal use, the newspaper reported.

Lewis spokesman John Bender said Wednesday that the speaker's staff had not had a chance to verify the numbers.

28, 1990 when Lewis, one of the most powerful political figures in Texas, was indicted by a grand jury investigating alleged corruption at the Capitol.

Since then, Lewis, who has been speaker a record nine years, announced he would not seek re-

election.

"It's just good to get any bad situation behind you," said Lewis after paying the fines. "We knew we would be vindicated."

"I don't think any of us won. My reputation was damaged. I think what has happened to me

has been wrong, wrong, wrong," he said.

Earle said, "The only clear winner in this situation is the public."

Both sides contended they would have won the case had it gone to trial, and both sides claimed they got what they wanted.

Earle said he agreed to the plea bargain because Lewis had decided to retire as speaker of the 150-member House. Perkins also noted Lewis' decision to step down when he described the plea bargain as a "fair verdict."

However, Lewis' attorney, Tim Evans of Fort Worth, said Lewis' decision not to seek re-election had nothing to do with the plea bargain.

"We were anxious to try this case because we felt like a jury would find him not guilty. But when the district attorney says we'll drop the cases and you don't have to go to trial, we'll take him up on it," Evans said.

Earle said the plea bargain ended an investigation into Lewis, but that a probe into the influence of lobbyists on lawmakers continues.

Texas steers closer to high-speed train

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas High-Speed Rail Authority voted 6-1 Wednesday to accept a franchise agreement with Texas TGV that could result in a bullet train system connecting the state's major cities by the turn of the century.

The commission, in creating The Texas High-Speed Rail Corporation, established a number of milestones that must be met for the project to become a reality.

Among the checkpoints the rail builders must meet include having proof of \$170 million in financial commitments by Dec. 31, 1992. The corporation also must prove to the authority that it has enough money to begin building the system by Dec. 31, 1994. That total is estimated to be about \$5 billion.

Construction of the system must begin by May 27, 1997 and the first route — connecting Houston, Dallas, Dallas-Fort Worth Airport and Fort Worth — must begin by Dec. 31, 1998.

One year from that date, the train must include service to San Antonio and Austin.

Representatives from Bryan College Station and Waco have asked the corporation to consider adding stations in their cities.

Board members met for more than eight hours — including five hours spent in an executive session — before accepting the 50-year agreement.

More than 200 citizens who feared their rural homes and communities would be affected by the train attended the meeting.

One of the first deadlines under the franchise agreement is for Texas TGV to repay the state start-up costs for the High Speed Rail Authority, and for a feasibility study.

"We are a long way from bringing high speed rail to Texas," said Texas Railroad Commissioner Lena Guerrero, the authority's chairperson. "Too many issues are unclear."

'Jane Roe' still fighting to keep abortion legal

EL PASO (AP) — The woman who helped legalize abortion in the United States said Tuesday she'll keep fighting to keep abortion legal.

"Many pro-choice supporters feel that the (Supreme) court is now ready to modify Roe vs. Wade. In fact, a Pennsylvania statute has been brought before the court for consideration," said Norma McCorvey, who was known as Jane Roe in the Roe vs. Wade

case. "However, I am here in El Paso to tell you that Jane Roe is not about to stop fighting to keep abortion safe and legal," she said in a news conference. "And even if the court modifies the Roe decision, it remains an important symbol that women have the morality and the intelligence to control their own bodies."

Earlier Tuesday, the Supreme Court had

agreed to review a Pennsylvania law that imposes waiting periods and other restrictions on abortions.

The Pennsylvania case will be argued in April with a decision expected by July.

"The abortion issue is not about morality. It is about control, plain and simple," McCorvey said. "Does a woman have the right, or not?"

She said she doesn't believe the court

will overturn Roe vs. Wade. "It's one of the first steps that many other states have already taken," she said.

McCorvey's challenge of the 1969 Texas abortion law led to the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion nationwide. The 7-2 decision was based on a woman's constitutional right to privacy.

About 20 demonstrators protested outside of McCorvey's El Paso news confer-

Aggies give border towns prayers, love

Continued from Page 2

about 200 patients with sinus infections, minor bronchitis and a variety of other illnesses, Buck said.

The Piedras Negras group visited a jail where they had made previous contacts with several men on past trips.

Jennifer Best, a junior from Ton Rouge, said that she changed as a person because of the trip.

"It was truly a life-changing experience," she said. "As a result of the trip I now have Christ in my heart."

Best said that her group formed family groups within the large group and really got to know each other well. They were assigned two names from the other groups to pray for during the week.

"We sang at night and had a pinata for a birthday," she said. "One night we had a Bible study on the topic of concentrating on the person of Jesus Christ."

Best said when the trip was over she wasn't ready to leave her friends she had made.

"I just wanted to get back to school so I could be with these people again," she said. "I miss them all so much."

Businesses give money to University

Continued from Page 2

with a \$150,000 gift that will be used to support an exceptional individual to teach and research in the field of transportation.

In addition, an equal gift of \$150,000 was funded through the Endowed Faculty Scholars Program, named for Kelleher's wife and will be used in the area of ranch management.

ARCO Chemical donated \$35,000 that will be used by the College of Engineering to develop a Machine Diagnostics Laboratory for the Mechanical Engineering Technology Program. Earlier in the year ARCO made a \$5,000 gift to the college.

Dr. Swaminadham Midtun, program coordinator of MEME, submitted the application.

The funds were released to the college through ARCO's University and College Grant Program and will be used to match funding for a proposal to the National Science Foundation for developing an Instrumentation Laboratory for Machinery Diagnostics and Condition Monitoring.

Lauren Elliott, assistant professor of the College of Engineering, received a PoWrMaster variable speed drive recently from IDI Controls. The gift — a very advanced type of motor — will be utilized by the Industrial Distribution Department for student enrollment in the factory automation course. Elliott said the drive is the most common application in the vary speed according to need in order to be more energy efficient.

"The speed drive is a chance to give students hands-on experience," he said. "It shows students real world applications of the theory they have learned in lecture."

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