

Our Judicial System.

What's Right And Wrong With It.

By George A. Burns

Clark County District Attorney Robert Miller discussed with the Sentinel-Voice the past week his views and opinions of the criminal and judicial system.

Miller touched on intricate and controversial matters such as plea-bargaining; the death penalty; our prison system; and the system as it pertains to fairness and equality towards blacks and other minorities.

In regard to plea-bargaining, Miller went into detail. He noted that the term "plea-bargaining" was also referred to as non-trial disposition, that being, results and conclusions of a specific case have been agreed upon without a jury having made the decision. Miller went on to explain that plea-bargaining occurs in a vast majority of all cases. "The reason being", he went on, "is the insurmountable cases filed last year. Here in this office, we prosecuted 200 cases. That was the most in the history of Clark County. Along with that high statistic comes unavailable space in our jails and prisons. Enters plea-bargaining. It's a necessary evil I personally don't like, nor does most of the public, but sometimes it's the only means of processing those cases. An interesting fact also in regard to plea-bargaining here in our office, is that for the last five years, there's been no case plea-bargained without the victim being involved. They are the best representatives of what's right. They went through the trauma of the crime. Now if this office and the defense attorney or (attorneys) can't convince the victim of the crime that the individual accused in the case should be plea-bargained, then that case isn't plea-bargained. I feel that this is only fair."

The probabilities of a 24 hour court concept sounded fine to Miller, but he noted that in order to have a system of this kind, "prosecutors, defense attorneys and judges must play an intricate part in this type court, literally working night shifts. This would also require more money along with the adjusting of schedules. There would be legalistic problems. It's an idea, but one almost impossible to be properly implemented and executed."

Miller touched upon how the public could play a more vital role, if it felt that the present system treated some unfairly. "They (the public) need to tell us more ways in which we can improve the system. They must allow some patience, considering our

limitations. They owe it to the community to be cooperative witnesses, and this is done by 1) informing the police of crimes committed, and 2) coming to court and testifying on that specific crime. Without them, the system has little chance of success."

In regard to the controversial death penalty, Miller was in favor of it for certain crimes, those being, "a premeditated contractual murder; a non-

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Clark County District Attorney Robert Miller.

passion homicide, and massive heinous crimes." The District Attorney noted that it was difficult to attain the death penalty today unless the person personally desired to be executed. He also said that "if life without the possibility of parole truly meant that, then this would be a different avenue to consider, but it doesn't. It's a necessary element of criminal justice."

Miller did feel that our prisons were places that the average person really doesn't want to be. He continued, "I've toured Nevada's prisons. Our maximum security prison is not a resort. Anyone in their right frame of mind would not want to be there. They're not allowed to come and go as they please as the general consensus tends to be. The biggest problem there really is not the facilities, but actual punishment. There are too frequent paroles with no set standard. They're spending a minimum

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percentage of their sentences while incarcerated. It's really a mockery."

The District Attorney stressed the importance of more Blacks and other minorities involving themselves more into the system to help change it and make it more fair and just to all. He noted that in regard to our present system, "there are a lot of people, not strictly related to race, who sit back to criticize and not make an effort to bring about change. Well change is best made through involvement. They must work to change it from inside. If a person is concerned about a lack of understanding and fairness by law enforcement agents and officials, the best way to remedy this feeling is to become a law enforcement agent and work from inside, because then they can convey their previous experiences to their co-workers and fellow colleagues and knock down the doors of injustice."

Miller concluded that there are only a very few Black attorneys in Las Vegas. "It's not nearly enough. We need more blacks, hispanics and other minorities involved in the legal mainstream." He cited that since the exit of Booker Evans, he now has only one black on his entire prosecuting staff.

YOUR LEGAL QUESTIONS - please!

By Attorney Herb Lewis

Do you have any legal questions? If you do, the Las Vegas SENTINEL-VOICE can get the answers for you at no charge through the help of Attorney Herb Lewis. All you need to do is to write this paper with your legal question and address your letter to Atty. Herb Lewis. LAS VEGAS SENTINEL-VOICE, 1201 SOUTH EASTERN AVENUE, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89104. Your answers will be published in a subsequent issue of this paper. Do not use the phone for your questions. They must be submitted in writing. Remember, there is no charge for this service. The series will begin in next week's issue.

Nevada Power To Conduct Energy Conservation Campaign

Nevada Power Company announced today it would ask Southern Nevada residents to conserve energy by pulling the plug on peak electricity demands during the hot summer months.

Vice President Dale Harmer said a major awareness campaign will begin next week to get the company's customers to cut down on energy use this summer from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. "That action," said Harmer, "will reduce the demand for power during peak periods. In the long run, with the cooperation of customers, we will not have to construct expensive peaking generators and everyone will benefit."

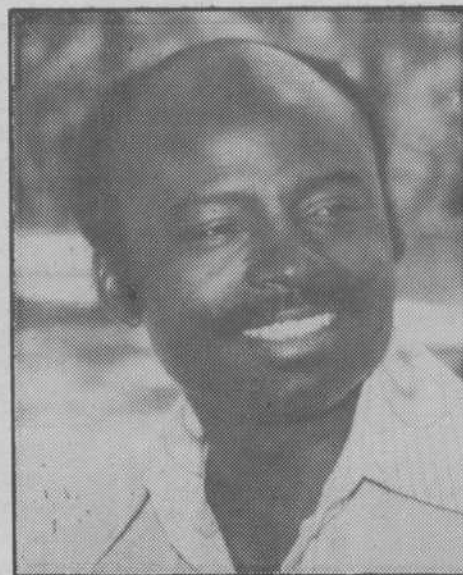
The "Pull the Plug on Peaks" campaign star-

ted several years ago and, according to Harmer, has helped reduce power demands.

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 FROM: William E. Robinson, Councilman-elect
 SUBJECT: Thanks, Voters

I would like to express my appreciation for your kindness during my recent campaign for the office of the City Councilman.

To my loyal supporters, please accept my sincere thanks for every act, word or deed made or said on my behalf. I shall be forever grateful.

Sincerely,

William E. Robinson
 North Las Vegas