'A Living Legend'

Percy Foreman At Hanszen

By BILL DELANEY
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The commanding personage and voice of Houston's renowned Percy Foreman reaffirmed to a captivated Hanszen "college night" audience Monday the legend of his legal and persuasive prowess.

After ten minutes of spicy introductory remarks involving "niggers," Jews, "gentleman farmer" Eisenhower and horse manure, Mr. Foreman presented a convincing hour and a half defense of the criminal lawyer and of his own rather infamous popular reputation.

As DEFENSE ATTORNEY in many splashy banner headline trials, Foreman blamed the dependence of modern America on such news media for the criminal lawyer's reputation in this country, as contrasted with the high esteem which European countries bestow on defenders of man's basic rights. Actually, about four-fifth of Foreman's cases are civil.

Underlying his lusty humor, powerful delivery, impressive legal memory and diplomatic responses to all questions was a humanitarian approach to law and a strict reverence for the Bill of Rights.

FOREMAN HIT HARDEST at the deplorable presence of the "voluntary confession" wrought by law enforcement officers, a perversion of the basic constitutional right of the accused to withhold evidence which can be used against him. The Fifth Amendment, he said, is the most basic of our rights.

"The more guilty a man is, the more he needs me," Foreman expressed as his credo.

IT IS THE DUTY of a defense attorney as a humanitarian, he stated, to defend persons whom he feels may be guilty and to present to the jury the circumstances responsible for the individual's crime, thus working toward a just punishment. He termed his view of the relativity of guilt and innocence as "greys," not "black" and "white."

In reply to a question about the Chessman case, he voiced opposition to capital punishment, and lamented the public's hesitation to aid the paroled prisoner in finding employment through which to repay his debt to society. This assistance, Foreman (Continued on Page 7)
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feels, is the best prevention of further crime.

"WHY DON'T DEM white folks get dem a Supreme Court?" was his anecdotal reply to a query about this court, which he lambasted as a body interpreting laws as the Congress has intended them ever since its "re-

olution of 1933."

As defense attorney for one of the alleged racketeers, the heart of this charge, in a recent court, N. Y., case, he again revealed his strong belief in the Fifth Amendment and his hatred of condemnation based by the thorny, minute points. He called it "SUCH GUILTY BY INERENCE," aided by today's newspaper coverage of crime, as well as the death penalty, will cause future generations to look back on 1969 with the same horror with which we view the Salem witchcraft trials of 1992, he said.

A well-educated, well-informed and concerned voting populace is the only sure cure to the current lawlessness, in America's current legal picture, Foreman emphasized.

He drew laughs with mention of himself as only sur-

viving member to the law firms of Moses, Justinian, Webster, Blackstone & Foreman, satirizing the prevalence of law firms of mostly defunct partners and emphasizing his own individual-

ity.

"I am against organized crime," Foreman said, and proudly referred to his assistance in driving the Galveston Nine to success from Houston in 1937. Like many a jury member, this reporter was en 

grossed by Foreman's delivery and unfortunately forgot to ask him at this point about the strange George Furr of Duval County.

After a few unofficial digs at District Attorney Dan 

Walton, Foreman expressed his feelings as a private citizen that Clarence Collins is not guilty of the Selby murder, despite the "voluntary confession."

Foreman made no apologies for the reluctance to donate money, as well as for love of justice. Often charged with trickery and chicanery, he admit-

ted several innocuous tricks, such as making all his clients shave, avenge suspicious mustaches and sideburns.

The Predominantly Hansen audience was generally impressed with Foreman, with scattered references to him as the "Clarence Darrow of our time."

Tuesday night Foreman was to have spoken to a group of students at Austin (he is a graduate of the University of Texas Law School) and Friday, at Fort Worth.

The Thresher apologizes for not having given this outside speaker the credit he deserves.

Percy Foreman was certainly as interesting a visitor to the Rice campus as Gov. Meiyner, Dr. Ny-

aradi or John Daly.