WRC given scope on Monkey Trial

BY GINGER YOUNG

Thresher Reporter

John T. Scopes, the man who believes that “the most important thing in our species is the individual,” spoke at Will Rice Tuesday night on the 1925 Monkey Trial.

Scopes, the militant youth of his day and defendant in the trial which tested the Butler Act against teaching evolution in Tennessee public schools, answered five questions he is commonly asked about the trial: why was it held in Dayton, who were Darrow and Bryan, why did he do it, and would he do it again?

Test Case

In answer to the last question, Scopes had a probable yes, for he “would not forsake liberty for conformity and security.”

Answering an ad by the American Civil Liberties Union, Scopes offered himself as bait to get the law off the books and “put Dayton on the map.” A mathematician, Scopes had only substituted in biology for ten days and doesn’t remember exactly what he taught then.

Bryan, Scopes recalls, was talented, not a hypocrite, but just “thought with emotion and not with his mind.” Darrow was the “logical humanitarian” striving to prove the law unconstitutional and show that evolution is not the “conspiracy of biological science to undermine Christianity.”

Student Rights

Still honoring the right to think, Scopes insists that the limits of academic freedom should be set by teachers and not by the administration. He supported the right of students to hear such visiting speakers as Timothy Leary.

Author of the recently published book, “Center of the Storm,” Scopes holds “Inherit the Wind” basically accurate, except for the mobs and riots. As a young and vigorous opponent of the “vicious” Butler Act, John Scopes doesn’t regret the $100 fine.