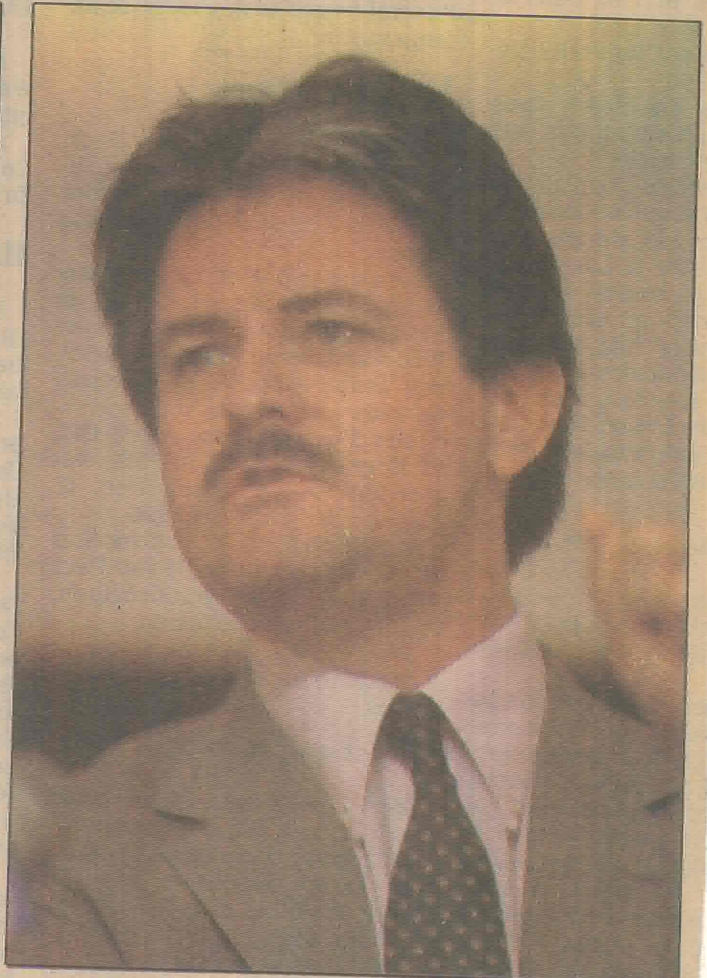


FRIDAY

Oct. 31, 1986 ★

Tribune-Herald

LOCAL



Staff photos — Steve Earley

'... McLennan County has become known as a haven for those who manufacture and sell drugs.'

— Paul Gartner

'But all this talk about McLennan County being a haven for drug manufacturers is just a bunch of bull.'

— Vic Feazell

Feazell, Gartner face off in debate before Jaycees

By DARRELL DUNN
Tribune-Herald staff writer

McLennan County district attorney candidates Vic Feazell and Paul Gartner sparred in a relatively calm debate Thursday sponsored by the Waco Jaycees.

Feazell, the Democratic incumbent, said his office has had the highest felony conviction rate in the state the past two years and has returned \$2 million in hot check collections to merchants and collected \$1 million in misdemeanor fines in 1986.

"I've been your DA for almost four years, and during that time we've put together a record we're pretty proud of and one I think most of the people of McLennan County are proud of... I've

made crime pay for the citizens of McLennan County and not the criminals," Feazell said.

Gartner countered that McLennan County needs a district attorney who can work closer with law enforcement agencies, can speed up indictments in pending cases and is tougher on drug prosecution.

"As your district attorney I will help coordinate the activities of all law enforcement so that we can have a cooperative effort to combat crime in McLennan County," Gartner said.

"The crime problem is too big for Mr. Feazell," Gartner said. "It's too big for me, by myself. We've got to have a cooperative effort, and I submit I'm the only candidate that can work with

all federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to combat the growing crime problem."

Feazell said he does not have a problem with individual police officers in the Waco Police Department, only with Chief of Police Larry Scott. He said he could not have compiled his felony conviction rate without the help of the street police officer.

"I've won three elections for this job and I feel I will win a fourth. If the chief of police can't get along with me, then the City Council needs to get them a new chief of police," Feazell said.

Feazell and Gartner disagree about

Please see FEAZELL, Page 14C

Feazell, Gartner debate before Jaycees

□ From Page 1C

whether McLennan County has a more severe drug problem than other counties.

"I'm concerned because McLennan County has become known as a haven for those who manufacture and sell drugs," Gartner said.

He said illegal drug use in the county is directly responsible for an increased crime rate in Waco in 1986 as compared to 1985.

"Every county in the United States has a drug problem and we're working to combat ours," Feazell said. "But all this talk

about McLennan County being a haven for drug manufacturers is just a bunch of bull. You can go to any county and you'll have someone spouting off that their county is the haven. We've got a problem, but its not a haven for any drug manufacturing."

He said his office frequently prosecutes drug cases, and three weeks ago obtained a life sentence against a man convicted of delivery of hydromorphone.

Gartner said Feazell has been too slow to present cases to the grand jury for indictment.

"I will expedite the handling of cases... over half of the felony defendants in McLennan County Jail have not been indicted," he said.

"You can't indict cases the minute they walk in the door... I'd rather take my time and do it right," Feazell said. "That's why we've got the conviction rate we've had."

Feazell said Gartner has no experience in prosecuting capital murder cases. He said he (Feazell) has obtained death penalties in four capital murder cases in the past three years.

"I ask you, if a member of your family was murdered, who would you want to be the lead prosecutor in the case?" he asked. "Vic Feazell has proven what he can do in the courtroom."

"He may be the only one who has handled a capital murder case, but I've handled numerous murder cases and the only difference is individual voir dire instead of group voir dire," Gartner said.

Voir dire is the process of questioning potential jurors to determine if they can fairly render a verdict in court hearing.