

Abortion

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because of his religious convictions, he was disqualifying himself from hearing further charges against Ryan. He said he had asked the presiding judge of the St. Louis County Circuit Court to appoint a special judge to hear the city charges.

Ryan, 31, of the 1100 block of Congress Avenue, Spanish Lake, nearly always attempts to block the entrance to Dr. Roitman's office when patients try to enter. He usually is the demonstrator who is arrested and charged, police said. He was released Saturday, as usual, on a \$200 property bond, which can be posted by merely showing a current paid property tax receipt.

Dr. Roitman said Ryan had entered the office Saturday and had tried to block patients from an inside door to the office. After an earlier demonstration, Ryan was charged with destruction of property because he had ripped away an office curtain, Dr. Roitman said.

Judge Johnson said that Drs. Roitman and Palmer were "none too clean," pointing out that the two osteopaths had served four months each in prison in 1980 for income tax evasion. The Internal Revenue Service later charged the partners with evading more than \$3 million in back taxes and penalties by failing to report cash income they received for performing abortions at the clinic in Bridgeton.

Judge Johnson said he also had put off acting on the charges against Ryan because of a civil suit filed last year by Drs. Roitman and Palmer to enjoin Ryan and two other frequent demonstrators, Samuel H. Lee and Anne O'Brien, from interfering with the operation of the clinic, its staff and its patients.

The suit, which also seeks actual damages of \$100,000 and punitive damages of \$1 million, has been held up because the clinic offices are in a condominium office building and several other physicians there have refused to sanction the legal action, Dr. Roitman said.

The weekly demonstrators conduct their picketing and sit-in protests in an atrium area of the building, known as the Northwest Professional Building. They have been permitted inside the building because some of the other physicians and owners have invited them, Ryan said Saturday.

"Thank God, there are still some people who are willing to take a stand for what they believe in despite the fact that it might mean some inconvenience or trouble or fewer customers," said Ryan. He is a social worker at St. Joseph's Home for Boys in St. Louis and a member of Missouri Citizens for Life.

Referring to Judge Johnson, he said it was "refreshing to have a judge who does not say one thing in private and then another when he puts on his robes."

He equated Judge Johnson with some Southern judges who sympathized with the civil rights movement of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in the 1960s and stretched the law to mitigate against harsh treatment of freedom marchers who practiced civil disobedience.

Ryan denied Dr. Roitman's charges that he had physically abused patients and nurses at the clinic in his zeal to dissuade abortion seekers.

"We are there every week to oppose violence and certainly would not use violence against anyone," Ryan said. "On the contrary, I have been stepped on, kicked and physically abused at times at the clinic. I will put my body on the line and between the woman seeking an abortion and the abortionist, but I have never grabbed or raised my hand against anyone."

Clipped By:



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