

✓ Judge's case handed to attorney general

12-3-86

SANTA CRUZ — District Attorney Art Danner said Tuesday he has asked the state Attorney General's Office to assume the investigation of Superior Court Judge Thomas Black, accused of kneeling and kicking a 17-year-old boy.

"This request was made on the basis that the Santa Cruz County District Attorney's Office appears before Judge Black on almost a daily basis and prosecutes jury trials in that court on a regular basis. Under these circumstances it is appropriate that the state attorney general take jurisdiction in this matter and oversee what investigation is necessary," said Danner.

"Based on an informal telephone conversation with Assistant Attorney General John Sugiyama there is every indication that the state attorney general would assume jurisdiction of the case," Danner said.

The incident with the youth stemmed from telephone calls last Wednesday that Black said he received from a Rio del Mar neighbor concerned that his 14-year-old daughter had not returned home.

About 9:45 p.m. a car pulled up and the girl got out. Black told deputies she appeared to be drunk and that she was wet and disheveled.

Seeking to find out what happened, Black said he tried to get 17-year-old Ron Kingsford who was driving the car to meet with the girl's father.

According to sheriff's reports, Black grabbed the youth's car keys from the ignition. When the youth produced another set and said he was going to leave, Black allegedly grabbed him by the sweater and kneed him in the groin and face.

The boy told deputies Black also kicked him after he had fallen to the ground. Black denies the allegation.

The youth went inside, where he stayed about 15 minutes with the girl's parents and then drove home, according to reports. The youth's father, UCSC Police Officer Ron Kingsford called deputies when he learned what had happened.

Attorney Tony Salatich, who represents Black, says the judge welcomes a full investigation into the incident. Salatich said he is confident no charges will be filed against Black.