He Vows Further Support to Preserve Heritage

By TRENT ANGERS
(Special to The Times-Picayune)

LAFAYETTE, La. - Gov. elect Edwin Edwards promised Wednesday his administration will continue supporting efforts to preserve Louisiana's French language heritage and culture.

In a speech to the closing gathering of the International Congress of French Speaking Americans, Edwards spoke in French, boasting of his French-maternal heritage and praising Gov. John J. McKeithen for the supportive role he has played in trying to preserve the French language.

"Both Louisiana and my administration propose to go on with the work so well started by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana," Edwards said, referring to the state agency created by the 1968 Legislature to preserve and expand the use of French in Louisiana.

"This task must go on until our Louisiana will have become bilingual," he said.

Edwards told delegates to the convention that all they need to do to realize French is "a living reality" in Louisiana is take a walk along the streets of some south Louisiana towns and talk French with the townspeople.

Telling the delegates from some 15 French-speaking countries and provinces that Louisiana is serious in her effort to preserve French, Edwards outlined the state legislation creating CODIFIL and that urging school administrators to teach French in their schools.

REVIEW ASKED

Edwards called on parish school administrators to consider reviewing their priorities so as to place French instruction in their curriculums.

"It would be well for them to give some thought to a review of their priorities in such a way that French, as learned very early in life, be placed in the perspective it fully rates," he said. "Of course, this suggestion is directed only to those parishes where the French language is still utilized by a substantial percentage of their populations."