

Governor delivers good news and a gift



A "thumbs up" speech by Governor Bob Martinez was one of the highlights of the Florida Sheriffs Association's 77th Annual Conference.

PENSACOLA — Governor Bob Martinez came to the 77th Annual Conference of the Florida Sheriffs Association bearing good news and a gift.

The good news focused on laws that were passed in 1990 to strengthen law enforcement and improve the criminal justice system — laws that he sponsored and endorsed.

The gift was a check for \$500,000 from the current state budget which he presented to the Sheriffs Association to help finance its statewide crack cocaine task force. An identical check delivered to the Association by the Governor last year resulted in "Operation Rockpile," an ongoing series of drug sweeps that has produced thousands of arrests

plus confiscation of large quantities of illegal drugs, vehicles and cash.

"We've made the criminal justice system, including prisons, a major issue each year," said Martinez in a banquet address. "The budget for the criminal justice system has soared, and as long as there is a problem, we will continue to support the providing of resources to deal with the issue of crime and drugs."

Martinez said he recommended to the legislature a number of laws which will put a burden on drug users, "for you know as well as I that if no one bought, there wouldn't be pushers." He said the bills that were passed "mean if you're caught and tried you can lose your professional license to practice in Florida, that you can lose your occupational license to open a business, and you can lose your driver's license. I think that sends a smessage to those who want to be users. They're part of the problem."

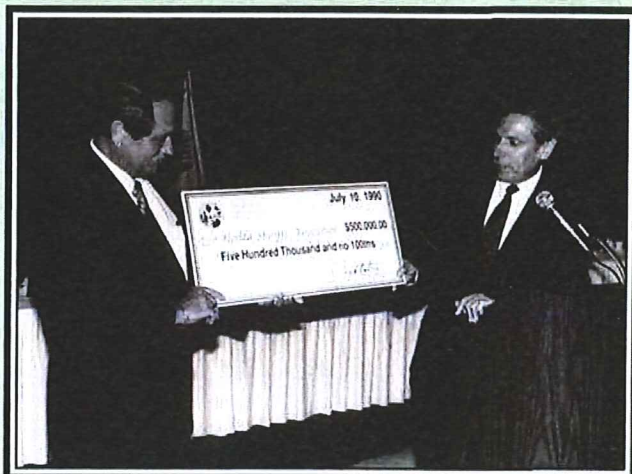
Noting that Florida's crime rate took a slight but favorable downturn in 1989, Martinez said he felt all the initiatives having to do with drugs were having an impact.

He said positive steps were also being taken to deal with hard core juveniles. "Eight hundred of the 9,476 prison beds I recommended this year are for hard core juveniles — the type that will take your head off," he added. "You've seen them. These are more than youthful offenders. They're hardened and they need a special place for the safety of other youthful offenders. Those systems will be put in place, the same as . . . tracking the gangs that are beginning to develop in certain localities."

Martinez said he supported a constitutional amendment to enhance victims' rights, and legislation to expand drug free school zones so that colleges, univer-



The Governor was introduced by his 1990 running mate, former Monroe County Sheriff J. Allison DeFoor II, who is a candidate for Lieutenant Governor.



Florida Sheriffs Association President Earl (Sermon) Dyess, Jr., (left) accepts a check for \$500,000 from the Governor. It will be used to help finance the Association's statewide crack cocaine task force.

sities, parks and housing authority properties also become places where "young people are safe from those who push drugs."

Describing drug kingpins as "merchants of death," the Governor reported he had just signed into law a new statute that allows them to be tried under Florida's death penalty law.

In closing, he said there is an urgent need for a law limiting death sentence appeals. "Even the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is asking for it. It isn't right that again and again, on almost identical appeals, someone can delay justice for an indefinite period of time. When you carry out the sentence, it ought to be as close as possible to the point when the crime was committed, and that isn't occurring."