

Doctor criticizes Tinsley for award

By **NORMA MARTIN**
Houston Chronicle

A Houston physician and anti-smoking crusader has criticized City Council member Eleanor Tinsley for her plans to appear at a tennis tournament sponsored by a cigarette company, but Tinsley said the appearance won't compromise her principles.



Tinsley

"I don't see anything wrong with accepting a literacy award at a tennis tournament. It's for a good purpose, and it's hard for me to see something wrong with it," said Tinsley, who was instrumental in passage of a city ordinance limiting smoking in the work place.

Dr. Alan Blum, an assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine and founder of a group called Doctors Ought to Care, said in a letter to Tinsley that it was inappropriate for her to appear at the Virginia Slims tennis tournament.

"I was troubled and disheartened by news that you intend to appear at a cigarette sponsored sporting event to receive a dona-

tion for a literacy organization," Blum said in the letter.

Tinsley said Thursday night that she understood she was only receiving an award for her contributions to the local literacy campaign. Blum's letter indicated Tinsley is to receive a monetary contribution for the campaign.

The letter also said Tinsley was compromising her anti-billboard position because the Philip Morris Companies Inc. "is perhaps the leading billboard advertiser in Houston, with current campaigns for Marlboro cigarettes, Virginia Slims cigarettes, Benson and Hedges cigarettes, Merit cigarettes and Miller Beer disgracing our roadsides and neighborhoods."

Tinsley, the chief force behind city billboard limitations, said she remains opposed to billboards and has refused to participate with organizations that use billboards in their campaigns in the past.

Tinsley said that perhaps this issue is "one of those gray areas, where you have to make a decision. I see a lot of gray areas in life. But I don't see anything wrong with accepting the award or obviously I wouldn't be doing it."

Blum plans to have a candlelight "vigil for victims of Virginia Slims" at the tennis tournament Monday in protest of the sponsor.