

## TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

# Late N.O. Novelist's Work May Become A Best Seller

By: Mabel C. Simmons

It is not very often that a university press publishes a best-selling novel. Indeed many such presses publish no novel at all - only scholarly works. Louisiana State University Press, however, seems on the verge of breaking all the rules by publishing a novel which gives signs of becoming a best seller.

The book is the gargantuan, posthumously published "A Confederacy of Dunces" by the

late John Kennedy Toole of New Orleans which is being greeted with extravagant praise by the critics.

"An explosion of inspired lunacy" critic Henry Kisor describes it. "I laughed until my sides ached," he said, "...what a delight, what a roaring, rollicking, foot-stomping wonder this book is."

"A Confederacy of Dunces" is in its fourth printing exclu-

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sive of book club editions," according to Catherine Silvia, promotion manager at LSU Press.

Grove Press has bought the paperback rights and its edition will make its appearance in the spring of 1981. Producer Scott Kramer, Ms. Sylvia further reveals, has purchased the moving picture rights, and the Book of the Month Club has chosen the book as an alternate selection for December. Rights for a printing of the book in large type have also been sold. British rights and translation rights in several

European countries are under negotiation at present.

Dawson Gaillard, also with LSU Press, recalls that a few years ago while she was on the faculty of Loyola University in New Orleans and was editor of *The New Orleans Review* which was printed there, she, as editor, reprinted a part of the then-unpublished manuscript of the book in the *Review*.

Loyola, in a way, was responsible for the eventual publication of "A Confederacy of Dunces." The author's mother, Mrs. Thelma Toole, after her son's death, had made efforts to find a publish-

er for the manuscript but was unsuccessful until she read in the newspaper that Loyola University was offering a course in creative writing to be taught by novelist Walker Percy of Covington, La.

Percy, approached through Loyola, agreed to read the novel and when he did, he was delighted with it. He tried to interest his own publisher in it but failed. He then submitted it to the LSU Press which accepted it.