

16 witnesses unlock sect's closed society

By **BILL PRESCOTT**
Sun staff writer

The 16 witnesses who testified in Clearwater's public hearings on Church of Scientology activities provided the first-hand information city officials will use if they decide to design ordinances to regulate the sect.

Boston attorney Michael Flynn, who gathered the witnesses, said he questioned them extensively about their Scientology experiences and people they knew in the sect. He confirmed that information through other witnesses and contacts inside the church, he said.

If they had not been in the sect, Flynn said, "I'd have to be pretty much of a dunce to allow my witnesses to get up there and say the things they did."

He said church contracts and waivers signed by several witnesses were put into evidence. He can obtain other documents, he said, if necessary.

Witnesses who testified of personal involvement in crimes were granted immunity by prosecutors, or were out of jurisdictional boundaries, Flynn said.

Of the 16 who testified, Flynn said he represents Lavenda Van Schaick and Paulette Cooper directly in separate lawsuits against the Church of Scientology. He said he is involved also indirectly in lawsuits filed by Ernest and Adelle Hartwell and Janie Peterson.

The witnesses came from throughout the country and represented involvement in all levels of the Scientology organization. In the order they testified, they were:

- Edward Walters, 44, said he is a gambling casino executive living in Las Vegas, Nevada. Walters said he had been a high-level auditor with the church's organization in Las Vegas. He summarized church policies and organization.

- Ronald Edward DeWolf, 48, said he is the eldest son of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard. DeWolf said he lives in Carson City, Nevada, where he is a security officer in a hotel casino. He alleged his father fabricated most of the biographies circulated by the church. He also told of the sect's formation and early years until he quit in 1959.

- Lori Taverna, 39, said she lives in New York City, where she



RONALD E. DeWOLFE
... founder's eldest son

operates a souvenir stand in Times Square. She said she was a 17-year veteran of the sect and alleged a wide range of abuses—including medical neglect—of church staff members and their children. Altogether, she said she spent 11 months in Clearwater during two stays.

- Casey Kelly, 23, said he is stationed at a U.S. Navy radar school in Virginia. He said he spent three years in the Clearwater Flag Land Base handling church finances and recruitment.

- David Ray, 18, said he lives in San Diego, Calif. and works at his grandparents' motel. He said he was in the church six months, most of that time in Clearwater doing menial labor. He testified about poor living and health conditions.

- Rosie Pace, 30, lives in hiding in the western United States, Flynn said. She said church indoctrination made it difficult for her to leave and that she spent eight months at the Clearwater base.

- Ernest and Adelle Hartwell, 62 and 58, respectively, said they were taken to Hubbard's desert hideout after being promised a trip to the Clearwater Flag. Mrs. Hartwell said she was promised a cure for an intestinal condition, later diagnosed as colitis by a medical doctor.

- George Meister said he is a businessman living in Greeley, Colo., and that his 22-year-old daughter Susan died while on

Hubbard's ship Apollo in Morocco. He said Moroccan and church officials said the single gunshot wound to her forehead was self-inflicted.

- Lavenda Van Schaick, 32, said she is in hiding from church harassment. She said she spent nine years in Scientology and that she received no schooling during her teens. She testified about living conditions of children and contended hepatitis swept through the Clearwater base in 1977 but was not reported to health officials.

- Janie Peterson, 34, said she lives in Las Vegas, Nev., and was a member of the sect's enforcement arm, the Guardian Office. She said sect community programs such as the Gerus Society, Apple Schools and Narcoticon are "basically public relations." As part of her job, she used information in confidential confessional files to fuel smear campaigns, she said.

- Scott Mayer, 38, said he lives in California and is a legal administrative assistant to the city of Santa Monica. Mayer, who said he was a former sect senior executive, told of a worldwide network of infiltration, conspiracy and smuggling.

- Robert Dardano, 31, said he is a carpenter in Boston. He said he burgled legal and medical offices on church orders to steal confidential files on sect enemies.

- Paulette Cooper, 39, said she is a free-lance writer in New York City. She testified she was a target of intensive church harassment after publishing a 1971 book, "The Scandal of Scientology."

- Dr. John Clark said he is a physician at Massachusetts General Hospital. He said he was harassed after giving lectures about the dangers of Scientology and other cults.

- Brown McKee said he lives in New London, Conn., and was a sect minister for 24 years. He said he and his two Scientology missions broke away from the main church in December 1981 after attempting a reform movement.

Staff Writer Steven Cirardi contributed to this story.