

# St. Petersburg Times

## clearwater times

EDITION

section **B**  
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 1982

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES

## Anti-Scientology lawyer gets police protection

By JOHN HARWOOD  
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

**CLEARWATER**—The city of Clearwater has assigned police protection to Michael J. Flynn, the man who is leading the city's charge against the Church of Scientology.

The church ridiculed the move as a "publicity stunt."

Plainclothes Clearwater police officers are guarding Flynn, a Boston lawyer who is the city's \$80,000 consultant for public hearings on church activities that begin Wednesday and are scheduled to continue through May 15.

City Manager Tony Shoemaker said he ordered around-the-clock protection as a precaution, and said he is not aware of any threats on Flynn's life. The plainclothes officers are members of the police department's "special unit strike force," Shoemaker said.

**FLYNN DID NOT** request protection, Shoemaker said. Flynn said, however, that there is "justifiable concern" about his safety.

In addition, Flynn said that certain potential witnesses may not show up for the hearings because they fear for their lives.

The church's lawyer, Paul B. Johnson of Tampa, dismissed as ridiculous the suggestion that Flynn or anyone else needs protection from the church.

"I think that is patently absurd," Johnson scoffed.

Johnson, a former Hillsborough County

state attorney, called the assignment of police protection "a publicity stunt" by Flynn designed to make local residents think Scientologists are "a dangerous group of criminals."

Johnson said it was curious that Flynn feels the need for police protection right before the hearings. He pointed out Flynn has long been engaged in lawsuits against the church and appeared in federal court in Tampa just two weeks ago, apparently without police protection.

"He's certainly attempting to set the stage for... the extravaganza that he will present," Johnson continued. "His presentation ought to be able to stand on its own without these kinds of theatrical tricks."

Meanwhile, Johnson said the church still has not decided whether it will send representatives to testify at the hearings. However, Johnson said he will make a 45-minute opening statement when the hearings begin. Flynn will also make an opening statement.

**THE HEARINGS** are being held to investigate Flynn's allegations that church activities violate numerous civil and criminal laws. After the hearings, city commissioners are to consider regulating the church with ordinances governing charitable solicitations and consumer protection.

In other hearing-related developments:  
✓ Over the weekend and Monday, Flynn met individually with city commissioners to coach them on do's and don'ts of questioning witnesses.

The church has sued the commission in

federal court over the hearings, alleging violation of its constitutional rights.

✓ Mayor Charles LeCher said that his apartment was "swept" with electronic equipment to check for the presence of bugging equipment.

"The police have just done it for me as a courtesy," LeCher said. He indicated that no bugs were found.

## Court overturns Scientology judgment

Associated Press

**SALEM, Ore.** — The Oregon Court of Appeals on Monday overturned a jury's finding that the Church of Scientology had committed fraud against a former member and intentionally caused her emotional distress.

The court nevertheless ruled that Martin Samuels, a Portland minister of the church, and the church's mission in Oregon should be retried on the fraud count.

However, the jury will be allowed to look at only those claims made against the church that were of a secular nature, the court ruled.

The opinion said the First Amendment protects religions from fraud charges because the truth of religious beliefs cannot be determined by a court.

The suit was filed by Julie Christofferson, who moved to Portland from Eureka, Mont. in 1975 after graduating from high school.