

## Sect branches file \$20 million-plus lawsuit

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A \$20 million-plus lawsuit has been filed by two branches of the Church of Scientology accusing a Boston lawyer, his brother, his law partner and a former Scientologist of violating the civil rights of church members.

The federal lawsuit claims attorneys Michael Flynn and Thomas Hoffman, Washington, D.C. restaurateur Kevin Flynn and former Scientologist Laurel Sullivan conspired to violate the church members civil rights by a campaign of lies that led to government investigations and adverse publicity.

"The defendants were motivated by their own personal greed as well as a personal animus toward the adherents and tenets of the religion of Scientology," the

lawsuit alleges.

The suit, filed Tuesday by the Church of Scientology of California and the Florida-based Church of Scientology Flag Service Organization Inc., also accuses the defendants of violating racketeering law by using the mails to raise money to support their allegedly illegal activities.

Ms. Sullivan is additionally accused of breaching attorney-client privilege by disclosing information she gained as a church agent dealing with church attorneys.

"It's a suit for all religions and the protection of their First Amendment rights of freedom to worship," said the Rev. Heber Jentsch, president of the Church of Scientology International. "We've decided to pick up the slingshot and knock down the Go-

liath, which involves government."

However, Flynn—who has handled several suits against the church and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard—termed the action "just another chain in the (church's) attack on myself, my colleagues, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service), the FBI—everybody who's litigated against them."

He noted that a similar 1981 suit accusing him and others of conspiring to destroy the church was dismissed in federal district court in 1982.

Flynn claimed the current lawsuit appeared to reflect the church's frustration at recent losses on other legal fronts, including loss of its federal tax-exempt status, failure to recover 30,000 documents allegedly dam-

aging to Hubbard from a former church official, and a British court's condemnation of Scientology as "corrupt, immoral and sinister" in a suit dealing with child custody.

Ms. Sullivan was a key witness against the church in the suit regarding the Hubbard documents.

The lawsuit seeks \$10 million damages for civil rights violations, \$10 million punitive damages and at least \$600,000 in compensatory damages for the church's losses in fighting the defendants' allegedly illegal activities.

Flynn termed "nonsense" the specific allegations in the lawsuit and said many already had been disproved. They include:

□ The defendants allegedly arranged to have a forged check

drawn on Hubbard's account at the Bank of New England in Massachusetts in March or April 1982. When the forgery was discovered, the defendants allegedly falsely blamed the church. The matter is under investigation by federal authorities, but Flynn maintains the church framed him.

□ The defendants allegedly were responsible for 1982 city hearings in Clearwater which led to legislation the church is fighting as unconstitutional. The lawsuit says the hearings were conducted on the pretext of considering charitable solicitation ordinances, but effectively amounted to "criminal prosecution without due-process safeguards."

□ The defendants allegedly falsely told Arizona authorities that

the church was connected with InterCap Corp., a firm whose employees were already under criminal investigation. This in turn led to what the lawsuit termed a "baseless" investigation of the church by the Arizona attorney general's office.

□ Flynn also is accused of making false statements in the lawsuit he filed on behalf of Hubbard's eldest son, Ronald DeWolf, seeking to have his father declared legally dead or mentally incompetent.

That suit was later dismissed, and on Monday Hubbard's third wife, Mary Sue Hubbard, filed a \$5 million Superior Court lawsuit alleging that DeWolf and Flynn attempted a "massive hoax" in seeking to have DeWolf declared trustee of the Hubbard estate.