

Hubbard removed as a defendant

From Sun reports

A judge in Los Angeles Friday removed Church of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard as a defendant in a \$25 million suit by a former member who claims church promises that its methods improve mental health are a fraud.

Superior Court Judge Norman Epstein said he dropped Hubbard from the suit because the plaintiff's attorneys were unable to find him for three years to serve him with official notice of the legal action. The suit continues against the church.

Larry Wollersheim sued the church, claiming he spent \$100,000 on Scientology counseling over 11 years, believing church promises that it would make him more stable, healthy, confident and productive.

In a similar action, a woman in Portland, Ore., sued the church, claiming it had defrauded her by promising to help develop her creativity and raise her IQ score when she was a college student in 1975 and 1976.

Julie Christofferson Titchbourne won a \$2 million judgment, but that was reversed by the Oregon Court of Appeals in 1982 and a new trial was ordered.

Testimony in the retrial Thursday featured a former church leader, Martin Samuels, who said the church used covert operations to learn a judge's attitudes about drug use and sexual promiscuity to tailor its defense against her suit.

Scientology is based on Hubbard's concepts of mental health.

Through the use of a so-called E-meter, an instrument similar to a lie-detector, church members participate in exercises and counseling aimed at eliminating negative mental images and achieving what Scientologists call the "clear" state.

Adherents may spend thousands of dollars achieving that state at sessions offered at Scientology facilities around the world. Revenues from such sessions, as well as from Hubbard's writings, form the foundation of Scientology's financial empire.