

Scientologists open defense in civil suit

By FRED LEESON
of The Oregonian staff

A Church of Scientology member who said her involvement in the church helped free her life of drugs and excessive use of alcohol testified Wednesday that the church helped pay for a 1978 lawsuit she filed against opponents of the church.

Jessica Marks, a former Portland resident, appeared as the first witness for the church in defense of a \$42 million civil fraud trial in Multnomah County Circuit Court against the church and its founder, L. Ron Hubbard. The fraud suit was brought on behalf of Marks' former Portland roommate, Julie Christofferson Titchbourne.

Marks said she was not an "agent" of the church when she sued Titchbourne, Titchbourne's mother and several others who attempted to deprogram Marks in 1976.

She said, however, that a lawyer for a church organization helped her find an attorney and that the church made two arrangements to help her pay the costs of her unsuccessful suit, which was dismissed in 1981 before reaching trial.

Although the deprogramming incident involving Marks occurred in June 1976, she said she was unable to file suit until March 1978 when "the church was willing financially to help me."

She said the church at one time agreed to trade in equal dollar amounts her legal costs in return for church services for which she otherwise would have had to pay.

Later, when the suit was dismissed and she still owed her attorney \$12,000, she said she paid \$2,000 and that the church arranged fund-raising events to pay the rest. "I had already paid \$10,000," she said.

Garry P. McMurry, attorney for Titchbourne, had Marks read an internal church document written while Marks' suit was still pending. The doc-

ument noted that Titchbourne's mother was "being sued by Scientologists in Portland."

McMurry said Marks' suit was dismissed after the church failed to produce documents ordered by then-Circuit Judge William M. Dale, who dismissed the case and held the church in contempt of court. Dale is now a U.S. magistrate.

Marks also testified that she tried to talk to Titchbourne on two occasions in 1984 in an attempt to get Titchbourne to drop her suit against Scientology.

"Were you asked by the church to make that contact?" McMurry asked. "Yes, because she (Titchbourne) is attacking my church," Marks replied. Marks said she felt Titchbourne had not suffered any damages as a result of her involvement with Scientology in 1975 and 1976, and thus shouldn't be suing the church.

"Julie doesn't need Scientology," Marks added, "but I do."

Titchbourne won more than \$2 million in damages against the church in a 1979 trial, but that judgment was reversed by the Oregon Court of Appeals and sent back for a new trial.

Marks said she started taking Scientology courses in 1975. Asked by defense attorney Harry Manion what impact the church had had on her life, Marks replied, "For me, I got off drugs. I quit drinking to excess. I got a promotion in my job. My father and I were starting to communicate better."

During his cross-examination, McMurry introduced a letter Marks wrote in 1973 before she was involved in Scientology in which she said she had stopped taking drugs. Marks said that in 1973 she did not consider marijuana a drug and that she had continued smoking marijuana frequently until she joined Scientology.

The defense will resume its case Thursday in the courtroom of Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer.

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