

Titchbourne hopes \$39 million award may help others

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After winning a \$39 million judgment against the Church of Scientology late Friday afternoon, Julie Christofferson Titchbourne said she hoped to establish a foundation to help other victims of thought-control organizations.

Titchbourne, a soft-spoken civil engineer who hugged her mother, husband and lawyers after hearing the jury's decision, said she hoped her experience could be turned to an advantage for others whose lives need rebuilding.

During a brief appearance before reporters outside the courtroom door, neither Titchbourne nor one of her lawyers, Ronald L. Wade, discussed how much money would be placed in the charitable foundation if the \$39 million verdict withstands appeal. Wade said the foundation would provide medical and mental treatment and occupational training for former cult members.

As Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer read the verdict in steady, unemotional tones, dozens of Scientologists who packed the courtroom gasped, and high-ranking church officials dashed to a nearby pay telephone as soon as Londer read the amounts of damages.

While the Scientologists sent word of the verdict up secret church communication lines toward their reclusive leader, L. Ron Hubbard, lawyers in the case took opposite views of the fate of the case in state and federal appellate courts.

"Verdict is ridiculous"

"This verdict is ridiculous," declared Earle C. Cooley, a Boston lawyer whose aggressive cross-examinations of former church officials who testified against Hubbard and the church dominated much of the 10-week trial.

"The Constitution of the United States is in serious trouble in the state of Oregon. I'm confident this decision will not stand up on appeal either in the U.S. Supreme Court or in the Oregon Supreme Court," Cooley said.

Meanwhile, Garry P. McMurry, who has represented Titchbourne since the early days of the suit in 1977 and through two trials, said he thinks the trial record and size of the verdict will withstand appeal.

"There were variations in amounts, showing differences of opinion on the jury," McMurry said. "I think it showed careful reflection."

The appeals route will go through the Oregon appellate system and then on to the U.S. Supreme Court, if the nation's top court elects to hear the case.

The jury awarded McMurry's full request of \$20 million in punitive damages against Hubbard, whom McMurry described during closing arguments as a "brilliant sociopath."

Jurors also granted \$17.5 million of the \$20 million McMurry requested against the Church of Scientology of California, which is Scientology's na-

tional corporate entity, and \$1.5 million of the \$2 million McMurry sought against the Church of Scientology Mission of Davis, which was the name of the Portland branch when Titchbourne was involved in 1975 and 1976.

McMurry in closing arguments Wednesday said it would take substantial amounts of money to send a message of punishment to Hubbard and the church because of the vast amounts of money to be collected from the sale of Scientology courses and processes.

Trial testimony indicated that the national church earned about \$1 million per week in 1982 and that Hubbard personally had received tens of millions of dollars from Scientology while claiming to make no more than a low-ranking staff member.

Heber Jentzsch, president of the Church of Scientology International, lashed out at the verdict in an emotional statement after the verdict. "We are the anvil that will wear out all the hammers," he said. "We will step up our investigations."

Attack on freedom cited

"No matter how long it takes, no matter what is found under the rocks, we will expose and crush this attack on the religious freedom of all Americans," said Jentzsch, who also issued a written statement prepared before the jury's verdict was revealed.

Based on evidence that one former Scientologist was providing information to the FBI and IRS, Jentzsch and other church leaders have contended that the federal government is involved in a conspiracy to destroy religious freedom.

Jentzsch repeated his statements at a Scientology rally held late Thursday night at the Scientology Church, 215 S.E. 9th Ave. About 200 attended.

Titchbourne, who graduated with honors in civil engineering from Washington State University several years after leaving Scientology, said she was relieved the trial was over but that she was not surprised by the amount awarded, based on the trial testimony.

Hubbard didn't appear

Hubbard, 74, did not appear at the trial although he was included as a defendant in absentia. Hubbard dropped from sight in 1980 as part of a plan to avoid lawsuits and government investigations, according to evidence at the trial.

Hubbard has written numerous books about Scientology dating back to 1950. He also has written or approved dozens of volumes of church policies including the "fair game" policy in which anyone declared to be an enemy of the church can be lied to, tricked, deceived or "destroyed" by any Scientologist without fear of retribution from within the church, according to trial testimony.

Anyone demanding a refund from the church is subject to being labeled an enemy, as Titchbourne was after requesting a refund after she was deprogrammed and left Scientology in 1976.

McMurry said he would request that the appeal of the case be heard directly by the Oregon Supreme Court.