

Scientists argue for mistrial

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — More than 1,000 Scientologists lined the halls of a county courthouse and marched outside Wednesday while a lawyer argued for a mistrial in the case of a \$39 million fraud judgment for a former member of the group.

Jurors who returned the judgment against the Church of Scientology were deliberately misled by the plaintiff's attorney, said Earle C. Cooley, a lawyer for the group, in arguments before Multnomah County Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer.

Cooley also contended that one juror's brother was a former Scientologist, despite her statements to the contrary, and that other jurors failed to report telephone calls from people claiming to be Scientologists.

During arguments, Scientologists gathered inside and outside the courthouse, singing "We Shall Overcome" as they marched outside.

The judgment was returned May 17 in a complaint filed by Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, 27, of Portland. She alleged the organization fraudulently claimed Scientology could improve her eyesight, intelli-

gence and creativity.

The mistrial motion was allowed because Londer had not yet signed the judgment. Londer was not expected to rule immediately on the request.

Cooley alleged that Ms. Titchbourne's attorney, Garry McMurry, displayed "flagrant disregard" for the limitations of the case, arguing points that specifically had been excluded.

McMurry attempted "to broaden the case into a large-scale attack on religion," Cooley contended.

Testimony about the assets of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard and tactics the group allegedly uses against its critics overstepped the bounds of the case, which was supposed to be limited to Ms. Titchbourne's contact with Scientologists, Cooley maintained.

Testimony that the organization was a business and not a religion ran counter to Londer's ruling that Scientology is a church, Cooley added.

"Where I come from, they'll get you for contempt of court for that," he said.

Cooley said it was impossible to erase testimony that's been implanted in the jury's heads.