

Scientology suit goes to trial for second time

By FRED LEESON
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A young woman who once won and then lost more than \$2 million in damages against the Church of Scientology in Portland started a second legal attack Monday on grounds that Scientologists defrauded her during nine months in 1975 and 1976.

Julie Christofferson Titchbourne, who began her involvement with the church when she was 17, is asking a Multnomah County Circuit Court jury to return \$3,253 she paid for courses and books and to award punitive damages as high as \$42 million against the church's founder and two church organizations.

The trial in the courtroom of Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer is expected to last three months.

Titchbourne alleges that she was defrauded indirectly by L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, and by the Church of Scientology of California and the Church of Scientology Mission of Davis, the latter being the Portland branch of the church.

Hubbard has been a recluse for many years and his whereabouts are not known. He has indicated through attorneys that he would not appear in court. The Church of Scientology International attempted Monday to appear in the suit for the limited purpose of indemnifying Hubbard, but Londer refused to let the organization join unless it accepted full legal standing as a party to the case.

Titchbourne alleges that she was told her Scientology courses would teach her more about the mind than any psychiatrist knew and more about the human body than any doctor knew.

Titchbourne, through attorney Garry P. McMurry, seeks up to \$20 million in punitive damages against Hubbard, \$20 million against the Church of Scientology of California and \$2 million against the Portland branch.

McMurry, in opening statements, told jurors that the church from Hubbard down had a policy of inten-

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tionally lying, distorting, hiding and concealing facts. He said Hubbard "controlled and directed the evilness of the fraud."

Portland attorney Ted E. Runstein, representing the two church entities, told the jury that Titchbourne was not defrauded by the church and that she seemed to be enjoying her activities with Scientologists until her parents locked her in her room during a visit to her Eureka, Mont., home in 1979 and had her deprogrammed.

"That meant locking her up until they talked her out of Scientology," he said.

Runstein said the purpose of the church was to teach members to use their analytical "creative" minds to help mankind and to do good. He said there were thousands of Scientologists in the Portland area. "They are proud of it," he said. "They are leading good lives because of it. It worked for them."

McMurry said she was told that Scientology could cure physical illnesses and insanity and that it could increase mental ability.

After Titchbourne attended courses for several weeks in Portland, McMurry said, she was persuaded by church officials to attend the Delphian Foundation at Sheridan rather than to return to Montana to start college.

Runstein said Titchbourne was strong-willed and "somewhat rebellious" in 1975 and 1976. He said she liked the classes and always was free to come and go as she wished. "She was never removed from society or taken away from her friends or family," he said.

Runstein said he believed Titchbourne had misstated the representations that were made to her about the classes. He added that the Scientologists involved believed what they told her as part of their religion. He said the defense would rely on freedom of religion to practice the philosophy of Scientology.

Titchbourne won a \$2 million judgment in 1979 but that verdict was overturned by the Oregon Court of Appeals. The appellate court struck some of the Scientology-related defendants from the first trial and eliminated a second claim by Titchbourne that the church had engaged in outrageous conduct in addition to fraud.

Runstein said Titchbourne's purpose in becoming involved with Scientology was the same as any other Scientologist. "She wanted to help mankind and do good."