

Big Picture  Local Focus
Daily Herald
SUBURBAN CHICAGO'S INFORMATION SOURCE

Second abuse lawsuit expected today

Author(s): Garrett Ordower Daily Herald Staff Writer

Date: July 8, 2004

Page: 13

Section: News

As a child of divorce estranged from her father, the 15-year-old Aurora Central Catholic High School student thought religion could help her through a difficult time.

Her teacher, Mark **Campobello**, happily obliged, instructing her conversion to Catholicism. But his guidance in religious matters soon turned into a yearlong sexual relationship, a civil lawsuit expected to be filed today in Kane County alleges.

The second civil lawsuit against Mark **Campobello**, the Rockford Diocese and its head, Bishop Thomas Doran, will seek damages in excess of \$50,000 from each. Joliet attorney Keith Aeschliman represents both victims.

Campobello pleaded guilty in May to abusing the two girls in 1999 and 2000 while he was a vice principal at Aurora Central and resident priest at St. Peter Catholic Church in Geneva. He has begun serving an eight-year prison sentence.

The Rockford Diocese and Doran should have protected the girls from abuse, but did not, Aeschliman contends.

The specifics of how the diocese handled the abuse will be part of the discovery process, which Aeschliman expects to take place concurrently for both cases.

He said he is searching for information from the diocese and others that would speak to its "pattern and practice" of dealing with cases of sexual abuse.

Aeschliman said the lawsuit will make the point that **Campobello** should have known the danger he posed to adolescent girls because he was already engaged in an illegal relationship with a 14-year-old Geneva girl before he became sexually involved with the Aurora Central student.

"(**Campobello**) clearly knew not only that he had an unhealthy and inappropriate sexual attraction to early adolescent girls, but also that he was inclined to yield to rather than control his predilections," Aeschliman said.

He said the girl enrolled in **Campobello's** five-person Latin class after transferring to Aurora Central in fall 1998 as a sophomore.

He often tutored students in the class individually and outside of class time, which led to him becoming a close friend and confidant who helped the girl learn about and convert to Catholicism.

"(The girl) came more and more to look upon **Campobello** as a surrogate for her estranged father, was emotionally and psychologically buoyed and flattered by his attentions, and became markedly dependent on his directions and instructions," Aeschliman contends.

Because of **Campobello's** actions and the diocese's negligence, the girl was a victim of sexual abuse from April 1999 to March 2000 at locations including Mooseheart, his car, Aurora Central and the rectory of the Crystal Lake parish, Aeschliman contends.

Campobello's attorneys did not return a call for comment. Ellen Lynch, an attorney for the Rockford Diocese, said it had not received a lawsuit in the matter and could not offer comment.