

Newsday

THE LONG ISLAND NEWSPAPER

THURSDAY, JAN. 5, 1995 • NASSAU

Teen Alleges Sexual Abuse

Catholic high school grad sues S. Huntington teacher

By Elizabeth Wasserman

STAFF WRITER

An 18-year-old graduate of St. Anthony's High School in South Huntington has filed a federal lawsuit alleging she was sexually harassed and abused three years ago by a Franciscan brother who confessed to her that he was "having unholy thoughts."

The former student, who lives in Huntington, alleges in a \$25 million federal lawsuit that Brother Harold Harvers, a teacher at the school, repeatedly brushed up against her, grabbed her and kissed her in the hallways.

The suit, filed Dec. 27 in U.S. District Court in Uniondale, also contends Harvers made such comments as, "I have dreams about you." At one point, the plaintiff claims, the brother confessed: "I am having unholy thoughts about you, and if I don't censor my thoughts, I may lose my job."

Harvers' attorney, Charles Adams of Bay Shore, said his client, who still teaches at the school, said, "At this point, when the case is in litigation, we'd prefer not to comment."

Besides Harvers and the school, the lawsuit names



Harvers

as defendants the Diocese of Rockville Centre, South Huntington Union Free School District, several other teachers and administrators at the school, and the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn, who run the school. It was filed in federal court because St. Anthony's indirectly receives some federal funding through South Huntington schools for programs, said Cary Scott Goldinger of Garden City, one of the woman's attorneys.

Eric Naiburg of Hauppauge, who is representing the alleged victim in any possible criminal charges arising out of the allegations, said yesterday he will be approaching the Suffolk County district attorney's office with the woman's complaint later this week.

Goldinger, who filed the civil suit, said that the woman began to get migraine headaches because of Harvers' behavior and that she is still under the care of a psychiatrist. "In the beginning, when she told her parents what was going on, they didn't want to believe it. They've all been good Catholics," Goldinger said. Her parents later complained to the school about

Please see LAWSUIT on Page A28

Sex Abuse Alleged

LAWSUIT from Page A26

the alleged harassment, as did other students, Goldinger said, but nothing was done.

The attorney for St. Anthony's, Robert Minion of Williston Park, declined to comment. However, the principal of the school, Brother Peter Dawson, sent a letter to faculty, staff, parents and students Dec. 9 advising them of the lawsuit. "Since nothing is more important to us than the welfare of our students, we consider this and all such claims to be of a most serious nature," the letter reads. "Because this matter may be subject to the judicial process, we are precluded from further comment in order to protect the rights of both the former student and the accused."

Attorneys for the diocese and the school district said they would ask to be dropped from the lawsuit because they do not own or operate the school, nor do they have any input on personnel and administrative procedures.

George Rice, a Rockville Centre attorney who represents the Franciscan Brothers, said yesterday that the order is currently exploring its own defense. "I hope we do not lose sight of the fact that the brothers have had a long and wonderful history in caring for and educating children," Rice said. He said St. Anthony's has been operating on Long Island since the 1930s.