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SNAP ordered to hand over wide range of abuse documents

by Joshua J. McElwee



Television reporters speak to members of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, outside the Jackson County, Mo., courthouse in a 2011 file photo. (CNS photo/Dave Kaup, Reuters)

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- A Missouri judge April 20 ordered the director of the leading advocacy group for victims of clergy sex abuse to give a second deposition and to turn over more documents to lawyers representing priests accused of sexual misconduct in the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese.

Lawyers representing at least four accused priests in the diocese will have access to a wide range of documents from the files of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP). The judge ordered SNAP to handover nearly all its files relating to sexual or other misconduct by priests in the diocese, and for SNAP director David Clohessy to undergo a second deposition.

The order is yet to be officially filed but was handed down by Jackson County, Mo., Circuit Court Judge

Ann Mesle following nearly four hours of arguments between lawyers this afternoon.

SNAP is not a party to the lawsuit involving a Kansas City, Mo., diocesan priest, but the case made headlines in January when the judge allowed a defense motion to depose the SNAP director and for the organization to turn over documents, including letters and emails from victims and journalists. This was the first time SNAP had been forced to testify in an abuse case in its 23-year history.

Saying that the six-hour deposition in January -- in which Clohessy refused to answer many of lawyers questions -- 'needs to be continued and finished,' Mesle also this afternoon ordered Clohessy to undergo a second deposition in the case.

Melse's official written order in the case is expected Monday, when she is also expected to hear additional arguments from lawyers.

This story is being updated with more information.

[Joshua J. McElwee is an *NCR* staff writer.]

Editor's Note: For more *NCR* coverage of SNAP's depositions, see:

- **SNAP director may be forced to testify in abuse case**, Dec. 29
- **SNAP leader: Testimony was 'fishing expedition'**, Jan. 3
- **SNAP receives second subpoena request for documents**, Jan. 5
- **SNAP, Catholic League leaders talk abuse scandal on radio show**, Jan. 6
- **Court documents reveal motives for deposing SNAP**, Jan. 23
- **Lawyers press for more SNAP documents, testimony**, Feb. 24
- **SNAP leader's deposition made public**, March 2
- **SNAP fires back at lawyers requesting documents**, April 17

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