

Norwich Diocese pays \$1.1M to settle sex abuse suit
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NORWICH -- The Diocese of Norwich has settled a priest molestation case for \$1.1 million.

According to the offices of the Reardon Law Firm, Michael J. Long of Waterford brought suit against the Norwich Roman Catholic Diocese and St. Mary Star of the Sea Church of New London in 2002.

Long sued the diocese and church for damages suffered when he was molested in 1978 by the Rev. Bruno Primavera, the associate pastor at St. Mary at the time. Long was 15 at the time of the molestation. The lawsuit, which involved four years of litigation, ended with the largest settlement paid by the Norwich Diocese in a priest molestation case.

Attorney Joseph Sweeney of the Halloran & Sage law firm in Hartford represented the Diocese of Norwich in the proceedings. Sweeney said Primavera served in the diocese temporarily, before transferring in 1980 to a parish in Toronto.

Sweeney said Primavera was defrocked by the church in 1990 after some "trouble" in New Mexico. Primavera died in February.

"Something happened that is very troublesome," Sweeney said. "The diocese deeply regrets any pain Mr. Long experienced because of this episode and hopes he will use the settlement to get whatever help he needs."

Sweeney said the diocese was unaware of the molestation until Long's suit was filed. He said since the molestation, the diocese has instituted many safeguards "to ensure no more of these incidents occur."

As a condition of the settlement, Long insisted his mother receive a letter of apology from the Most Rev. Michael R. Cote, bishop of Norwich. Robert I. Reardon Jr. of the Reardon Law Firm represented Long.

"Michael and his family have been incredibly brave as they proceeded through the ordeal of this lawsuit," Reardon said. "He is relieved that this case is over, so he can finally begin the healing process."
