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## Controversy Arises from OHD Dismissa

## BY CARMEN J. **VIGLUCCI**

The dismissal last June of the diocesan director of Human Development has resulted in controversy agitated by argumentation over motivation and details and by charges of racial bias.

To diocesan officials the dismissal of John R. Salter Jr. was predicated simply on "administrative weakness" and "failure to communicate."

Salter says he was fired by Father Charles Mulligan, director of Social Ministries, without warning, that he has since been deprived of due process and claims there was anti-Indian and anti-layperson prejudice involved in his dismissal

A group called the ad hoc Committee for the Reinstatement of John R. Salter, with its spokesman John G. Erb, county legislator and former OHD staffer, is demanding the reinstatement of Salter, that a "fair" arbitration process be set upon reinstatement and wants a reassessment of the present diocesan conciliation arbitration process.

Salter's supporters say he was not informed of diocesan due process machinery, that when he learned of it from an outside source "through informal means - not via Diocesan officials" and filed the diocese procrastinated and "at no point did the diocese communicate to John that it would definitely commit itself to the results of the conciliation-arbitration process."

Salter eventually withdrew from due process, claiming he was told it would take two or three months and that he could not afford the wait.

Diocesan officials said he was told that it might be handled within 10 days.

Diocesan officials do not feel that Salter was unwarned. They feel he was insubordinate by refusing to attend a meeting with Father Mulligan (Salter disputes this) and that he was asked to resign and refused. They say a list of the reasons f dismissal was sent to Salter but they would not comment on them because they felt it was his personal business.

Speaking for the diocese, ather Charles Latus, secretary to Bishop Joseph L. Hogan, said that the due process availability and procedure has been widely publicized in the diocese.

There have been stories about it in the Courier-Journal, it is listed in the Diocesan Directory and letters on it have been sent to all parishes and to members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council."

Salter, who was dismissed June 16, said that it took four weeks from his filing for due process to when the procedure actually got under way.

Diocesan officials admitted a delay but said it was caused by the fact they were unsure of Salter's intent. In his filing, they said, he seemed to be setting conditions. He asked that he be paid his full salary during the arbitration and that he be assured that the diocese be bound by the results.

Father Douglas Hoffman,

diocesan director of Pastoral Ministry, said that the diocese informed Salter that it would not pay him, that the machinery requires that each party pick up its own expenses. Father Hoffman said that Salter was informed that "the diocese would be bound" by the results of due process.

Salter said that the letter on the subject was in his and his attorney's opinion "ambiguous." He said that while it did state that the diocese would be bound by the findings it also added that he could not be reinstated to his former position because a replacement had already been

Father George Wiant was named Salter's successor.

At the time of his dismissal, Salter requested and received a meeting with Bishop Hogan and Father Mulligan. Both adversaries reported to the bishop then Father Mulligan left the office and Salter and the bishop conferred alone for about 20 minutes. The bishop supported the Father Mulligan position.

Salter, 44, is a Wabanaki Indian. He became OHD director in December of 1976. He was assistant professor of urban planning and sociology at the University of Iowa and its advisor to Native American students. He has been a community organizer since 1955 in different parts of the country. He has three children, aged 16, 13 and 8. When he was dismissed, he received 30 days severance

His supporters have distributed a "fact sheet" charging that efforts were made "to curtail and reduce

creative and effective community organizational and advocacy programs and discourage innovative and varying approaches to social

Father Mulligan, who before diocesan restructuring was himself director of Human Development, said these charges are "simply untrue."

Salter has also brought up the issue of bias on the part of "older staff members" at OHD. He says he was discriminated against both because he is an Indian and a layperson.

Told that Father Mulligan did not agree with these allegations, Salter replied:

"He exemplifies that attitude himself. From the very point I arrived, Charlie Mulligan and some older staff communicated back and forth around me. They did so in a fashion not designed to come to my attention. Some older staff persons who were and are anti-Indian and antilayperson communicated directly with Mulligan and he with them and he holds those attitudes.

"By older staff, I mean clergy and Religious but not all of them. The prejudice came out in comments and jokes."

Informed of Salter's claims. Father Mulligan said that the OHD director was removed simply for "administrative ineffectiveness."

"My differences with John do not derive from the fact he Indian or layman but because of serious differences in administrative styles.

John seemed to feel that absolutely everything had to come to him ... that I couldn't talk to anyone on staff without talking to John ... I wasn't going to be put into a box. An office cannot carry on without communication ... another example of adminstrative ineffectiveness.

"I would like to point out that my division has a layman heading Catholic Charities. lay leadership in Justice and Peace" and he indicated further expansion of lay roles in social ministry.

Father Mulligan said that when he was hired, everyone knew and enthusiastically endorsed hiring him. He was hired because of the competence and strength he offered and he was fired because of difficulties developed in his style of administration and communication."

While diocesan officials appeared adamant that Salter would not regain his former position, they indicated there might be room for discussion. Father Hoffman said a compromise, for instance, might come along the lines of reinstating Salter if he would then resign, presumably to improve his chances for future job procurement.

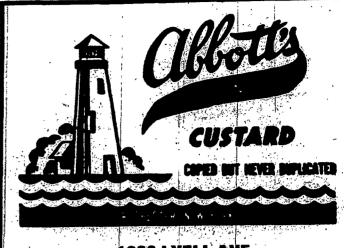
Salter termed the idea "ridiculous" and said he would accept nothing short of "reinstatement without prejudice." He claims a "largescale coalition has emerged - Indian, AFL-CIO, Catholic Social Action and concerned Protestants -- for the first time."

Such supporters plan a

public rally at 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 10 in Rochester's Washington

Square Park.

In addition to such appeals for support, Salter hinted that the future may also hold "an aggressive lawsuit."



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