

City judge dismisses convictions of activists

By Richard A. Kiley
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — A Rochester City Court judge unexpectedly boosted the emotions of 37 anti-abortion activists last week when he dismissed their convictions on charges of resisting arrest.

Judge John Manning Regan announced his decision before the activists — five of whom were Catholic — scheduled to be sentenced in a Public Safety Building courtroom last Wednesday, Feb. 8.

The judge declared that the conviction was not valid because prosecutors never proved that doctors who lease the fifth-floor east wing of Highland Hospital ordered protestors to leave when they staged a "rescue mission" there on May, 23, 1988.

Two defense lawyers argued during the trial that part of the duty of the tenants — in this case the doctors who lease the east wing of the hospital — was to inform the activists that they were trespassing. If the activists refused to leave, it was then up to the doctors to ask police to remove them.

The judge did not believe that evidence presented in the trial by Assistant District Attorney Joanne Winslow proved beyond a reasonable doubt that doctors wanted the activists arrested.

William D. McGinn, a former president of the St. Thomas More Lawyer's Guild, also convinced Regan to allow defendants to use the so-called "justification" or "necessity" defense throughout the trial. The defense stems from a state law stating that under certain circumstances people may be justified in using criminal behavior to defend their own lives or the lives of others — in this case, unborn children.

Resisting arrest — which is a misdemeanor — was the more serious charge facing the activists. Back in December, a City Court jury also found the 37 guilty of trespassing. Regan did not drop the trespassing convictions. Most of the activists were sentenced to 16 hours of community service for the trespassing conviction.

Ken Maher, one of the five Catholic activists who was sentenced, said he was "pleasantly surprised" by Regan's de-

cision. The other Catholic activists arrested were Dr. Barbara Fredericks, Janet Parulski, Bernard Stein and Karen Webb.

"He (Regan) felt we were only delaying arrest and not resisting arrest," said Maher, who is Justice and Peace director for the Catholic Family Center. "I felt his decision was justified."

Prosecutors in the case did not share Maher's sentiments, and they plan to appeal the decision.

Parulski, a parishioner at Holy Cross Church in Rochester, believed Regan's decision was justified because she "never

thought the jury really seriously considered the justification defense."

David E. Long and Gerald Crawford, two leaders of Project Life of Rochester, were sentenced to do 24 hours of community work.

Long, who claimed last May that nine abortions were scheduled that morning and none took place, said that he and other members of the group will not do the community service work. Long and Crawford already face probation, fines and 30-day jail terms stemming from conviction.

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Union victory celebrated

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The Community Coalition for Workers' Rights has released a statement celebrating the National Labor Relations Board's certification of a chapter of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union at the Rochester and Brockport plants of Kleen Brite Laboratories, Inc.

Coalition members distributed the statement Friday, Feb. 10, to Kleen Brite workers at the Oak Street plant in Rochester and the two plants in Brockport.

Kleen Brite, which manufactures household and cleaning products for a 15-state region, has opposed its employees' efforts to join the union since a majority of workers voted to do so in July, 1988. The company filed objections to the union's certification with the National Labor Relations Board, but the board announced its decision to certify the union on Jan. 31.

The Community Coalition for Workers' Rights includes several diocesan parishes and offices, including the offices of the Spanish Apostolate and Black Ministries, and the Division of Urban Services. Since its formation last fall, the coalition has expanded its membership to include neighborhood groups, coalitions, churches and



Linda Dow Hayes/Catholic Courier
Members of the Community Coalition for Workers' Rights confer outside of Kleen Brite Laboratories' Oak Street plant in Rochester.

leaders. Through private and public efforts, it has steadily pressured Kleen Brite to accept the union.

Father David Reid, parochial vicar at St. Peter and Paul Parish and a spokesman for

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CFC names executive director

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Carolyn Portanova, former department director of Restart, has been named executive director of the Catholic Family Center.



Portanova assumed her new duties on Monday, Feb. 13. Prior to becoming director of the CFC, she had been with Restart for 15 years, the last five as director.

Restart, a substance abuse program, is one of eight departments in the recently-reorganized CFC. The other seven are: Catholic Youth Organization; Elderly Services; Parental and Children; Personal and Family Development; Justice and Peace; Refugee Resettlement and Migration; and Disabilities.

In October of 1988, the Genesee Valley Office of Social Ministry merged with the Catholic Youth Organization and the old Catholic Family Center under a regional board to become the new CFC. Portanova will replace Maurice Tierney, associate di-

rector of social ministries, who has served as acting executive director of the CFC.

Portanova was one of three candidates recommended by a search committee consisting of Father John Firpo, director of the diocesan office of social ministry, and the current presidents of the CFC's three component agencies. The regional board then chose Portanova, a decision that pleased Father Firpo. "(Portanova) has a commitment to people who are in need of services, and she knows how to deliver services in a caring and effective manner," he said.

As executive director, Portanova said her goal would be to continue the CFC's reorganization and consolidation. "I really want to put my attention on administration and administrative services to help the programs function a little better," she said. "If the programs at the Catholic Family Center are better integrated ... it provides freedom for us to address issues in a consolidated, integrated way."

As an example of department integration, Portanova said that "the (Catholic Youth Organization) is doing some wonderful things with youth. Many of the programs that they have at the CYO would be beneficial to people at Restart."

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Panel weighs fate of northeast's schools

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — It will take at least another meeting before the Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools finishes its work on the proposal submitted by the Northeast Quadrant Planning Board, according to William Pickett, commission chairman.

The commission met all day on Thursday, Feb. 9, at St. John Fisher College to discuss various proposed changes in governance of the diocesan school system. It also discussed the Northeast Quadrant Planning Board's proposal to close six Catholic schools in northeastern Monroe County and establish a junior high program on the premises of Bishop Kearney High School, but Pickett said the commission did not have enough time to explore the proposal fully.

Appointed by Bishop Matthew H. Clark, the commission is charged with reviewing the findings and proposals of nine groups

working to reorganize the diocesan school system — four quadrant planning boards in Monroe County, three cluster groups outside Monroe County, an informal group representing Monroe County's high schools and the Implementation Committee for Catholic Elementary School Planning for the city of Rochester and Monroe County.

The commission will meet again on Thursday, Feb. 23, to continue its work, Pickett said. Although he declined to comment on any specific conclusions commission members reached during the Feb. 9 meeting, he did note that they examined the issues of governance, overall financing and whether each quadrant should contain a junior high program.

Pickett also said that it would be "difficult" for the commission to finish its recommendations regarding the Northeast Quadrant proposal before March 1, the date when Bishop Clark had been scheduled to announce his final decision regarding the proposal.

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