

Keating quits review board

Jerry Filteau/CNS

WASHINGTON — Former Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating resigned June 16 as chairman of the National Review Board formed by the U.S. bishops last year to monitor their performance on combating sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

The move followed a heated controversy with Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony over Keating's characterization of some bishops as being as secretive as a crime family. But in his resignation letter Keating said he has been talking for the past two months about resigning this June after one full year in the job.

In the letter, however, Keating also defended his recent remarks.

"As I have recently said, and have repeated on several occasions, our church is a faith institution. A home to Christ's people. It is not a criminal enterprise," he wrote.

"It does not condone and cover up criminal activity. It does not follow a code of silence," he added. "My remarks, which some bishops found offensive, were deadly accurate. I make no apology. To resist grand jury subpoenas, to suppress the names of offending clerics, to deny, to obfuscate, to explain away: that is the model of a criminal organization, not my church."

He called the sex-abuse scandal "a poisonous aberration, a black page in our history that cannot ever recur."

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Keating has made an "enormous contribution" to the church in his year as head of the review board.



Bob Roller/CNS

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating, flanked by Bishop Wilton D. Gregory and Bishop Joseph A. Galante, addressed the media last June 14 in Dallas. Keating has resigned as chairman of the National Review Board formed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In a letter accepting Keating's resignation Bishop Gregory wrote, "I will always be grateful to you for your immediate and generous willingness to contribute to this unprecedented endeavor."

Bishop Gregory named Keating to head the National Review Board last June in Dallas, immediately after the nation's bishops adopted the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" which established the board.

Keating was then nearing the end of his second term as governor of Oklahoma and, under that state's term limits, was ineligible for reelection.

Justice Anne M. Burke of the Illi-

nois Appellate Court in Chicago, vice chairwoman of the board, was expected to lead the board until a successor to Keating is named.

The 13-member National Review Board is charged with monitoring the U.S. bishops' compliance with the child protection charter, conducting annual audits in every diocese, and providing yearly reports on the results to the USCCB president, who is to publish those reports.

The charter also gave the board responsibility for two major research projects — one on the extent of the problem of clergy sexual abuse of minors in the U.S. church and another on the "causes and context" of the crisis.

Bishop arrested in fatal accident

PHOENIX (CNS) — Bishop Thomas J. O'Brien of Phoenix was arrested June 16 on a felony charge of leaving the scene of a fatal collision.

Bishop O'Brien, 67, was arrested at his home after police connected his car to the hit-and-run accident that killed Jim L. Reed, 43, of Phoenix, as he jaywalked across a street at about 8:30 p.m. June 14.

The arrest came two weeks after Bishop O'Brien and Maricopa County Attorney Richard Romley announced an agreement by which the bishop would avoid criminal prosecution for obstruction of justice over the way he handled cases of sexual abuse by priests. The agreement requires the bishop to delegate a "moderator of the curia" to take over cer-

tain administrative duties, including revising and enforcing policies on sex abuse.

In the hit-and-run case, Phoenix police said Reed was struck by two vehicles as he crossed between intersections on Glendale Avenue in Phoenix. Neither car stopped. A witness got a partial license plate number and other information about the first vehicle, which led police to learn that the vehicle was owned by the Diocese of Phoenix.

The police statement said that in an interview with Bishop O'Brien at his home June 16, he acknowledged driving the car on the night of the accident as he returned home from a parish in Buckeye, southwest of Phoenix.

Bishop O'Brien's car had damage

to the front end, and the windshield was shattered on the passenger side. It was seized by the police.

Court records cited by Arizona media say Bishop O'Brien told police he thought he had hit a dog or a cat or that someone threw a rock at his car.

After several hours of questioning at his home, police placed the bishop under arrest and brought him to Maricopa County's Madison Street Jail for booking.

At the initial court appearance, Bishop O'Brien was ordered to surrender his passport and told not to leave the state before his June 25 arraignment. His request for permission to attend the St. Louis meeting later in the week of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was denied. He was released on a \$45,000 bond.

ARCHDIOCESE SETTLES

FOR \$3.7 M

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Louisville has agreed to settle 243 sexual abuse lawsuits by 440 plaintiffs for \$3.7 million.

The agreement was announced at a news conference June 18, about 14 months after the first of the lawsuits was filed in Jefferson Circuit Court. Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville speaking at the news conference, said he apologized to the children victims of abuse by priests and other church personnel.

BISHOP'S FAITH-BASED

INITIATIVE CRITICIZED

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Bush administration's faith-based initiative is beginning to draw the wrath of critics who say it is a thinly veiled attempt to promote religion in the public sphere. They say the program is a thinly veiled attempt to promote religion in the public sphere.

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BISHOP'S VISIT

LAUNCHED IN BOZONA

KATHAM, Wyo. (CNS) — Pope John Paul II's 1981 foreign trip June 22 takes him across the Atlantic Ocean for one long day to reach Bozota, Bosnia.

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