

Inaudible trial frustrates audience

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Date: November 18, 2005

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A little more than a month after Kane County officials promised to put a microphone in courtrooms, court watchers say they still can't hear.

Audience members at the hearing Thursday for the civil case of two girls suing the Rockford Diocese and former Geneva priest Mark Campobello for sexual abuse complained that both the **judge** and diocese attorneys were nearly inaudible.

Unlike Cook County civil courts, where attorneys stand closer to the audience than the **judge**, attorneys in Kane stand only a few feet from the bench, often forcing them to talk softly so it doesn't appear they are shouting at the **judge**.

"We are trying to be polite about this, but we can't hear anything," Mary Lu O'Halloran of Geneva told the **judge** after nearly a half-hour of listening to mumbles.

O'Halloran is one of up to a dozen residents and members of Catholic watchdog groups who routinely come to watch the hearings.

The group complained last month to the chief **judges'** office and was told a portable microphone would be purchased.

But **Judge F. Keith Brown**, who oversees the church hearings, said a \$7,000 portable microphone system was a waste of money so residents will have to wait while the county board and court administration work out a way to put permanent microphones in the rooms.

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