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## Records of priest in sex abuse case to be reviewed

By GERI NIKOLAI, *Rockford Register Star*

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The Rockford Catholic Diocese will not appeal a court order to turn over personnel records on convicted sex offender and priest Mark Campobello.

It is unknown, however, if those records will ever become public.

The diocese had weighed whether to contest a 2nd District Appellate Court ruling last month that Campobello's records must be submitted to a Kane County judge for review. The judge, Timothy Sheldon, then would decide if the documents would be forwarded to the Kane County state's attorney's office, which had asked for the records while doing pretrial work on the Campobello case.

Since Campobello pleaded guilty last month to two counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse involving two minor girls and began serving an eight-year prison term, the need for the records is in doubt.

The diocese sees no need for Sheldon to review the papers but acknowledged that decision is his.

"We have weighed the issues and believe it is better for the diocese not to appeal," said Ellen Lynch, an attorney for Hinshaw and Culbertson, which represents the diocese. "We thought the Appellate Court ruling was sound in certain respects, and we're willing to respect the decision."

The judge may decide the documents are irrelevant now that the case is over, Lynch said.

Assistant State's Attorney Jody Gleason of Kane County, who prosecuted Campobello, said her office has not decided whether

### What's next

- Appellate court issues a mandate formalizing its ruling on the Campobello records. Expected by June 21.
- Kane County decides whether to push for the records.
- Judge Timothy Sheldon decides if he will review the records in private and refer any relevant material to the Kane County prosecutor.

to press for a review of the diocesan records.

Gleason said she doubts whatever information is in the records would become public since it would not be introduced in open court now that the case is settled.

Gleason's office had asked for personnel, transfer, intervention team and misconduct reports, any records of mental health treatment for Campobello and private diocesan documents on Campobello.

Attorney Joe Klest of Schaumburg, who has represented a victim in another case involving the diocese, said Kane County should push to have Sheldon view the records.

"The judge should at least review them in camera," meaning in private, Klest said. "There is still a potential for other criminal charges if there are other victims."


Such information might be in the diocesan files, Klest said.

Campobello, 39, ordained a priest in the Rockford Diocese in 1991, committed the offenses in 1999 and 2000 while serving at a Catholic high school in Aurora and parish in Geneva. Before that, he had served several churches, including Holy Family and St. Peter in Rockford. He was at St. James in Belvidere from June 2001 until his arrest in December 2002, when the diocese relieved him of duty.

Campobello is now at the Illinois River Correctional Center, a medium-high-security prison in Canton that holds about 2,000 adult men. He is eligible to seek parole in May 2008.

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