

Detroit Free Press

1070

2A DETROIT FREE PRESS/SATURDAY, OCT. 27, 1979 ●

Scientology members guilty in data thefts

WASHINGTON — (AP)— A federal judge Friday convicted nine members of the Church of Scientology, including the wife of the founder, of taking part in a major conspiracy to steal government documents about the church.

As the defendants and their lawyers clustered in front of him, U.S. District Judge Charles Richey said the evidence "establishes each and every element" of the crimes that resulted in convictions.

RICHEY SET no date for sentencing the defendants, who included Mary Sue Hubbard, wife of church founder L. Ron Hubbard.

Mrs. Hubbard and six others were convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice, which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

One defendant was found

guilty of conspiracy to illegally obtain government documents, which carries the same maximum punishment. Another was convicted of stealing government records, with a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

SCIENTOLOGY documents, which the government used to support its case, were

seized from church offices in Los Angeles in 1977. They revealed that church operatives stole documents from the IRS, the Justice Department and the U.S. Attorney's Office, among others.

The records also show that the church planted employes in the Justice Department and the IRS and once bugged a meeting of the tax agency.