

Clearwater Sun

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Judge stings Scientologists

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In a stinging rebuke to the Church of Scientology of California, a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge ruled Thursday that a former sect archivist was justified in taking about 10,000 Scientology documents when he fled the Clearwater-based sect in 1982.

Most of the documents in question belonged to the reclusive 73-year-old founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, who has not been seen publicly since 1979.

In his 12-page decision, Judge Paul G. Breckenridge said 37-year-old Gerald Armstrong—who was personally authorized by Hubbard in 1980 to collect documents in preparation for a Hubbard biography—took materials to “minimize potential risks he

faced” after leaving the sect, “including physical harm.”

“The organization (Scientology) clearly is schizophrenic and paranoid, and this bizarre combination seems to be a reflection of its founder, LRH (Hubbard),” Breckenridge stated following the nine-week trial. “The evidence portrays (Hubbard as) a man who was virtually a pathological liar when it comes to his history, background and achievements.”

Breckenridge said the documents—letters, orders, tape recordings—“reflect on (Hubbard’s) egoism, avarice, lust for power, greed and vindictiveness against all persons perceived by him to be hostile.”

Court sources told the *Clearwater Sun* late Thursday that Breckenridge (Please see * TRIAL, next page)

* Trial

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further ruled that Hubbard is the “alter ego” of Scientology and that Hubbard “controls” Scientology through the paramilitary arm called the Sea Org and his own *Commodore’s Messenger Org.*

“Hubbard’s seclusion has a light and a dark side, which adds to his mystique and also makes him unavailable” to the public and investigators, Breckenridge stated.

Armstrong was charged by the sect and Hubbard’s wife, Mary Sue, with stealing the documents they claimed were “personal and private.” Although the documents were under court seal during the trial, many of them were entered as exhibits during the trial.

Armstrong, a Scientologist for 11 years and one of Hubbard’s intimates before leaving the sect, testified he fled in fear of his life when he discovered documents which proved that Hubbard was not the man he claimed to be.

The documents, combined with Armstrong’s testimony, painted Hubbard as a man obsessed with power who went to great lengths to exaggerate and even invent his past.

Although the *Sun* was unable to reach lawyers for either Armstrong or the Scientologists, it was learned late Thursday that Breckenridge ruled that Armstrong’s court costs should be reimbursed. However many of the contested documents will remain under court seal for the time being.