

# THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Weather: Tonight, mostly cloudy  
Low 32 Wednesday, clearing  
High 48. Details on back page.

NOVEMBER 18, 1993

## Talk show host cancels show to testify

■ At trial over Scientologist's suit, Sally Jessy Raphael testifies to defend herself and freedom of the press.

By CHONG W. PYEN  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Sally Jessy Raphael canceled her show today to testify in an Ann Arbor courtroom, saying she wants to defend the freedom of the press, but she also has to defend herself.

The television talk show host is one of several defendants in a \$72 million lawsuit brought by a member of the Church of Scientology who claimed Raphael's show maligned her and her faith.

Appearing in a gray suit and wearing her trademark red-rimmed glasses, the host of "Sally" was questioned by attorneys in the courtroom of Washtenaw County Circuit Judge Melinda Morris.

She said it was the first time in her 10 years as a talk show host that she has been sued.

"I'm thrilled ... about what's happening here

and I am here voluntarily. I had to cancel the show in order to do that," Raphael said, adding that she strongly believes in freedom of the press. The show is broadcast locally at 3 p.m. weekdays on WDIV-TV, Channel 4.

The suit was brought by Dorothy Jean Dickerson, 61, of Albion, who is a member and employee at the Scientology organization called the Hubbard Dianetics Foundation, 2355 W. Stadium Blvd. in Ann Arbor. A mother of eight grown children, Dickerson says in her suit that the "Sally" show aired July 14, 1991, violated her privacy, causing her humiliation and embarrassment and leading to her alienation from her children.

Damages of \$72 million are sought to cover the woman's emotional distress and defamation.

Raphael was called as a witness by her own attorneys. During her time on the stand this morning, she had to be repeatedly reminded that she was not allowed to ask questions, just answer them.

As cross-examination started at mid-morning,

See RAPHAEL, C3



NEWS PHOTOS • LARRY E. WRIGHT

Talk show host Sally Jessy Raphael, right, testifies today in the \$72 million civil suit brought by Jean Dickerson of Albion, left, a member of the Church of Scientology.

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**RAPHAEL**, from C1

## Attorneys explore Raphael's role in show

attorneys for Dickerson were trying to establish how much of a role the show's host had in the production of the show entitled "How Scientology Ruined My Life."

Raphael was to continue her testimony this morning and several members of her staff also were being called to testify.

Part of the show in question included a brief segment showing Dickerson's meeting with her grown children at a small park in downtown Ann Arbor on June 2, 1991. The scene was secretly videotaped by a hired crew. In that footage, Dickerson's children confront her over her devotion to Scientology and she admits she earns less than \$5,000 washing dishes for the organization.

Two daughters then tell Raphael on the show that they suspect their mother had been brainwashed and was totally out of touch with family and reality.

Other defendants include: Multimedia Inc., which distributes the show nationally; the Cult Awareness Network based in Chicago, which the suit says coached Dickerson's daughters in their attempt to remove her from Scientology; and an Oak Park electronic firm and its technicians who recorded the family conversation while posing as garbage handlers.

Raphael has been a journalist for 37 years, the last 10 as a TV talk show host. She previously worked as a reporter and foreign correspondent. She said that she has produced more than 12,000 shows in the last decade and this is the first time she has been sued.

During the trial, which began Nov. 1, the plaintiff's attorneys, headed by Robert E. Logeman, focused their questioning on how the airing of the footage caused Dickerson mental anguish and trauma. Defense lawyers led by Gregory Curtner tried to portray the woman as having shielded herself from her family behind the edicts and dictates of Scientology, causing her children to resort to deprogramming and the national talk show.

Scientology is not party to the case, but the organization's interest and presence have been obvious during the trial. In addition to three lawyers helping Dickerson, the organization's external counsel from California and its public relations officer from New York were in the courtroom most of the time.

The Scientology movement, which has marked its 30th anniversary this year, was founded by L. Ron Hubbard who introduced Dianetics and applied the psychotherapy technique to Scientology.