

Guardianship issue is settled

Family of former bishop OKs naming of Loudonville priest

BY JILL BRYCE
Gazette Reporter

A priest was appointed Thursday as legal guardian for a former Albany diocese bishop who has been residing at a diocese-owned nursing home after he was injured in two separate falls last spring.

The decision was made at a hearing at the Teresian House before state Supreme Court Judge Thomas J. Spargo and appeared to mollify concerns by family members over the bishop's care, and the disposition of his considerable wealth.

The Most Rev. Edwin B. Broderick, bishop of the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese from 1969 to 1976, attended the hearing; family members including his niece Mary Broderick and nephew Edwin Broderick participated via telephone conference.

Broderick and his family members "fully consented" to the priest's appointment as legal guardian, according to B.J. Costello, a partner at the law firm of Hinman Straub, whom the court appointed Thursday as Broderick's attorney.

The Rev. Michael Farano, a former chancellor of the diocese, will serve as guardian. He agreed to

waive any fees and will not make any money in his role as guardian, said Costello. "Father Farano will receive zero benefits from what's going on," said Costello. "He is doing this because for 30 years he's been a friend of Broderick's."

Farano, pastor of St. Pius X Church in Loudonville, could not be reached Thursday to comment. Costello said Broderick, who will turn 89 Monday, needs some assistance with his day-to-day affairs, but otherwise is doing well and happy to be living at the Teresian House.

Costello said there were never any disputes between Broderick's family members and Farano over guardianship of the former bishop.

However, after the hearing, the former bishop's niece expressed disappointment.

"I feel coerced, violated, intimidated and threatened and feel my own attorney abandoned me," Mary Broderick said. "I feel misinformed. I love my uncle and always wanted what was best for him. I'm very sad they've taken my uncle away from me."

She would not comment further.

Costello said Mary Broderick

ALBANY

was asked several times during the hearing if she consented to have Farano as guardian and she said yes and had no objections.

Broderick, who had been living in Manhattan, has assets estimated at up to \$3 million, including an apartment near Central Park valued at \$1.7 million.

According to Costello, the apartment will be transferred to the Peter Broderick Memorial Foundation a not-for-profit charitable foundation named in honor of Broderick's late father.

None of Broderick's family members wanted to be guardian and Farano was asked to take on the role, said Costello. He said Farano has known Broderick since the 1970s and the two had a very close friendship. "It was not done to get money out of the bishop," said Costello.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany released a statement late Thursday and said it has no involvement and has sought not to be involved in a legal matter brought by Broderick's family.

"The Rev. Michael Farano, a diocesan priest, did not seek to be appointed a guardian for Bishop Broderick. His appointment was recommended by an independent evaluator chosen by the court to investigate the matter and agreed to unanimously by attorneys for

the Broderick family," diocese officials said in a statement.

"Father Farano is a 35-year friend and colleague of Bishop Broderick. He agreed to accept the court appointment as one of Bishop Broderick's two guardians on condition that he receive no fee."

Prior to Thursday's hearing, some family members had expressed concern that some of Broderick's assets would come under diocese control.

Broderick was named bishop of the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese in 1969 and headed the diocese until 1976, when he became director of Catholic Relief Services, where he served until 1982. Bishop Howard J. Hubbard succeeded Broderick in 1977.

Broderick had been living in Manhattan, but traveled to Albany several times a year to do confessions.

During an April visit, just after Easter, he fell outside St. Mary's Church.

Costello said that he has never done work for the Albany diocese. Another attorney with the Hinman Straub law firm, James Potter, represented diocesan priest Rev. John P. Bertolucci in a case in state Supreme Court several years ago.

Reach Gazette reporter Jill Bryce at 432-4391 or jlbryce@dailygazette.net.