



Statement from Archbishop Chaput on false charge against deceased priest

July 13, 2010

More than a year ago a female plaintiff filed a complaint under the pseudonym "Jane Doe" against Monsignor William Higgins. Msgr. Higgins passed away in 1967, after more than five decades of loyal service in this archdiocese, most of which was at St. Philomena's parish. Other than this single complaint made 42 years after Msgr. Higgins' death, no complaint has ever been advanced against this fine priest.

Through the litigation and the extensive discovery in the case, the archdiocese determined that the plaintiff's complaint was not credible and the charges made against Msgr. Higgins were groundless. The plaintiff has voluntarily dismissed all claims.

If Msgr. Higgins were alive today, he would be in good standing and able to minister in the archdiocese. False charges do inexcusable harm to a priest's good name, his reputation earned over years of service to others, and to the lay Catholic faithful and other dedicated priests. We are saddened that such a charge was made, but want you all to know that you can esteem Msgr. Higgins and keep him in your prayers as a righteous man.

As we work to ensure all people in the Archdiocese of Denver are safe, so too are we determined to defend the reputation of the many, many innocent good men and women who work in the archdiocese and give so much to others.

*+Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver*