

<http://www.MSCNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=24517>

Two New Lawsuits filed Against former Area Priest

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) - Two new lawsuits have been filed against a former St. Joseph, Missouri priest convicted of taking lewd photographs and the officials who oversaw him.

Plaintiff's attorney Rebecca Randles says the latest suits bring the total number of cases filed over the Rev. Shawn Ratigan's conduct to seven. Ratigan pleaded guilty in August to producing child pornography after police learned of hundreds of images of children, most of them clothed, with the focus on their crotch areas.

Ratigan's case led Bishop Robert Finn to be charged with failing to report suspected abuse because there was a delay in notifying authorities. Finn became the highest-ranking U.S. church official to be convicted of a crime related to the child sexual abuse scandal.

The diocese released a statement expressing "profound sorrow" for any harm Ratigan caused.