

ABUSE | Seven file lawsuit

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she was 9 when the seven siblings entered the orphanage in the 1950s. Two of the siblings are not part of the case.

Edwards said Lammers later impregnated her, and she suffered a miscarriage when she fell from a window sill onto a concrete floor while cleaning windows at the orphanage.

Edwards said her sisters lost touch with each other but made contact in the past year, when they learned that Lammers allegedly abused the five sisters.

"I thought I was the only one he was doing it to, and I (thought) as long as he was doing it to me he wouldn't do it to anybody else," said Edwards, now of Dallas. "The nuns knew. They all knew."

Her sisters who also joined in the lawsuit are Myrtle Darlene Kustes, Ann Wilson, Alicia Lynn Sinnott and Carol Ann Gilbert. The other plaintiffs are Dorothy Richardson, who accuses Lammers of abuse, and David V. Summers, who names Stuecker.

Their lawyer, William McMurry, represented 243 plaintiffs in last year's \$25.7 million settlement with the Archdiocese of Louisville. Richardson was one of two plaintiffs accusing Lammers who took part in that settlement.

McMurry also has filed suit against the Vatican, which he accuses of ordering a cover-up of abuse.

McMurry said that even though Lammers was an employee of the archdiocese, he believes the Sisters of Charity knew of the abuse.

"Hopefully, we'll open the eyes of the community of victims and empower them to come forward and tell the full story ... so we can see how deep this horror ran," he said.

Typically, lawsuits alleging decades-old abuse would be barred under Kentucky's statute of limitations, but McMurry alleges that the Sisters of

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Lawyer

Charity covered up the abuse and that the time limit should not apply.

He made a similar argument in suing the archdiocese. The claim was never tested because the suits were settled.

Lammers worked as director of Catholic Charities from 1939 to 1976. Catholic Charities owned the orphanage from 1952 onward, and it was operated by the Sisters of Charity.

Lammers died in 1986 at age 79. The archdiocese has said it had no record of any complaints before he was named in lawsuits.

Pope Pius XII gave Lammers the honorary title of monsignor in 1955, and the Catholic Orphans Society board honored Lammers in 1965. Lammers also served on various civic and right-to-life groups.

Most abuse cases in the Catholic Church have focused on abuse by priests, rather than nuns. But earlier this week, the advocacy group Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests issued a public call for women's religious orders to take stronger action on abuse in their own ranks.

Only one of the more than 250 lawsuits against the Archdiocese of Louisville in the past two years alleged abuse by a nun, and the plaintiff's lawyer dropped that case late last year after concluding it should not go forward.

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth includes about 600 nuns working in the United States, India and three other countries, Qualls said.

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