

# METRO

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## Ex-newscaster sues archbishop

*McCall is claiming breach of contract*

Staff writer

By Bruce Nolan

It has been a remarkable three weeks in the family of former newscaster Mary Lou McCall. On Thursday, she sued

her longtime television partner, retired Archbishop Philip Hannan. And her son, John Young Jr., qualified to run against his father — McCall's ex-husband — for an at-large Seat on the Jefferson Parish Council.

That's after McCall announced in mid-August she would run for the 6th Senate District seat held by Julie Quinn, John Young Sr.'s current companion.

The timing of the political qualifying was set by law, but the timing of the lawsuit has nothing to do with McCall's candidacy, her attorney, Randall Smith, said Thursday.

McCall filed suit in federal court charging Hannan, his television network and a network employee, Charlene Vance, with breach of contract, defamation and violating the pension rights in firing her in May after a

19-year television partnership.

Hannan and Vance were unavailable for comment Thursday night, as was F. Evans Schmidt, the attorney for Hannan and his network, FOCUS Worldwide Television Network.

McCall's lawsuit describes the breakup of a once-close partnership with Hannan.

Throughout the 1990s, as Hannan reinvented himself in retirement as a Catholic televi-

sion journalist, he was supported by McCall, the former anchorwoman pursuing her own new career after a life-changing assignment reporting religious apparitions in Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In her lawsuit, McCall claims that in 1993 Focus agreed to contribute \$10,000 annually toward her pension. The lawsuit says such payments haven't

*See McCALL, B-8*

### Defamation part of lawsuit's claims

*McCALL, from B-1*

been made since 1997.

In addition, McCall claims that in 2003, fearing she might one day leave the network, Hannan signed her to a contract granting her "complete job security at FOCUS for as long as she desired to remain at the show".

But by last spring, McCall claims that Vance and others inside FOCUS began maneuvering Hannan, 94 and ailing, to turn against her.

McCall, who suffered from alcoholism, divorced Young in 2005 and recently has been engaged in a fight with Young over custody of their children. She married lawyer Noel Allen in March.

Smith said Hannan was told that McCall had violated Catholic teaching by remarrying without an annulment of her marriage to Young. "Why single her out? Are they looking at every other member of the network to see if they've violated some te-

net of the church?" Smith asked.

"There was also something about her temper, although she'd worked there 20 years; and there was a comment about her drinking, although she has not been drinking for years,"

Smith said.

"We basically think it was all a complete ruse and an excuse for a power grab," he said.

The charges were distilled in two letters from Hannan firing McCall. The letters were delivered without envelopes and

passed through several hands, including McCall's maid and one of her sons, which is the basis for the defamation complaint.