

Baker Case Settled

On March 27, the five-year-old suit against Regal Art Press, owned by Chuck and Sue Baker, was settled in Franklin Superior Court, Franklin County, Vermont. No money will change hands between the plaintiff, Linda Paquette of Vermont Catholics for a Free Choice, and the defendant, Regal Art Press.

Ms. Paquette initially brought suit against the Bakers for their refusal to print membership forms for her organization, an organization which, despite its erroneous use of the title "Catholic," advocates abortion rights. The Bakers, who are Catholic, maintained that the material was objectionable and contrary to their beliefs. Ms. Paquette registered a complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Coalition, arguing that she personally had been discriminated against on the basis of her religious beliefs. Ms. Paquette sued, and the Bakers countersued, claiming that their First Amendment right to free speech was violated.

In the settlement, the Bakers agreed that they would not discriminate against any person on the basis of creed. Ms. Paquette agreed that Regal Art had the right to refuse to do a printing job of material that conflicted with their beliefs.

In late April, the League received a warm-hearted thank you from the Bakers for the generous support shown by the Catholic League and its members during the long-standing case. When the suit was first brought, League members responded by sending 2,000 postcards to the Bakers as a sign of support. The League also assisted the Bakers through financial and legal support. The Catholic League is pleased, as are the Bakers, to see the case come to a close. League members are to be given credit for the long-term interest and generous support shown to the Bakers over the years.