

PHONY ASSAULT ON DEAL HUDSON

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responded today to a story last night by CNN's Anderson Cooper on attempts by some Catholics to get the McCain campaign to oust Catholic author and activist Deal Hudson from the Catholics for McCain National Steering Committee:

"Anderson Cooper said last night that those opposed to Hudson were citing two reasons why he should be dumped from the McCain campaign as an advisor: Hudson 'harassed an 18-year-old female college student 10 years earlier,' and his 'brokering a deal between a meeting of conservative Catholics and San Antonio mega-preacher John Hagee.'

"There is nothing Catholic about these charges. Catholics put a premium on forgiveness and reconciliation—they do not conduct vindictive campaigns of personal destruction under the guise of promoting the Catholic cause. Hudson has made several public statements of apology regarding his improper sexual encounter with a coed in 1994. What are we to do as Catholics—say it isn't enough? Ted Kennedy belongs to Barack Obama's Catholic National Advisory Council. Should he be criticized? Certainly: I did just that when I cited his 100 percent NARAL record. What I didn't do was cite his past sexual indiscretions, one of which left a young woman dead.

"Everyone knows that I was the first to criticize Pastor John Hagee for his offensive past comments about the Catholic Church. When Hudson sought to open Hagee's eyes about some misconceptions he had about the Catholic Church's historical role in dealing with Jews, it helped to change the Texas minister. Indeed, Hagee issued a public apology. Hagee and I then met, courtesy of Hudson, and have since reconciled. Is that not the Catholic thing to do? If not, then is the Vatican not acting in a Catholic way? I received a letter from a prominent Vatican Cardinal thanking me for reconciling with

Hagee. I also received the plaudits of many in the Jewish community for doing so.

“Hudson and Hagee have paid their dues. It’s time everyone—especially Catholics—acknowledged it. Kudos to the McCain campaign for seeing through this phony effort and standing by Hudson.”