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Boston College buys bishop's mansion

University buys a 43-acre mansion from diocese \$135 million in debt

By Jay Lindsay
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — Boston College, a Roman Catholic school, has agreed to buy the Boston archbishop's mansion and 43 adjoining acres for \$99.4 million, providing the church with badly needed cash to settle the sex scandal that has engulfed it.

Proceeds from the sale, announced Tuesday, will be used to pay a \$90 million settlement reached last year with more than 550 alleged victims of sexual abuse.

"It puts us on the road to recovery," Archbishop Sean O'Malley said. But he added: "I don't think we had any options. The sense of loss, in terms of our history here, is certainly very great."

O'Malley has said the archdiocese is \$135 million in debt. The archdiocese put the property on the market late last year, and Boston College immediately expressed interest.

The land is across the street from the college's main campus in the city's main Brighton section.

The school said it has not yet decided what to do with the three-story Italian Renaissance-style mansion. But Boston College spokesman Jack Dunn has said the land would give the boxed-in school room for athletic fields.

From the start, the church emphasized that Boston College would have no advantage over any other bidder. And the Rev. William Leahy, Boston College's president, said there was "no sweetheart deal, no clergy discount today. This is

a significant price, no question. Our advisers felt it was a very fair price."

The archbishop said he was glad the property will stay in the Catholic community.

The sale of the property is part of O'Malley's pledge not to use collection-plate money to pay the settlement, which is the biggest known deal between a U.S. diocese and victims of child-molesting priests.

The sex scandal dealt a major financial blow to the church, which reported a loss of nearly \$14 million in fiscal 2003 after sharp drops in collections, investments and land holdings.

"It was very important for us as an archdiocese to clearly show how the funds for the settlement were raised," O'Malley said.

Unlike his predecessors, O'Malley does not live in the mansion, which was built in the 1920s and became a symbol of the church's grandeur.

In addition to living quarters, the mansion houses offices and meeting rooms, and is used to broadcast daily Mass.

O'Malley, a Capuchin Franciscan friar who took a vow of poverty, lives in an apartment behind the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

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archbishop

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Internet technology found vulnerable to hackers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers uncovered a serious flaw in the underlying technology for nearly all Internet browsers, which led to an international effort to prevent global disruptions of Web surfing, e-mail and instant messages.

The British government announced the vulnerability of Internet technology on Tuesday. Experts said it could allow hackers to knock computers offline, broadly disrupt routers that coordinate the flow of data among vast groups of computers.

"Exploitation of this vulnerability could have affected the global holds the Internet together," Roger Cumming, director of England's National Infrastructure Security Coordination Centre, said.

USA Today editor retires amid plagiarism scandal

NEW YORK (AP) — The editor of USA Today, the country's largest-selling newspaper, retired Tuesday amid a scandal involving fabrications and deceptions by Jack Kelley, one of the paper's reporters.

Karen Jurgensen, 55, had been the paper's editor since 1999. Her departure came on the heels of a comprehensive report on Kelley's fiasco compiled by veteran newspaper editors.

Craig Moon, USA Today's publisher, has not released details about the report's contents or recommendations.

Steven Anderson, a spokesman for the newspaper, said USA Today executives were not planning any comments on the departure beyond a brief statement that Moon sent to USA Today staffers Tuesday afternoon.

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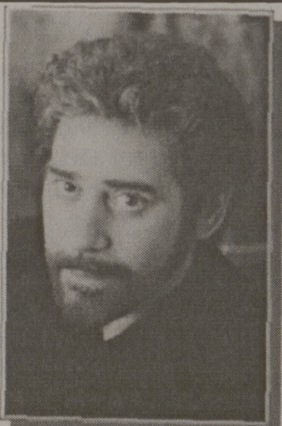
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