

Suit filed against highest Illinois court

by UPI

CHICAGO - A Kane County newspaper is suing the entire Illinois Supreme Court on charges of violating its constitutional rights and those of a former columnist.

The suit by Shaw Suburban Media Group, owner of the daily Kane County Chronicle, accuses Chief Justice Robert Thomas of using the court system he controls to win a \$4 million libel judgment against the paper, The Chicago Sun-Times reports.

Thomas was awarded the money after a jury found he had been libeled by then-columnist Bill Page who accused the chief justice of cutting a political deal in a disciplinary action.

In arguing the libel case, Thomas called his fellow Supreme Court justices as witnesses, forcing the court would to recuse itself from reviewing any appeal of the verdict.

The Chronicle asked the federal court to set aside the libel judgment and order the entire case be retried once Thomas, a former kicker for the Chicago Bears, is a private citizen.

The judge's term expires in 2010 but he could seek retention for another 10-year term.

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