

N.J. appellate court overrules lower court dismissal of a sex abuse lawsuit against the Philadelphia Archdiocese

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A New Jersey appellate court on Tuesday overruled a lower court's dismissal of a sexual abuse lawsuit against the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, allowing the case to proceed.

The lawsuit, filed last year in Atlantic County Superior Court, alleges that a now-former priest, Michael J. McCarthy, began sexually abusing a 14-year-old boy in 1971 at McCarthy's Shore home in Margate when he was a priest at St. Bernadette Parish in Drexel Hill.

McCarthy took the boy overnight to the Margate home, where he plied him with alcohol, showed him pornography and sexually assaulted him, said **David Inscho, a partner at Kline & Specter and the lead attorney for the victim.** Afterward, McCarthy repeatedly sexually assaulted the teen at the boy's Delaware County home over several months, Inscho said.

McCarthy, now 83, was defrocked in 2006, according to the BishopAccountability.org website, after the archdiocese learned that he had taken other teenage boys on overnight trips to the Margate house. That abuse was detailed in a 2005 Philadelphia grand jury report that uncovered years of sexual assaults against children by priests in the archdiocese.

McCarthy and his attorney, John Curtis Agner, did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday. Efforts to reach the attorney for the archdiocese, Nicholas Centrella, were unsuccessful, as were efforts to reach its spokesperson.

The archdiocese had sought to dismiss the lawsuit, claiming a lack of jurisdiction and saying it was not responsible for McCarthy's actions. In November, the New Jersey Superior Court agreed and dismissed the case.