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The Times-Picayune

Court unseals part of divorce record

The Times-Picayune sought documents

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A state district court judge in Jefferson Parish has unsealed part of the record of Councilman John Young's divorce from television personality Mary Lou McCall in response to a request by The Times-Picayune to give the public access to the documents.

But Judge Robert Pitre decided to keep some documents under wraps, saying their release would harm the couple's minor children. Those records included income tax forms, medical records, specific testimony and allegations filed by attorneys on both sides.

"The court knows that at times young children can be cruel," Pitre wrote in his ruling. "If friends of these minor children of the parties read and-or are told of allegation [sic] made by the parties' attorneys in the pleadings, there is a strong possibility that the children will be harassed . . ."

Young asked that the proceedings be sealed when he filed for divorce in October 2004. The Times-Picayune contested that decision last month.

Young did not object to opening the divorce proceedings to the public. McCall's attorney asked that six documents remain under seal.

Pitre ruled on those six specific documents on Thursday. He partially released Young's original divorce petition and McCall's answer to it, although all allegations in them were redacted. He unsealed an emergency request to reschedule a hearing, which stated McCall was receiving treatment for alcoholism and would not be able to make a specific court date. He kept testimony from a July 29, 2005 hearing sealed, again citing harm to the children. He also denied access to two motions for contempt, according to the ruling.

The newspaper sought access to the records after McCall applied for a temporary restraining order against state Sen. Julie Quinn, R-Metairie. McCall claimed in a May 25 police report that Quinn had slapped her and Young's youngest son. Quinn, who has been dating Young since last fall, denied hitting the boy. Her divorce from New Orleans hotelier Patrick Quinn became final in March.

McCall's temporary restraining order against Julie Quinn was dissolved June 13.

Young and McCall have five sons together, ranging in age from 8 to 21 years old. McCall remarried in March.

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