

Chaplain suing hospital officers

By JESSE LEAVENWORTH
Courant Staff Writer

BRIDGEPORT — A chaplain at the state mental hospital in Fairfield is suing two of the hospital's public safety officers, saying her civil rights were violated when she was arrested in May.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court by the Rev. Melvinia Parker, says that Officer Dean Evans, of Fairfield Hills Hospital security staff, twisted her right arm and threw her on the ground while she was walking on Queen Street in Newtown May 12.

Evans and his sergeant had no reason to arrest Parker, the suit says. The suit, filed Oct. 10 in U.S. District Court in Bridgeport, says Parker's constitutional rights under the Fourth, Fifth and 14th amendments were violated.

At the time of Parker's arrest, hospital police were looking for several missing patients. The hospital's superintendent has said, however, that none of the missing patients was a black woman.

Parker, who is black, says in the suit that Evans "rudely demanded" that she produce identification as she was walking to an afternoon movie off hospital grounds.

Evans then grabbed her, twisted her right arm, threw her to the ground on her stomach, handcuffed her and kept one knee in her back while he called for assistance, the suit says.

Evans' boss, Sgt. Michael Hugyo, arrived and told Evans that the woman in custody was the hospital chaplain, the suit says. Evans said he still was going to proceed with the arrest and Hugyo, the other defendant named in the suit, assisted him, the suit says.

Parker was charged with interfering with a police officer after she refused to identify herself, but a judge in Superior Court in Danbury dismissed the charge in June.