

Writer quits party after prostitute report

By MAUREEN JOHNSON
Associated Press Writer

LONDON — Best-selling novelist Jeffrey Archer resigned yesterday as deputy chairman of the governing Conservative Party, saying he erred in offering money to a prostitute so she would not talk to reporters about allegations they were lovers.

Archer, 46, said in a statement that he never met the woman, Monica Coghlan, or had an association with any other prostitute.

His resignation came hours after the News of the World weekly newspaper reported that he tried on Friday to pay Coghlan \$2,800 through a middleman.

Archer, a millionaire, was appointed by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher last year in the latest comeback of his bumpy political career.

He had been elected to Parliament in 1969 as its youngest member, but was forced to resign five years later because he was bankrupt after having invested all his money in a company that turned out to be a fraud.

In his resignation statement, issued from his London apartment, Archer acknowledged that he had offered Coghlan, 35, money to go abroad.

He said Coghlan had repeatedly telephoned him saying newspapers were asking her for interviews because one of her clients had told reporters she and Archer had a relationship.

Archer said Coghlan claimed they had been seen together in London's Mayfair district.

"In the belief that this woman genuinely wanted to be out of the way of the press, and realizing that for my part any publicity of this kind would be extremely harmful to me... I offered to pay her money so that she could go abroad for a short period and arranged for this money to be handed over to her," said Archer.

"For that lack of judgment and

that alone I have tendered my resignation to the prime minister as deputy chairman of the Conservative Party," he said.

"I have never, repeat never, met Monica Coghlan, nor have I ever had any association of any kind with a prostitute," he said.

"Foolishly, I now realize, I allowed myself to fall into what I can only call a trap in which a newspaper, in my view, played a reprehensible part," he said.

Thatcher aides who spoke on condition of anonymity said the prime minister felt "sadness and sympathy" because of Archer's resignation.

Yesterday afternoon, Archer returned to his home in Cambridge where he told dozens of waiting reporters that he felt "very sad."

Standing next to him was his wife, Mary, a scientist on the Cambridge University faculty. The couple met at Oxford undergraduates. They have been married for 20 years and have two sons, ages 14 and 12.

News of the World quoted Archer as telling Coghlan in a taped telephone conversation: "What I'm saying is, would you go abroad if financially taken care of?"

The tabloid said Archer denied during the conversations with Coghlan that he had ever met her.

The story was accompanied by a photo of what the newspaper said were Coghlan and Archer's middleman meeting at London's Victoria Station.

Other newspapers picked up the News of the World story under banner headlines yesterday.

The Mail yesterday said Archer had been "appalling set up" by News of the World and that Coghlan had been trying to sell her claims to national newspapers for six weeks.

"We're satisfied with our story," News of the World spokesman Arthur Britenden said yesterday.

Archer's political career has rivaled that of his fictional characters.

He was elected to Parliament in 1969, but had to resign when he went bankrupt five years later after a



AP Laserphoto
Jeffrey Archer

Canadian company in which he had invested his entire self-made fortune of \$710,000 turned out to be a fraud.

He turned this experience into his first novel, *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less*, the tale of how four people who had been swindled set about getting their money back.

In another novel, *First Among Equals*, Archer tells the story of four ambitious members of Parliament. One of them is threatened with having his political career compromised by a prostitute. The book has been made into a television series. His latest novel is *A Matter of Honor*.

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Student who cheated through high school sues for education

By BARRY SCHLACHTER
Associated Press Writer

BOSTON — Karen Morse was voted president of her senior class and student council president and was elected to the National Honor Society. She captained the girls' soccer team and won letters in two other sports.

But for nine years neither her teachers nor her friends knew she couldn't read.

Now the young woman voted the student with the "most school spirit" is suing her high school in Henniker, N.H., to cover bills at a special school where she caught up on learning.

Morse says she was labeled "learning disabled" in the second grade. But not until the end of her junior year in 1983 was she diagnosed as dyslexic, meaning that her brain jumbled the order of words and letters. "Was" becomes "saw" and "Morse," whose intelligence is unaffected by dyslexia.

She got as far as the ninth grade only by cheating, she said without apology during a visit to Boston from her home in suburban Beverly.

"I did a lot of taking other kids' papers, erasing their names. Just cheating mostly. I really didn't think about it. It was a question of survival," said Morse, now a 20-year-old college freshman.

"I was hiding my not being able to read more from my peers than from my teachers because the judgment of your friends is more important."

After school authorities discovered her reading problems, she complains, they did little more than assure her she wasn't stupid. She was shunted to a corner three times a week and set before a workbook, she recalled. "There was no remedial work at all."

Her reading was still extremely poor, but she made it into the National Honor Society in her senior year because her dyslexia was taken into account, along with all of her school activities. A special tutor was called in to teach her six days a week.

Although she gave a speech at her class of 1983's graduation, Morse agreed not to accept her

diploma or formally graduate so Henniker High School would pay her tuition at the Landmark School of Beverly, which specializes in helping dyslexics.

After a year at Landmark, the special school recommended she spend another year there to prepare for college. However, Henniker's school district, under a new superintendent, refused to pay for it and mailed Morse her diploma last spring.

Her family is suing the school for the \$17,000 they paid in Landmark tuition during the second year, which she completed this summer. Now she's a freshman at Salem State College and works part-time at Landmark coaching lacrosse, soccer and for sports.

Ruling in the suit, the New Hampshire State Court said mailing the diploma was not a form of due process and ordered a new hearing by the state Department of Education, which is pending.

Morse says the case has turned many in her hometown against her family. There has been hate mail and her parents, already financially strapped, are having to sell their home in the town of 3,100, she said, partly to pay legal costs.

Henniker school officials also are not happy with the legal battle. "The feeling in town now is that the school board made a gesture, went beyond their obligation, legal or otherwise, and is now being burned," said Superintendent Cynthia Mowles.

"We don't cure blind children or deaf children," Mowles said in a telephone interview. "Our duty is to bring the child up to the point where they function independently in society."

She said that not only did Morse miss requirements for graduation before she went to Landmark, but her aptitude test scores were good enough to get her into college.

Morse feels she was not sufficiently prepared for college by the Henniker schools and required instruction from teachers trained to deal with dyslexics. And the legal fight has been a bitter lesson in itself.

"I've lost faith in the judicial system," she said. "It's not what they taught us in school."

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