

Judge rejects suit by suspended lawyer

By Bruce Golding
Staff Writer

A state judge has thrown out a lawsuit in which a suspended White Plains lawyer challenged the performance of the state agency responsible for policing the conduct of New York's judges.

In a ruling published this week, state Supreme Court Justice Herman Cahn dismissed Doris L. Sassower's claims that the Commission on Judicial Conduct had failed and had refused to carry out its constitutionally mandated duties.

Cahn, who presides in Manhattan, also denied requests by Sassower for orders seeking appoint-



Doris L. Sassower

ment of a special prosecutor and referral of the case for criminal investigation by federal, state and local authorities.

Sassower, founder of the not-for-profit Center for Judicial Accountability, vowed yesterday to appeal. In her lawsuit, she cited nine complaints she made to the commission since 1986, all of which were dismissed without investigation.

Sassower called Cahn's ruling "egregiously wrong" and said it was part of a pattern wherein "judges cover up for the commission so the commission will cover up for them."

"It's unfortunate that these lawsuits are not being heard impartially, on the merits, because of the political ramifications as far as the judiciary is concerned," she said. "There is just such an enormous self-interest here that is being protected."

Sassower also said Cahn's ruling revealed a bias against her

that she said was first demonstrated when he cut short her protests and ordered her removed from his Manhattan courtroom during a hearing in May.

"No one who was in that courtroom that day could have any confidence in the integrity of a decision by Justice Cahn after that," she said.

In a related matter, Sassower said the Center for Judicial Accountability had collected almost 1,000 signatures on a petition calling for Gov. George Pataki to appoint a special commission to hold public hearings on judicial corruption and the political manipulation of state judgeships.

Sassower, 62, has been suspended indefinitely from practicing law since June 1991 for failing to undergo a court-ordered competency exam. She contends that the order was illegal and that her suspension is thinly disguised retribution for her attempts at judicial reform.