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Bank wants records secret

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A Madison circuit judge is deciding whether a Richmond bank can declare pre-trial documents secret in a case involving a lawsuit filed by an ex-bank employee.

A former vice president of Richmond Bank has filed a lawsuit alleging age discrimination.

Judge Julia Hylton Adams said this morning she needed time to read and consider additional documents filed today in connection with the motion.

James D. Cochrum, an attorney for the bank, told the judge he is asking for the protective order "up front" so the bank could protect the confidentiality of bank customers. He said a breach of the customers' right to confidentiality could occur at any time during trial preparation.

The protective order would allow the bank to classify as "confidential" any pre-trial document it deemed potentially harmful to its customers. Documents termed confidential would not be open to

public inspection.

"We want to not have to come running into court every week," Cochrum told Adams.

"I'm trying to protect against the customers of the bank having this information put in the newspaper," he said.

Cochrum told the judge, "A lot of media attention has been devoted to this case."

"A lot of media attention is focused on a lot of cases," Adams responded. "I understand the concerns of the Fourth Estate."

Robert L. Abell, attorney for the plaintiff, Robert E. Puckett of Richmond, objected to what he called the broad scope of the motion.

The motion pertains to an age-discrimination lawsuit Puckett filed in late 1994 against Richmond Bank and its holding company, United Bancorp of Kentucky Inc.

The bank contends Puckett resigned. Puckett says he was fired.

No court date on the suit has been set.