

FORMER PROFESSOR FILES DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT AGAINST NSU



Northwestern State University is being sued by a former instructor from the school. The instructor claims he was the victim of racial discrimination and harassment by the criminal justice department's dean. The plaintiff in the case, Arthur Moghalu, is a citizen of the United States and also a Nigerian national. Moghalu is suing the Natchitoches university in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia. Moghalu is suing the school because the United States Justice Department declined to litigate the complaint. The decline for litigation came after a New Orleans office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission decided that the allegations from Moghalu had merit, according to documents from the courts. Officials from the United States Justice Department did issue Moghalu a right to sue letter. David West, a spokesman from Northwestern State University, referred all questions about the issue to University of Louisiana System attorney Winston DeCuir Sr. Messages left at the Baton Rouge office of DeCuir were not returned on Tuesday. From August of 2006 to May of 2008, Moghalu was a faculty member at Northwestern State University, as the only black instructor working in the department, according to court documents. Joe Morris, the head of the Northwestern State University criminal justice department, was also named as a defendant in the case. The lawsuit was filed on Friday. On February 29, 2008, Moghalu said that Morris had filed a false accident report identifying Moghalu as a hit and run driver. It is alleged by Moghalu that the accident never occurred and that the false report was in retaliation for a complaint Moghalu made after the department newsletter published a distorted version of an article that Moghalu wrote. Court papers claim that Morris allowed other department members to use racially demeaning words in reference to Moghalu and that Morris "routinely diverted students from meeting with (Moghalu) for advisory purposes (and) ... constantly made comments that (Moghalu) was too proud and arrogant." Moghalu also claims that he was badgered regarding his doctoral studies when other staff members do not have PhDs. Other claims include he received inconsistent and arbitrary reviews in the classroom and was also subjected to student complaints that had been encouraged by other faculty members. Those were proved to be untrue. According to Moghalu, Northwestern State University also engaged in "unlawful employment practices by failing to follow both the faculty handbook and university policy." Moghalu also claimed that Northwestern State University officials were aware of the conspiracy by Morris and the conspiracy of other faculty members against him. He claims that even though the officials at the school knew this, they still signed off on the firing of Moghalu back in 2008. Moghalu has demanded a trial by jury because he wants back pay, wants to be issued punitive damages, and wants to be reinstated at the school.

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