

Los Angeles Wave

BOTTOM LINE

UCLA faces another discrimination suit

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By Betty Pleasant, Contributing Editor

Comes now View Park resident Dawn Therese Evans, who had been an integral member of UCLA's medical staff for more than 30 years, adding to a growing list of African-Americans who say they were the victims of racism at UCLA.

Evans, who earned a master's degree in public health at UCLA in 1982, has sued the university, the regents of the University of California, her supervisor, Niklas Krause, and Does 1 through 50 for 10 specific offenses against her including racial discrimination, racial harassment, retaliation, the violation of three labor codes, four government codes and her ultimate wrongful termination perpetrated in the guise of a layoff.

Evans worked in the UCLA's School of Public Health, which is located on the campus in the Health Science Complex across from the Ronald Reagan Medical Center. Her job site's operations are funded by the National Institutes of Occupational Health and Safety and she was the program administrator who managed the Education and Research Center's \$9 million NIOSH funding — as well as its Industrial Hygiene Program funding — for almost seven years when she was unceremoniously “laid off” last year.

Evans reached that pinnacle after joining the UCLA medical personnel in 1974, earning a master's degree in public health at UCLA in 1982 and accumulating several promotions, pay raises, and garnering the respect of both her peers and supervisors. In fact, based on the nomination of her colleagues, Evans received the UCLA Staff Achievement Award for the 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 fiscal years.

All was well with Evans, who became an important figure in the UCLA workplace, where she figured to remain for several more years and eventually retire.

“Unfortunately, the arrival of Dr. Niklas Krause would bring an abrupt and tragic end to Evans' long and exemplary career with UCLA and the state's regents,” attorney Edwin Pairavi wrote in his Superior Court complaint.

According to the complaint, Dr. Krause became the administrator of the center and Evans' supervisor in January 2011, "which resulted in drastic and unfortunate changes for Evans and other minority employees at the [Education and Research Center]."

The complaint states that there were a total of three minorities working at the center when Krause arrived — one Hispanic, Mark Magana; and two African-Americans, Frank Rodgers and Evans. The court document accuses Krause of a "clear racial animus" that included making disparaging comments about the three minority employees and singling them out for disparate treatment. He was once overheard saying of Evans, Magana and Rodgers, "these people were people that were hired without my input," and went on to say he wanted "to start a 'clean slate' with respect to the hiring decisions."

According to the complaint, shortly thereafter verbalizing his "clean slate" aspirations, Krause terminated Rodgers, (whom he called useless), fired Magana one quarter before her graduation, and laid off Evans after she had been subjected to racial and professional degradation by Krause, who publicly harangued her about her "inability" to perform a job she had been doing — and doing well — long before Krause arrived.

Now, let's count up the cost of having UCLA around. Dr. Christian Head sued the university and the state regents for racism and received a humongous settlement from the state; Dr. Joel Sercarz sued the university and the state regents for racism and retaliation and his settlement is pending; Tenise Hayes, another ex-UCLA employee sued the university and the state for racism and her case is just sitting there; Judge David Cunningham III has filed a claim against UCLA and the state regents for racism on the part of the UCLA police — a mandatory precursor to a lawsuit, and now Evans has formally filed a lengthy suit in the Superior Court against the university and the state regents for racism and is moving right along with it because, "I'm looking to be made whole," she said.

"I can't find a job. I've been looking for two years now. I've applied for at least 200 jobs and had only three interviews; two on the telephone and one in person."

As of press time, efforts to reach Krause for comment have been unsuccessful.

On Wednesday, a UCLA spokesperson said he was in Germany.