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Meet Nancy Gray



In a diverse legal career that has spanned over three decades, attorney Nancy Gray has represented hundreds of clients in a variety of civil matters, including labor and employment (management/employee); sexual harassment, discrimination, wrongful termination; commercial,

Standing Up For Women? Male Executive Alleges Retaliation after Complaining About Treatment of Female Employees

Yet another legal battle is being waged in California over behavior in the workplace, and both sides are getting ugly. Korn/Ferry International, the world's biggest executive search firm, is facing a retaliation lawsuit after firing one of its top executives, Robert A. Damon. Damon filed suit against his former employer alleging that he was fired in retaliation for making complaints to the board of directors and the human resources department about CEO Gary Burnison's treatment of women.

Pattern of Abuse by CEO

According to Damon, Burnison began a pattern of harassment and discrimination against female employees beginning in 2010. One female executive, Ann Dutra, alleged that after she complained about Burnison's abuse, the CEO threatened her with a golf club. While the board of directors of Korn/Ferry hired an outside firm to look into her allegations, Dutra was also demoted. After she filed a complaint with the Illinois

contract and business issues.

Among other highlights, Ms. Gray served as Assistant District Attorney in New York, spent seven years with a national law firm working on complex pharmaceutical and medical device cases, and successfully litigated and coordinated cases around the country. She has a unique expertise in matters pertaining to the adulteration of extra virgin olive oil.

Ms. Gray has also lectured and written on a variety of topics, including expert testimony, drug and medical device regulation, sexual harassment, employment practices and child performer issues.

In 1997, she started her own firm, based in Los Angeles.

Having been raised in New York City, Nancy enjoys dramatic, musical and comedy theater as well as pro sports. She is a PADI-certified scuba diver. Among her favorite reading material is Bon Appetit and anything pertaining to criminal behavior and behavioral profiling.

Accreditations

The logo for Super Lawyers, featuring the words "Super Lawyers" in a stylized, bold, gold-colored font with a slight shadow effect, set against a white background.

Department of Human Rights, Dutra left the firm and settled a sex-discrimination lawsuit against the firm privately. Other female employees had made similar complaints about mistreatment by the CEO.



The investigator who looked into Dutra's complaints told the board that Burnison needed to be trained on "how to lawfully behave in the workplace," but the CEO was never disciplined and no such training took place.

Damon contends that he stood up for Dutra and other women in the office, but was told by the

Vice President of Human Resources that "[the CEO] doesn't discriminate. He's an equal opportunity abuser." After learning that Damon was making complaints about the CEO's behavior, the CEO fired Damon. Damon was told that he had "tarnished the company's brand," and had forfeited his right at least \$1.7 million in deferred compensation because he was fired for cause.

According to the complaint, Damon believes that he was fired in retaliation for speaking up about gender abuse and discrimination, which is against California law.

Korn/Ferry Attacks Damon

Korn/Ferry filed its own court documents stating that Damon's complaint is attempting to draw attention away from the real reason he was fired: Damon repeatedly used his company email to hire at least 20 call girls, and used his company computer to review pictures of the nude or semi-nude women. Korn/Ferry

Directions



About Gray & Associates P.C.



Attorney Nancy Gray of Gray & Associates, P.C. has more than 30 years of experience providing personalized attention and creative solutions to her clients' legal issues.

Whether you need a strong litigator, a labor and employment advocate, or a savvy business law attorney, you can rely on Gray & Associates to provide you with excellent

also claims that Damon suggested that the call girls contact Korn/Ferry to confirm his identity and position.

In a statement from Korn/Ferry's chief marketing officer, the company stated that Damon was "terminated with cause for inappropriate personal behavior, flagrant violations of company policies, and material breaches of his own employment arrangement."

Attorneys for Damon declined to comment.

Retaliation or Legitimate Termination?

California law protects employees from negative consequences for "protected activities" under the state's Fair Employment and Housing Act, which prohibits discrimination.

Protected activities generally include things like opposing or speaking up against illegal behavior, like gender or racial discrimination. If an employee is fired or demoted after making a complaint about discrimination, that employee may have a retaliation claim under California law.

To establish illegal discrimination, the employee must prove three things:

1. That he or she engaged in a protected activity,
2. That the employer subjected the employee to an adverse employment action, and
3. That the adverse action was a result of the employee's protected activity.

Firing is the ultimate "adverse employment action." The issue, however, will be whether Damon was fired as a result of his own inappropriate behavior, or because of his complaints about the CEO's unlawful treatment of women.

Help for Employers

When an employee alleges discrimination or bias, it is important for employers to take steps to investigate

legal representation. Click [here](#) to read more.

and rectify the problem if one exists. Even if that employee is later fired for cause, not taking action to address an employee's complaint about mistreatment or discrimination can result in lengthy and messy court battles.

Employers need to be sure that they have clear, written policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace. Employees should know where to take concerns regarding unlawful conduct in the workplace, and corrective action should be taken whenever a legitimate complaint arises. Employers should also make sure that an employee is not reprimanded for addressing his or her concerns about discrimination or harassment.

If you are concerned about an employment or harassment matter, you need experienced legal help on your side. Attorney Nancy Gray is a knowledgeable California employment law matter who can help you protect both your employees and your business. Contact Gray & Associates, P.C., if you are concerned about your obligations as an employer or your rights as an employee.

For a free consultation, [contact](#) Gray & Associates, P.C. by calling (310) 452-1211 today.

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