

Lawsuit filed against Southwestern Baptist: Sex discrimination charged

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Sheri Klouda, a former Hebrew professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who claims she was denied tenure because of her sex, has filed a federal lawsuit against the seminary and its president, Paige Patterson.

Klouda was hired by the seminary's board of trustees shortly before Patterson became president in 2003. Klouda alleges that Patterson first assured her that her sex would not be an issue in her employment but later told her it was the reason she was being denied tenure. Klouda has since obtained a tenure-track position at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana.

Her attorney, Gary Richardson of Tulsa, Oklahoma, filed the suit March 8 in Fort Worth, Texas, where the seminary is located. The suit alleges breach of contract, fraud and defamation and seeks damages and declaratory relief.

Nothing about sex discrimination is mentioned in the lawsuit, Richardson said, because that is "a matter of interpretation." Rather, "the thrust of the suit is breach of contract and defamation."

Klouda told the *Chronicle for Higher Education* that she "is saddened that it became necessary to file this suit, and disappointed that we were not able to resolve this matter fairly and privately."

John Zellers, a seminary spokesperson, said that the seminary and Patterson would not comment on the pending litigation. -*Religion News Service*