

Former Professor Sues Savannah Law School



Summary: Savannah Law School is preparing to close its doors but that is the least of the school's worries now as a former professor sues the school for discrimination.

Savannah Law School has been hit with a discrimination lawsuit by a former professor. Maggie Tsavaris was fired from the soon-to-be-closed law school last year but she claims she was terminated because of her age, gender and cancer treatments.

Tsavaris filed her lawsuit on May 25 in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia. In the suit, she claims the law school fired her from her tenure-track position in order for younger faculty members to move in. She was 60-years-old at the time and the oldest female faculty member at the school when [John Marshall Law School](#), which operates Savannah as a branch campus, fired her. Tsavaris further alleges that John Marshall has a history of discrimination against minority women and legal writing instructors.

Tsavaris, who is representing herself, said in an interview with [Law.com](#), "I've never felt discrimination before. It's the most crushing, demoralizing sensation ever, and it's the 21st century and it's a law school? It has just been awful."

She was hired by the Savannah in 2013 to teach legal writing. She was already teaching as an adjunct and visiting professor at a number of other law schools. Before the school year started, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to undergo surgery. Since that first year, the school hired her back each year and was selected by the Class of 2017 to give a speech at graduation. Even then, Dean Malcolm Morris told Tsavaris that this would be her last year because of subpar teaching.

Morris had observed one of Tsavaris' lectures, claiming it was too lecture-heavy and did not involve the students enough. He also noted low student evaluations but she claims a number of other younger faculty members received lower student reviews but were not terminated.

The suit reads: "Defendant Morris singled out Ms. Tsavaris, an age-protected, disabled, white female professor, before she could apply for the tenure for which she worked very hard, for termination for pretextual reasons that her teaching was not up to par and her student evaluations were purportedly confirmation of that."

Tsavaris goes on to allege that Morris threatened to give her bad references unless she resigned, which she refused to do. She says she has applied for a number of positions but has not received any offers yet.

In all, she is bringing 11 claims against the school for age discrimination, sex discrimination, defamation, breach of contract, and violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. She is asking for back pay, compensatory damages, and more.

John Marshall is already facing at least two proposed class actions by Savannah Law students over the closing of the school. The school announced in March that they would no longer accept new students and had sold the campus building because of low enrollment numbers.

Savannah Law students and alumni have started a campaign to save the school by getting it linked with a public university. Until the fate the school is finalized, students are able to attend classes from an alternate location.

Do you think Tsavaris can be claiming discrimination when the law school is closing and likely fired a lot of perfectly good professors? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about Savannah Law's closure, read these articles:

- [Savannah Law School Announces Last Semester](#)
- [Savannah Law School to Remain Open for Students to Finish](#)
- [The John Marshall Law School Launches New Law School in Savannah](#)

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