

## Duane Morris Faces Lawsuit Over Alleged Gender and Racial Pay Inequities



### Lawsuit Accusations

On August 1, 2024, a class action lawsuit was filed against the law firm Duane Morris, alleging that the firm improperly classifies its nonequity partners and engages in discriminatory pay practices. The suit, filed by Meagan Garland, a Black female attorney, claims that the firm shifts significant business expenses and tax liabilities onto nonequity partners while failing to provide them with equitable pay or benefits.

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### Misclassification and Financial Impact

Garland, who has been with the firm since 2018, alleges that despite receiving a partner title in January 2021, her role and responsibilities remained unchanged. However, her compensation and tax obligations were adjusted, leading to a decrease in her effective pay. The lawsuit details how Duane Morris stopped withholding employment taxes from Garland's salary and imposed additional financial burdens on her, including a share of the firm's partnership taxes and capital contributions.

### Alleged Discrimination

The lawsuit also accuses Duane Morris of violating California's equal pay laws through systematic gender and racial pay inequity. Garland asserts that the firm's predominantly male and white executive committee makes compensation decisions in a non-transparent manner, which disproportionately disadvantages female and nonwhite attorneys.

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### Financial Discrepancies

The suit highlights discrepancies in pay between Garland and her colleagues. It cites instances where white male attorneys with similar or less experience received significantly higher compensation and bonuses compared to Garland. The complaint also alleges that Duane Morris used funds deducted from nonequity partners for political and charitable purposes, further disadvantaging those partners.

### Legal Demands

Garland's lawsuit seeks various remedies, including punitive damages and civil penalties up to \$25,000 per violation, a declaratory judgment on employment misclassification, and restitution. The legal claims involve breach of contract, violations of California's business and equal pay laws, and several other allegations related to misrepresentation and fiduciary duties.

### Firm's Response

Duane Morris has responded to the allegations, expressing strong disagreement with the claims and indicating their intention to vigorously defend themselves in court.

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