

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION

JOHN F. KNIGHT, JR., and ALEASE S. SIMS, et al., individually and on behalf of others
similarly situated, *

Plaintiffs and Plaintiffs-Intervenors, *

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *

Plaintiff-Intervenor, *

v. *

Civil Action No.
2:83-cv-1676-HLM

THE STATE OF ALABAMA, et al., *

Defendants. *

**KNIGHT-SIMS PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
WHY DEFENDANT AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN CONTEMPT**

EXHIBIT B: Joe McAdory, "*Danley questions dismissal*," OANOW.COM,

February 11, 2005



Danley questions dismissal

Joe McAdory

Staff writer

Friday, February 11, 2005

Stacy Danley recently closed on a new home. He's the proud father of three young boys, one not yet three weeks old. Thursday morning, however, he had to walk through the front door of his new home to tell his wife the shocking news.

He'd just been let go from the university he's loved since high school.

Danley signed to play running back at Auburn out of high school, and after a brief NFL career, he returned to work in its athletic department. Now, he feels jilted.

Danley, Auburn University's associate athletic director for external affairs and Olympic sports coordinator, along with Auburn assistant athletic directors Eugene Harris and Marvin Julich, were laid off as the school reorganized its athletic department.

Though newly hired athletic director Jay Jacobs viewed the layoffs as an attempt to create a more efficient department, Danley - Auburn's eighth all-time leading rusher with 2,427 yards from 1987 to 1990 - believes a discrimination complaint he filed in 2003 against the university may have ultimately resulted in his termination.

"I knew back in 2003 if I went forward with my claims and exposed some negative things within the athletic department, that it was a good chance my employment would be short-lived from that point on," Danley, 36, told the Opelika-Auburn News.

"I think that happened today."

Danley, who was hired by Auburn eight years ago and became the school's first African-American associate athletic director, reached a settlement with Auburn in May of 2003. He received a lump sum of \$80,000 and a promotion from assistant athletic director to associate athletic director with an annual salary of \$75,000.

When asked if Danley was treated any differently by school personnel because of his race, he replied, "No comment.

"It was necessary to expose what was going on within the athletic department and put an end to it. I don't think it was what Auburn stands for. At Auburn, there are no colors but orange and blue. That's the colors Coach (Pat) Dye talked about, not black and white. I was disappointed to be faced with those situations when I was hired in 1997. I did what I had to do and I think Auburn is a better place because of it. If that meant me telling the truth, being honest and maintaining my integrity no matter what, then that's what I have to do even if it cost me my job."

Danley refuses to get into specifics about the work environment he was exposed to prior to the complaint.

"I don't want to comment on that right now," he said. "I don't want to bring out any negative publicity to Auburn. I've never wanted to do that. It's unfortunate that we're going to be faced with some of that negative publicity now. It's going to probably be another black eye for Auburn, something I never wanted to do. When I played for Coach Dye, it was 'you keep your family business inside the family.' Now, I think some of our family business is going to be aired, and that's unfortunate. That's not something I wanted to speak on today."

Football hero

Danley was a big part of Dye's golden years of Tiger football, including three SEC championships. Many remember Danley not necessarily for a touchdown he scored, but rather for a hard lick he took against Ohio State in the 1990 Hall of Fame Bowl. Danley was leveled by a Buckeye and knocked unconscious. After an inspirational speech from Dye, Danley quickly propped himself up and ran off the field. Auburn rallied from behind to win, 31-14.

"People told me I was taking one for the team," he said. "I feel like now I'm taking one for the team again today."

But playing football took its toll.

"I'm bone-on-bone in both knees," he said. "I've had knee replacement surgery. My ankle is bad to walk on. My back is out of place. I can't even play with my boys now. But if somebody asked me if I'd do it all over again, I'd come to Auburn and sacrifice my body and do what I had to do to win games, beat Alabama and win championships, I'd do it in a minute."

Conflict

After his brief NFL career, Danley went on to complete his education at Auburn and accept a position within the athletic department. Then something went awry.

Part of the settlement agreement to Danley's 2003 complaint led to Danley getting the duties of overseeing the school's NFL fund-raising initiative. He believes that role created a conflict.

"(New athletic director) Jay (Jacobs) felt like he should have been overseeing it," Danley said. "He felt he was over fund raising and it was his deal."

Jacobs was previously the school's senior assistant athletic director for development, which coordinates fund raising.

"We had, in the settlement agreement, that was part of the job responsibilities that I received. Naturally, that would cause a conflict. I thought we moved from that, but it was probably the beginning of the end of what I thought was a good relationship between Jay and I."

Jacobs said he and Danley enjoyed a good working relationship.

"Stacy was a player here when I ran the dorm," Jacobs said. "We've always had a good relationship. Being in athletics, we're all competitive and sometimes hard-headed, but we've always been able to work things out - and I'm not just speaking specifically about him. I've always respected Stacy and thought well of him."

Danley said he would hate to think his termination was retribution.

"Sometimes when you go through different things and different situations, when different outcomes arise, people can't get over those things and they harbor such things," he said. "I just don't know. It was no surprise to me. I had gotten word from higher-level individuals that this may be happening."

"I asked Jay flat-out. I said, 'Jay, are you going to fire me? This is what I've heard today. If you are, tell me now before I have my third son and before I close on this new house that I'm ready to build.' I hadn't heard anything from him until today. I respect Jay's decision, but I'm sad. I'm hurt. Maybe this is a blessing in disguise."

"I think Jay is a good, strong Christian person. I question if there are outside entities that put pressure on him to make these decisions."

Who could that be?

"No comment," Danley replied.

Is this the end?

Is legal action on the horizon?

"Some things are going to come out in the near future," Danley said. "It's unfortunate because we had a great year this year. Those kids did a tremendous job. We're going to always love Auburn and support Auburn, but as a father and a husband, I'm going to always do what's best for my family."

"I've had some great days at Auburn University. I love Auburn University. I committed my life to Auburn."

"I think if God continues to work within the athletic department, then He will remove some of those demons that are still around in there and we can be the great Auburn University that we strive so hard to be."

Danley repeatedly expressed his love for Auburn and his desire to make it a better place to work and learn.

"God doesn't like ugly," Danley added. "He always exposes ugly. It's just a matter of time. Until we can get some of those demons out of there, we're going to continue to have situations like this."

"I just hope one day we can start to do the right things, top to bottom, every day. I think that day is coming because we've got enough good Auburn people around who are not going to quit until that happens."

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