

Pastor Accused Of Sexual Assault
Havonnah Johnson

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JACKSON, Miss. -- A local pastor accused of sexually assaulting five women settled a lawsuit out of court Wednesday.

Larry Weems is the pastor of Davis Temple Church of God in Christ. He's also the superintendent of St. Academy in Holmes County where the women worked.

Algenia Randle is one of five women who filed a wrongful termination lawsuit against Weems, her former boss. Randle complained that the pastor sexually assaulted her at St. Academy in Holmes County. The wrongful termination case was settled out of court.

"It has been a long time. We are just glad it is over and are pleased with the outcome. We're glad that it's over. That's the main thing," said Randle.

Another woman said it's not over. A Texas woman who decided not to sue described an incident during a church trip.

"When I woke up, Larry Weems was on top of me grinding himself through my clothes and I told him to get up and get off of me," said the woman.

Another woman who sued the church wants him held accountable publicly.

"He needs to be registered as a sex offender so people need to know what he is and what he is about," said Earnestine Deering who filed a lawsuit.

The women claimed they first tried to settle the case with church leaders but did not get far.

"My response was to be fired after they lied and said it would help us and said they would protect us. All we got was fired," said the woman.

At least two of the five alleged victims said they have had a hard time finding work. As for Weems, the case was settled and he is still the pastor at Davis Temple and the superintendent of the school.

Weems refused to comment on the case. WAPT tried to contact Weems' bosses, the local superintendent and the bishop of the Church of God in Christ in Memphis, but none of the calls was returned.

The lawsuit was settled for an undisclosed amount and the victims could not say if the church or the pastor paid them.

Jackson 04/26/06

Pastor Sex Case Settled

By David Kenney

david@wlbt.net

A Jackson pastor accused of sexual assault will not stand trial.

Wednesday Pastor Larry Weems of Davis Temple Church of God in Christ settled out of court with his accusers.

All five settled out of court, minutes before the trial was to start in a Lexington courtroom Wednesday morning.

Weems currently serves as pastor at Davis Temple Church of God in Christ on Dalton Street in Jackson. He was recently featured in an article in the Clarion Ledger on faith leaders in the community.

The accusers all say the alleged incidents of indecency involving Pastor Weems occurred when he was superintendent of Saints Academy and College, which is also a part of Church of God in Christ Incorporated.

In their deposition, one plaintiff testified, quote "He would start out with a conversation and end up with his hands on me in this closet, and pulling my breasts out and s*%#ing on them."

The exact terms of the settlement are not being discussed but the plaintiffs attorney, Felicia Perkins, released a statement. "This was a very traumatic experience for my clients. They are very pleased the matter is resolved and they have obtained a measure of justice. They are looking forward to the healing process and getting on with their lives."

We were unable to contact Pastor Weems or his attorney for comment.

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The women sued the Church of God in Christ Inc., headquartered in Memphis, which has about 5.5 million members, and Larry Weems, who was superintendent of Saints Academy and College in Lexington. The Church of God in Christ operates the religious school.

The women worked at Saints Academy and College until 2004, when they said they were fired by Weems. Weems, who is pastor of Davis Temple Church of God and Christ in Jackson, was hired as superintendent of the school in August 1998.

The women alleged Weems harassed or sexually assaulted them and committed other unlawful and lewd acts. And when they reported it to board members and others affiliated with the school and church, Weems fired them, the women alleged.