Wigdor LLP Files Gender Discrimination And Retaliation Lawsuit Against Bramshill Investments

September 24, 2019 • News & Press

On September 24, 2019, Wigdor LLP filed a gender discrimination and retaliation lawsuit on behalf of former Executive Director Ashley Pullen against Bramshill Investments, LLC ("Bramshill"), an alternative asset manager with approximately $2.5 billion under management. Bramshill's Chief Investment Officer and Co-Founder Art DeGaetano and Chief Executive Officer Stephen Selver are also named Defendants in the lawsuit.

As set forth in the Complaint, when Ms. Pullen joined Bramshill in May 2019, only four of the firm's 22 employees were women. The lawsuit alleges that Ms. Pullen was subjected to a hostile work environment and various acts of blatant gender discrimination throughout her employment with Bramshill, including:

- Unequal pay relative to her male counterparts;
- Being marginalized and denied the same investor coverage opportunities as her male coworkers – which would have a direct, negative impact on Ms. Pullen's ability to earn compensation;
- Relegation to an "event-planning" role while her male coworkers were tasked with more analytical and technical work;
- Frequent inappropriate comments about her appearance that were never made to male employees; and
- Exclusion from Bramshill's numerous "male-only" social events.

The lawsuit further alleges that while Mr. Selver criticized Ms. Pullen for being "combative" and "aggressive," he often praised her male colleagues for exhibiting similar behavior. The Complaint notes that this gender-based language is unlawful under the federal anti-discrimination laws, citing the landmark Supreme Court case, *Price Waterhouse v. Hopkins,* in which Justice William J. Brennan wrote:

> *"An employer who objects to aggressiveness in women but whose positions require this trait puts women in an intolerable and impermissible Catch 22: out of a job if they behave aggressively and out of a job if they do not. Title VII lifts women out of this bind."*

As alleged, Ms. Pullen was terminated by Bramshill just one week after she complained of the "boys' club" environment to which she was subjected. Finally, Bramshill has further retaliated against Ms. Pullen by threatening to sue her after she retained counsel and put Bramshill on notice that she intended to vindicate her rights under the anti-discrimination laws, according to the Complaint.

Ms. Pullen is represented by Wigdor LLP Founding Partner Douglas H. Wigdor, Partner Michael J. Willemin.

Statement from Douglas H. Wigdor and Michael J. Willemin:

> *"Unfortunately, rather than take Ms. Pullen's complaints of gender discrimination seriously, Bramshill instead decided to fire her and threaten to sue her. This type of intimidating conduct is precisely why so many women are afraid to speak out against discrimination, and if companies who act like this are not held accountable, women will continue to suffer in silence."*

New York Law Journal
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