

Perry Ellis executive sues company president over alleged homophobic, racist remarks

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A store for Perry Ellis brand Original Penguin. Perry Ellis

Perry Ellis president and soon-to-be chief executive Oscar Feldenkreis is being sued by a top executive at the Doral-based retailer who says that Feldenkreis made racist and homophobic remarks to him.

Feldenkreis allegedly told the executive, Joseph Cook, to make sure there were “no blacks in my ads” or “anyone who looked too gay,” and also that Cook could avoid jury service by expressing hatred for minority groups, according to a lawsuit filed Wednesday in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Cook, who identifies himself as gay in the lawsuit and says Feldenkreis was aware of his sexual orientation, runs Perry Ellis’ Original Penguin brand. He is based in New York. Perry Ellis is also named in the suit.

In a statement, a lawyer for Perry Ellis denied Cook’s claims.

“Perry Ellis is a company that promotes equal opportunity and a positive working environment,” wrote Sarir Silver, an attorney at Gordon & Rees. “Perry Ellis categorically denies any allegations to the contrary. The claims that have been asserted will be vigorously defended against.”

Feldenkreis is [set to take over as CEO](#) from his father, George Feldenkreis, next year.

Cook is being represented by attorney Douglas Wigdor.