

# 'The Notebook' Author Nicholas Sparks Accused Of Banning LGBT Club At School He Founded

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**Nicholas Sparks**, the man who authored the extremely popular romance novel *The Notebook*, is locked in an increasingly tense legal battle with the former headmaster of the school Sparks co-founded over allegations of anti-LGBT discrimination, racism, and anti-Semitism.

The 53-year-old romance novelist co-founded the **Epiphany School of Global Studies** back in 2006 in New Bern, North Carolina, and sought for it to be an institution “anchored in the Judeo-Christian commandment to Love God and Your Neighbor as Yourself,” according to its mission statement.

At one point in 2013, a man named **Saul Benjamin** came on as CEO and headmaster of the school — and he quickly noted that the place was lacking diversity, taking it upon himself to implement change, according to an extensive report about the lawsuit and its context published recently by *The Daily Beast*.

Well, Benjamin’s attempts to diversify the school must have backfired horribly, because by 2014, he was locked in a lawsuit against the school’s Board of Trustees — which includes Sparks — and Benjamin was then openly accusing the author and the school of homophobia, racism, and anti-Semitism.

For the last five years, the lawsuit has been winding its way through the court system in North Carolina, and while it hadn’t previously drawn much attention publicly or in the media, *The Daily Beast’s* big reveal now has EVERYBODY reacting to the accusations against Sparks.

One of the center points of the lawsuit against Sparks is a series of emails he allegedly fired off to Benjamin during the man’s headmaster tenure. As obtained by *The Daily Beast*, the emails purport to show that Sparks was adamant about NOT allowing an LGBT club to being at the school, while also defending why he believed his decision about that wasn’t discriminatory or illegal.

An alleged email reportedly from November of 2013 read (below):

“Not allowing them admittance is discrimination. Not allowing them to have a club is NOT discrimination. Also, remember, we’ve had gay students before, many of them. [A former headmaster] handled it quietly and wonderfully, and the students considered themselves fortunate. I expect you to do the same.”

Wow...

In that same email, Sparks also allegedly complained about the fact that sexual orientation was added to the school's non-discrimination policy, claiming that he and the rest of the Board of Trustees were NOT on board with having it included, and explicitly arguing it was Benjamin's decision alone.

Sparks allegedly wrote (below):

“About the non-discrimination policy you keep bringing up: please remember that sexual orientation was NOT in there originally, and that the only reason it was added was that YOU insisted it specifically be added... Frankly, no one but you wanted it in there, preferring to simply phrase it as ‘we don’t discriminate against... and other legally protected categories.’ Please stop implying it was something the [Board of Trustees] wanted to do; it’s the law.”

OMG! This guy!!!

And in a final email, the *A Walk To Remember* author allegedly continued with a rant about diversity, too (below):

“Regarding diversity, I’ve now told you half a dozen times that our lack of diversity has NOTHING to do with the school, or anyone at the school. It’s not because of what we as a school, has or hasn’t done. It has nothing to do with racism, or vestiges of Jim Crow. It comes down to 1) Money and 2) Culture.”

Um... so has Sparks gone full-MAGA, or what?? What IS this stuff?!?!

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The backlash to the recently revealed emails has been so strong that Sparks himself released a statement about the lawsuit on Thursday, in which he attempts to call out *The Daily Beast's* reporting as “not news” while also dismissing the claims Benjamin makes about Epiphany.

In the statement, Sparks said (below):

“Since 2014, I have vigorously been defending the lawsuit brought against me and the Epiphany School of Global Studies by its former headmaster, Saul Benjamin. The article appearing in today’s The Daily Beast is not news, and repeats false accusations and claims made against Epiphany and me, and largely ignores the overwhelming evidence we have submitted to the Court. I am pleased that the Court has dismissed nearly every claim against me, my Foundation and Epiphany. Very importantly, the Court has dismissed all claims of discrimination or harassment against me. While there will be a trial on a few remaining issues, I am confident that a jury will evaluate these claims fairly and decide those claims in our favor as well. As we prepare for trial, I want to make one thing clear: Epiphany is and remains a place where students and faculty of any race, belief, religion, background or orientation should feel welcome. My commitment to these values, as well as Epiphany’s commitment to these values, have been and remain constant. At this time, we will not have any further comment. Thank you.”

Hmmm...

In response, **Lawrence M. Pearson** — the lawyer representing Benjamin in court — released this follow-up statement about Sparks’ words (below):

“The emails written by Nicholas Sparks speak for themselves. Despite Mr. Sparks’s attempts to downplay his discriminatory actions, he does not get to decide what is or isn’t ‘news.’ We look forward to vindicating Mr. Benjamin’s rights at trial in August.”

No kidding...

As Pearson alludes to in that email, Benjamin’s suit figures to officially go to trial at some point in August 2019.

Any reactions to Sparks’ shocking reported emails, Perezicious readers??? Sound OFF about all of it and more in the comments (below)...