

EDUCATION

Former Nardin Academy president files lawsuit against the school

Sandra Better is alleging defamation and a breach of her employment agreement.

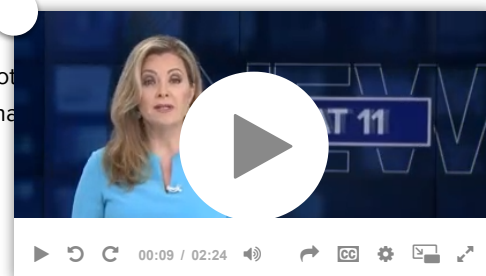
Author: **Andy Paden**
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BUFFALO, N.Y. — Former embattled Nardin Academy President Sandra Better is striking back, [filling a 63-page federal lawsuit](#) against the private Catholic school that previously employed her.

Better is alleging a breach of her employment agreement and defamation, among a number of other accusations.

It comes after the former president stepped down in June following months of student protests, threats from donors and parents reconsidering enrolling their students based on claims that Better created a toxic environment.



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But according to Michael Willemin, Betters’ attorney, the environment that his client is accused of fostering is one that she inherited — not one that she created.


“Enrollment at Nardin was in decline,” he said. “The deficit in Nardin was on the rise. The debt at Nardin was on the rise, and all these issues with respect to race relations that our client walked into Nardin and experienced were already in existence.”

Better’s attorney also said his client received death threats with one email from a parent telling her to “walk carefully and look over your shoulder or something or someone will handle you.”

Despite the threat, the former president, in addition to asking for compensation, is requesting to be reinstated as president of the school.

“If she has the opportunity to go back and complete the job, she will certainly do that,” Willemin said. “And hopefully with a supportive board, a supportive community, a supportive faculty and a supportive administration underneath her.”

2 On Your Side did reached out to Nardin Academy for comment but did not hear back. Willemin said the suit is now in the school's hands and that they are waiting for its response.



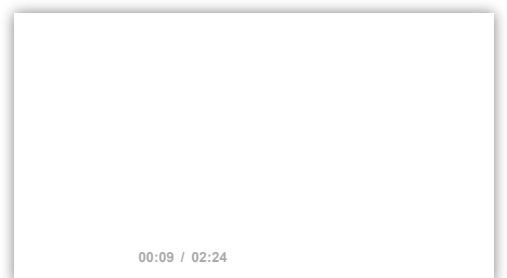
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 SANDRA BETTERS, :
 : Civil Case No.:
 Plaintiff, :
 :
 v. : **COMPLAINT**
 :
 NARDIN ACADEMY, MARSHA SULLIVAN, :
 MICHAEL LAWLEY, FRANK EWING, LUKE :
 JACOBS, CHARLIE CHIAMPOU, PATRICIA : **Jury Trial Demanded**
 LORENCE, KENT LORENCE AND THERESE :
 FORTON-BARNES :
 :
 Defendants. :
 ----- X

Plaintiff Sandra Betters (“Dr. Betters”) hereby alleges, by and through her undersigned counsel, Wigdor LLP, as and for her Complaint against Defendants Nardin Academy (“Nardin,” “Academy” or the “School”), Marsha Sullivan (“Ms. Sullivan”), Michael Lawley (“Mr. Lawley” or “Trustee Lawley”), Frank Ewing (“Mr. Ewing” or “Trustee Ewing”), Luke Jacobs (“Mr. Jacobs” or “Trustee Jacobs”), Charlie Chiam pou (“Mr. Chiam pou”), Trish Lorence (“Ms. Lorence”), Kent Lorence (“Mr. Lorence”) and Therese Forton-Barnes (“Ms. Forton-Barnes”) (together, “Defendants”) as follows:

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. In July 2021, after a rigorous hiring process and unanimous approval by the Board of Trustees, Dr. Betters became the President of Nardin Academy, the oldest independent Catholic school in Western New York.
2. Nardin Academy – and the primarily affluent Buffalo, New York community that it serves – boasts that it is “a school of academic excellence grounded in the values and philosophy

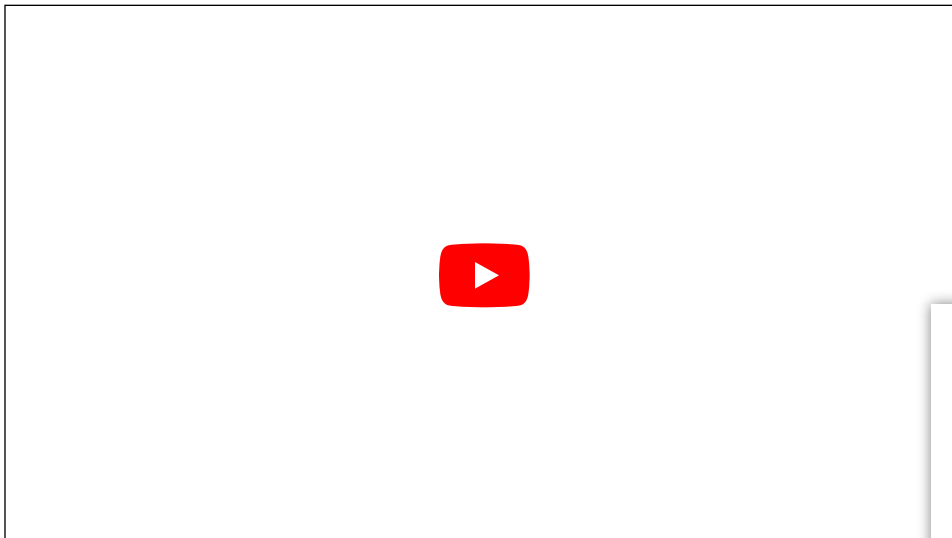
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