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Judge denies Clemson in lawsuit brought by former employee

Staff reports

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U.S. District Judge Matthew J. Perry III on Wednesday denied Clemson University's motion to dismiss a lawsuit brought by a fired employee. Perry also denied Clemson's motion to move the case from Columbia to Greenville or Anderson.

Chalmers Eugene "Gene" Troutman III of Greenville, who served as executive secretary to the board of trustees for more than two years, says in the suit that between 2000 and 2007 the university increased in-state tuition from \$3,590 to \$9,900 while amassing \$137 million in unrestricted cash. Troutman also claims university officials intentionally kept the state Legislature from learning about the fund's growth for fear the lawmakers would reduce the school's budget appropriation.

Troutman claims the board fired him in August 2007 because he raised questions about the tuition increases and the growth of the fund. He says in the suit that the board violated his First Amendment rights, and that an official defamed him. He is asking for actual and punitive damages, including back pay.

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