

Sheriff's Deputy Lieutenant June Johnson files EEOC complaint against Hennepin County

Written by Al McFarlane, Editor-In-Chief
Monday, 07 October 2013 12:04

A veteran law enforcement officer has filed civil rights violations charges at the U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against her employer, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department and Hennepin County.



Lt. June Johnson has worked at the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office since 1985. In a complaint filed two weeks ago with the EEOC, Johnson said she had been "subjected to gender harassment, sexual harassment, and race and age discrimination."

She said, "Over the years, I have been subjected to harsher scrutiny and disparate treatment as to my work schedule, work assignments and use of earned leave." Johnson talked about her history as a Sheriff's Deputy and the hostile work environment that eventually led to the filing of charges with the federal government last Tuesday in KFAI interview on *Conversations with Al McFarlane* . (http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/insightnews/conversationswithalmcfarlane/~5/sh9o_s_1vOs/10_01_13.mp3)

Johnson said she has experienced a hostile work environment from the beginning of her work career in the Sheriff's Department. She said she was proud, however, to wear the uniform, to be a member of the County's law enforcement organization, and proud of the positive responses she got from our community as a uniformed officer.

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Johnson, a native Northsider, is a 1980 graduate of Mankato State University with a BS in Law Enforcement and a BS in Criminology, with a minor in Psychology and Sociology. She has had advanced professional training required for advancement in her field.

"When I was promoted to sergeant," she said in the KFAI interview, "I met with my supervising lieutenant and he told me all the reasons why I should not have been promoted. He gave his opinion as to why I was promoted – that it was because I was Black and female - then named people that he felt were more deserving than me – all white men. He told me I would struggle in my new assignment and that I would not make it. He did all he could to make that happen."

Johnson cited that conversation as an example of the incessant hostility she endured. "I loved my job. I wanted to be a good trooper, loyal to my profession, to my employer, and to my co-workers. So I just would not say anything about ongoing slights, disparate treatment, and harassment. I was a team player," she said.

It became clear to her, however, that in the Sheriff's Department, "people are dealt with based on fear and intimidation. There is a bully factor. There is a feeling that you have to go along to get along."

"The problem is systemic," Johnson said. "No one wants to be the one to speak out for fear of retaliation. There are others who are now or have in the past been subjected to similar treatment.

I hope that as a result of an outside investigation the issues will be publicly revealed and dealt with accordingly."

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