

a 2003 McDonald's, Women's Basketball Coaches Association, Nike, *USA Today* and Blue Chip All-American and a Gatorade 2003 Pennsylvania High School Player of the Year and was a four-year member of the National Honor Society and President's Academic Award recipient. She was also a star player at Penn State, where she was among the Lady Lions' leading players on scores, assists and steals during her 2005 sophomore season.

According to the complaint, this is not the first time Penn State has been asked to take action in the wake of reports that Portland has a long-standing "no drinking, no drugs, no lesbians" policy. The complaint notes that she created a stir in 1986 after she told *The Chicago Sun-Times* she does not allow lesbians on her team, and again in 1991 when reports surfaced in the press. Harris' complaint alleges that although Penn State officially added sexual orientation to the school's nondiscrimination policy, Portland has continued to discriminate against athletes and staff whom she suspects of being gay and that Penn State failed to take any action.

"I am proud of Jennifer Harris for speaking out and for speaking on behalf of those of us who were too afraid when we were targeted," said former Lady Lions player Cindy Davies, who, according to a recent ESPN news report, played with the team in 1980 and, the complaint alleges, was forced from the team after Portland threatened to "out" her to her parents and the media if she found out she was gay and did not quit the team.

Courtney Wicks, who played on the team in 1996 and 1997, said: "I often heard Coach Portland make derogatory comments about lesbians. During a trip to Seattle, she made comments about lesbians in the stands and how she didn't want lesbians on her team. Her comments were often focused on African Americans, and I found that particularly offensive."

Attorney Karen Doering of the National Center for Lesbian Rights added: "As explained in more detail in Jennifer's complaint, Coach Portland's decades-long practice of engaging in deliberate discrimination on the basis of actual and perceived sexual orientation, gender and race has continued virtually unabated despite the harm to players and staff. We are hopeful this lawsuit will serve as a catalyst for a new era of

inclusiveness and respect."

Harris has now taken her high-powered game to James Madison University, where she is coached by Kenny Brooks. Because of NCAA transfer rules, she must sit out the 2005-2006 season before she is eligible to play her junior and senior seasons.



Pvt. Kyle Lawson, a 19-year-old resident of Tucson, Ariz., was physically assaulted and threatened at Fort Huachuca Army Base after fellow soldiers learned he is gay.

ARIZONA

Young Soldier to Leave Army After Anti-Gay Attacks

Pvt. Kyle Lawson said Dec. 18 that the threat of further physical attacks by fellow soldiers means he'll have to leave a job he loves, according to *The Arizona Daily Star*.

Lawson reported being punched in the face and threatened with a knife after it became known he was gay. The 19-year-old Army interrogator, who is stationed at Fort Huachuca in Arizona, said he is sleeping in his drill sergeant's office to avoid another attack.

INDIANA

Indianapolis Council Approves Gay Rights Law

Discrimination in employment and housing based on sexual orientation or gender identity will be illegal when Mayor Bart Peterson signs legislation narrowly approved Dec. 20 by the City-County Council. The measure was defeated in April, but several council members changed their votes in a quick special session, according to *The Indianapolis Star*.

MASSACHUSETTS

Anti-Marriage Group Alleges Threats

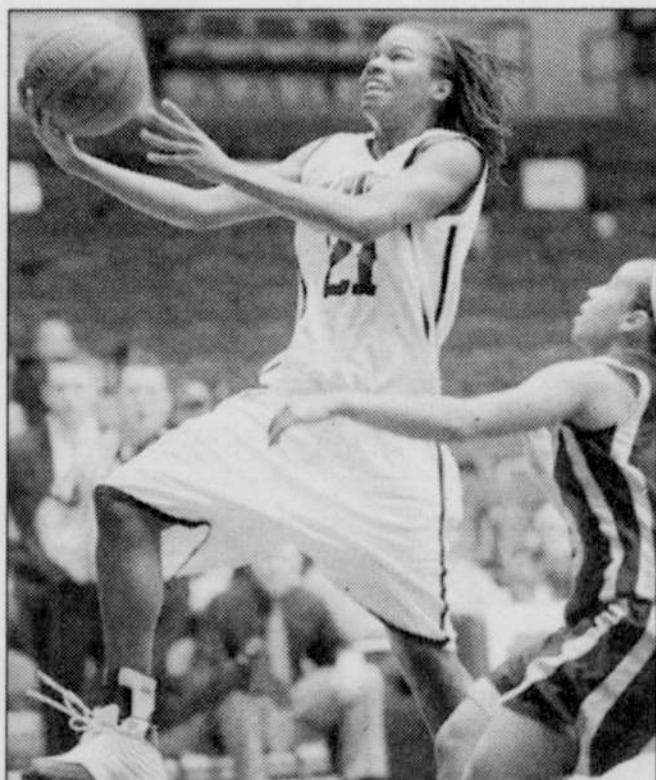
The leaders of Vote On Marriage, an umbrella group of anti-marriage activists, charged harassment Dec. 27 by a Massachusetts gay couple who launched a Web site listing all the names and home addresses of the reported 123,356 signatories to a petition in support of a ban on same-sex marriage. The site, KnowThyNeighbor.org, is ostensibly for the purpose of allowing citizens to investigate fraudulent signatures, and the information contained on the site is in the public record, according to Massachusetts law, 365Gay.com reported.

KANSAS

Bullied Teen Gets \$440K Settlement

Dylan Theno, an 18-year-old who was bullied and harassed on school grounds by peers who believed he was gay, was awarded a \$440,000 settlement by the Tonganoxie, Kan., school district Dec. 26. Theno, who quit school during his junior year and who testified that he is not gay, charged in his lawsuit that he had been the target of anti-gay slurs since seventh grade, according to *The Washington Post*. **jo**

Compiled by SARAH DOUGHER



Lesbian basketball player Jennifer Harris is suing Penn State for discrimination. Her former coach, Rene Portland, allegedly repeatedly inquired about Harris' sexual orientation, pressured her to change her appearance to be more "feminine," harassed and targeted her and other African American athletes and eventually told other players not to associate with her.

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