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Elected Leader Files Racial Bias Tort

Allegations of racial bias are raised by Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith in a tort claim notice she has filed against the county and County Chair Deborah Kafoury.

It follows an investigation into the commissioner's conduct when two of her former staffers filed complaints stating that Smith had mistreated her employees and abused county funds, directing some toward her own campaign expenses.

Smith denied the allegations, but now says the investigation should have been closed when the county reached a settlement agreement on April 5, and that the county's continued exploration into the employees' claims is the result of bias against her.



Loretta Smith

Smith's notice, which informs the county of her intent to sue, claims the investigation has altered her capacity to effectively lead, maligned the commissioner's reputation and caused her to lose sleep.

The notice also says that Kafoury is politically motivated to maintain the investigation because Smith could run against her for election to the position of County Chair in the 2018 election cycle. Kafoury's office said they would not comment on pending litigation.

Smith, who represents District 2 of north and northeast Portland, is only the second black County Commissioner to ever be elected in Multnomah County's 163-year history.

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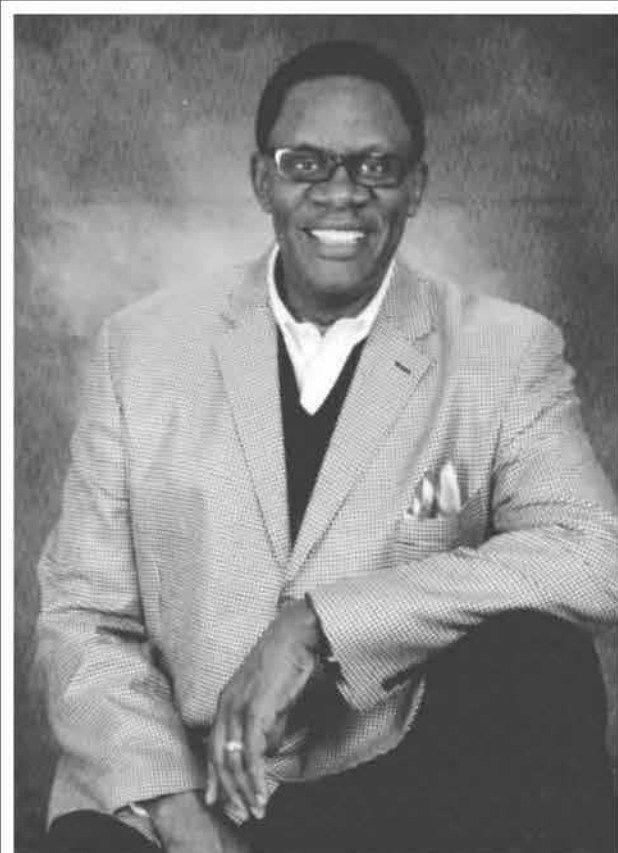
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