

Sports Broadcaster Warner Wolf Sues Don Imus for Age Discrimination

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Two broadcasting legends are squaring off in New York Supreme Court. On Thursday, Warner Wolf filed a discrimination lawsuit against Don Imus.

Wolf, an 80-year-old sports broadcaster who became famous in New York for his catchphrase "Let's go to the videotape," alleges that Imus routinely made inappropriate comments about his age.

"Indeed, despite Mr. Wolf's years of loyal service and unparalleled broadcasting caliber, Defendants' discriminatory conduct towards Plaintiff came to a head on October 31, 2016, when Defendants unlawfully terminated Mr. Wolf's employment based upon his age, replacing him with a sportscaster decades his junior," states the complaint. "Adding insult to injury, after terminating Plaintiff's employment, Defendants and non-party Cumulus Media, Inc. refused to honor a severance clause in Plaintiff's employment agreement that provided for 26 weeks of severance pay – amounting to \$97,500.00 – in the event of Plaintiff's termination."

Imus spent decades himself in broadcasting — both on radio and on television. Along with Howard Stern, Imus helped define morning shock jock radio, but his career invited controversy at certain points due to insensitive remarks. Most famously, he was fired in 2007 from CBS over sexist and racist comments about the Rutgers women's basketball team. In January, Imus announced his imminent retirement.

Wolf began providing services for *Imus in the Morning* in 1996, according to the complaint ([read here](#)), and he would later follow Imus' return to the air on WABC following the scandalous comments about Rutgers female athletes.

The sports broadcaster says that in 2015, he was given permission to relocate to Naples, Florida, and to provide services from that location. Wolf had an annual salary of \$195,000, according to the complaint, which he alleges was to be trimmed to \$80,000 upon a renegotiation. Wolf says he got confirmation of the new employment agreement in an October 2016 email.

"Before Plaintiff's new employment agreement went into effect, Defendants terminated Mr. Wolf's employment and replaced him with Sid Rosenberg, a sportscaster decades younger than Mr. Wolf," states the complaint, also naming Cumulus vice presidents Chad Lopez and Mike McVay along with WABC program director Craig Schwalb as co-defendants.

Around that time, Wolf says he got an email from Imus stating, "You asked me if I was ok with you doing sports from Florida. I said I was. We tried it. It sucks...If you're in the studio in New York . . . it's terrific. Anything else is not."

That potentially offers defendants a legitimate business rationale for the termination — if the absence of a new agreement can be termed as such — but Wolf's attorneys at Wigdor say the "proffered basis for terminating Mr. Wolf was blatantly pretextual."

Wolf says he wasn't offered any real opportunity to return to New York.

"In reality, Defendants discriminatorily terminated Mr. Wolf based upon his age," continues the complaint. "As evidence of Defendants' discriminatory conduct, by way of example only, Imus once commented that it was 'time to put [Mr. Wolf] out to pasture' and 'shoot him with an elephant dart gun.'"

The defendants couldn't immediately be reached for comment.