

Wigdor LLP Files Discrimination Lawsuit Against Raymond James and Associates

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On October 16, 2023, Plaintiff Joena Bartolini Mitchell has filed a discrimination claim against her ex-employer Raymond James and Associates, Inc (“RJ”), an investment banking firm in Florida.

For over 15 years, Ms. Bartolini Mitchell provided RJ with exceptional service. She held positions as a Due Diligence Officer (2006-2010), Project Analyst in Operations (2010-2012), Assistant VP of Securities Based Lending for Raymond James Bank (2012- 2015) and Assistant Regional Director (2015-2017). Most recently, Ms. Bartolini Mitchell held the position of VP of Administration and Risk.

RJ, however, has a long history of discriminating and retaliating against women, and Ms. Bartolini Mitchell was no exception. Over her decade-and-a-half at RJ, Ms. Bartolini Mitchell witnessed and was the target of numerous instances of sexual harassment; was often described in sexist terms, such as being told she was too “aggressive;” and was paid less than men with the same responsibilities. Indeed, RJ denied Ms. Bartolini Mitchell a promotion because, in the firm’s sexist view, she was “too aggressive.”

In mid-2022, Ms. Bartolini Mitchell protested the discriminatory treatment internally by, among other things, sending her boss materials about sexist perceptions of strong women. Things suddenly got worse for Ms. Bartolini Mitchell. She was denied the opportunity to participate in important budget meetings, not invited to interview candidates for leadership positions, cut out of strategy discussions and stripped of important responsibilities. RJ then summarily suspended Ms. Bartolini Mitchell, claiming that she sent business materials to her personal email address in violation of firm policy. (As RJ knew, any technical violation was unintentional. And, perhaps more importantly, employees routinely used personal email to conduct business. Moreover, RJ routinely overlooked serious misbehavior by male employees who, among othering things, misappropriated funds and engaged in sexual harassment.)

Fed up, on November 28, 2022, Ms. Bartolini Mitchell filed a charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”), detailing years of discriminatory and retaliatory conduct by RJ. The firm promptly fired her the next day in retaliation.

[The Complaint can be read here.](#)

Statement from Wigdor attorney Valdi Licul:

“The unfortunate reality is that RJ’s conduct towards Ms. Bartolini Mitchell is not a one-off or unique situation; rather, it is entirely consistent with a status quo of silencing women who stand up against RJ’s discriminatory culture. We look forward to holding RJ responsible for this unlawful behavior.”

Statement from Joena Bartolini Mitchell:

“I was successful at RJ for more than 15 years because I was competent, a good colleague and spoke with conviction to protect RJ, its clients, and shareholders. Despite this, RJ could not transcend the sexist stereotype labeling me “too aggressive” and asking me to “talk less and listen more” as if I were a beauty pageant contestant. My male peers were not saddled with the same discriminatory baggage. I tried to work within the system to change the culture. Sadly, RJ chose to lash out by firing me. I now turn to the courts and a jury of my peers for justice. ”

Any questions can be directed to attorney Valdi Licul (vlicul@wigdorlaw.com) or Communications Manager Courtney Cormican (ccormican@wigdorlaw.com).