



NATIVE AMERICAN EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION SUIT

Drawing upon an Entire Firm's Unique Expertise in Employment Law, Litigation, Individual Rights and Indian Law to Protect Native Americans in the Workplace

SITUATION

Mackenzie Hughes has enjoyed a close working relationship with the Oneida Indian Nation. When one of the Nation's members, Virginia Grandy-Robbins, and other Native American employees of a Madison County manufacturer were subjected to workplace harassment based upon their national origin, Grandy-Robbins turned to Mackenzie Hughes for its broad knowledge and expertise in various areas of law to help them address the problem. Like many disputes involving individual rights, this controversy could not be resolved with a cookie-cutter approach. It required insight and specialized attention in a variety of legal disciplines, including employment discrimination law, litigation, individual rights and Indian law.

CHALLENGE

- Successfully petition the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to partner with Mackenzie Hughes to pursue the claim on behalf of Ms. Grandy-Robbins and her Native American co-workers to protect their workplace rights under federal law.
- Achieve an effective solution that stops Native American discrimination in Ms. Grandy-Robbins' work environment and provides effective legal protection for the Native American employees who endured the same hostile working conditions.

SOLUTION

Led by litigator Art Wentlandt, Mackenzie Hughes applied its knowledge and unique resources to partner with the EEOC in pursuing a major federal lawsuit against the employer on behalf of Ms. Grandy-Robbins and 10 former Native American employees who were subjected to the same workplace harassment. Drawing upon its experience and insight from previous discrimination cases, Mackenzie Hughes and the EEOC launched an aggressive, complex investigation which revealed widespread discrimination against Native Americans in the workplace. Mackenzie Hughes' and the EEOC's efforts forced the employer to reverse its earlier refusal to settle the case, resulting in a far-reaching settlement that included, among other things, the company's agreement to mandatory annual anti-discrimination training in its workplace, creation of company-wide Native American hiring and employment programs, and payment of substantial compensatory damages to the employee-victims of the harassment.*

*The settlement agreement includes a provision that the company denies that it violated the law and that it settled the case to avoid the costs and risks of litigation.

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MACKENZIE HUGHES LLP

Plain talk. Exceptional expertise.

BEST PRACTICES

NATIVE AMERICAN EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION SUIT *con't.*

SUCCESS

Mackenzie Hughes' Art Wentlandt has earned a reputation for his persistent, successful pursuit of individual rights through litigation. Ms. Grandy-Robbins' case is an example of his success, which he attributes to his ability to utilize the law firm's diverse resources and leading expertise to meet any challenges he may encounter. On behalf of Ms. Grandy Robbins, Wentlandt specifically relied upon the firm's vast experience in employment discrimination law, individual rights, litigation and Native American legal issues to reach a solution that significantly benefited his client, Native Americans and the business community.

"Mackenzie Hughes looked at every aspect of the case, while remaining positive, upbeat and informative. They were more than eager to help, and they knew what they were doing. It wasn't about the money. It was about making the company responsible for what happened and changing it for the better. When I decided not to negotiate or compromise, they stood with me. Mackenzie Hughes dug their heels right in and went for it. The final decisions were always left up to me."

—Virginia Grandy-Robbins, Plaintiff



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