

Former Steeler Mike Merriweather sues Meadows casino

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 26 December 2013 15:12 -

Michael L. Merriweather, who savaged opposing offenses as a linebacker for the Steelers during the 1980s, was figuratively gang-tackled by white managers at The Meadows Racetrack and Casino during a nine-month stint there, he alleged in a lawsuit filed late Tuesday.

Mr. Merriweather, 53, now of Stockton, Calif., was hired by The Meadows in April 2011 as director of sports marketing, according to the complaint filed in U.S. District Court. His job was to promote blackjack tournaments, bowling and Steelers-themed "Black and Gold" events, according to the complaint by attorney Emily E. Town. He was to be paid a salary plus commissions.

Mr. Merriweather, who is black, was promptly treated by other managers to comments he viewed as stereotyping, like, "I don't want him to beat me up," and "I don't want to get him mad," according to the complaint.

A white superior repeatedly failed to properly code some clients' play at The Meadows, costing Mr. Merriweather commissions, according to the complaint. He brought his concerns to the general manager. Eventually, a group of white managers stopped responding to the former linebacker's emails, inviting him to meetings and even greeting him in the hallways, the lawsuit alleged.

A superior eliminated Mr. Merriweather's office and told him to work in a common area, the lawsuit indicated, and in January 2012, he was fired.

The complaint said that The Meadows owners Cannery Casino Resorts and The Washington Trotting Association subjected Mr. Merriweather to disparate treatment due to race, violated state human relations laws and, by not paying promised commissions, broke state wage laws. It seeks payment of lost wages, punitive damages and attorney fees.

A spokesman for The Meadows could not be immediately reached.

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