

## \$20,000 Settles Gender Discrimination Case

### **Moody and Stowe v Frey** Ann Arbor

Two men, Shannon Moody and Robert Stowe, accepted \$20,000 to settle their sex discrimination suit against Roland and Joan Frey of Ann Arbor. According to the suit, Roland and Joan Frey refused to rent their Potter Street apartment to two men. Moody and Stowe contacted the Fair Housing Center to report the incident. Male and female testers were used to support the claim of discrimination based on gender. Testing for this complaint was funded by a contract with Washtenaw County.

Stowe and Moody initially asked FHC staff to resolve the case without litigation. The Frey's, through their attorney, offered the men \$100.00 to settle the case. "At that point we realized we had to go to court," said Shannon Moody.



*Shannon Moody and Robert Stowe*

Filed in Federal District Court, by Fair Housing Center Cooperating Attorney Steve Tomkowiak, the case was assigned to Judge George Caram Steeh. This is the first time the Fair Housing Center has aided men in a claim of sex discrimination under the Federal Fair Housing Act.

**Court: Federal**  
**Settlement: \$20,000**

## \$9,500 Settles Familial Status Litigation

### **Chapman v Latham** Milan

Stacey Chapman accepted \$9,500 to settle her familial status litigation against David Latham. Mrs. Chapman said her family was denied the rental of a duplex apartment in Milan, Michigan because her then fourteen-year-old son would be living in the apartment. According to the suit David Latham, owner of the apartment, advised the Chapmans that he would not be interested in renting to a family with a

teenaged child. FHC Cooperating Attorney Gayle Rosen filed a familial status suit on behalf of Stacey Chapman. FHC testing supported the Chapman's claim of discrimination based on familial status. Testing was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing Urban Development. Filed in Federal District Court, the case was assigned to Judge John Corbett O'Meara.

**Court: Federal**  
**Settlement: \$9,500**



*Gayle Rosen*

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advocacy,  
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## cases settled

### **Harbrecht v Ann Arbor Housing Commission** Ann Arbor

Paul P. Harbrecht, III has accepted \$2,500 and an intercom amplifier to settle his disability discrimination lawsuit against the Ann Arbor Housing Commission. Harbrecht, who suffers from hearing loss, first requested an amplifier for the doorbell/intercom system at his apartment at Baker Commons over three years ago. Harbrecht, who lives on the 3rd floor of Baker Commons, needed the amplifier to hear the buzzer at the front door. The amplifier also allows Mr. Harbrecht to communicate through the intercom system to screen guests.



*Ericka Jackson and Paul Harbrecht*

Harbrecht's requests were initially ignored. The Commission later insisted that Harbrecht accept a lighted doorbell typically used by those with no ability to hear. "I wanted to use the hearing I have. With the lighted bell I would have to go downstairs to see who was there before I let them in. Tenants without hearing impairments don't have to do that," Harbrecht told FHC staff.

Letters to the Ann Arbor Housing Commission from both Harbrecht and the Fair Housing Center requesting a reasonable accommodation did not result in the installation of an amplification system. FHC Cooperating Attorney Ericka Jackson of Sommers, Schwartz, Silver and Schwartz filed suit on behalf of Harbrecht. Ms. Jackson was assisted by Attorney David Greco. Filed in Washtenaw County Circuit Court, the case was assigned to Judge David S. Swartz.

**Court: State                      Settlement: \$2,500**

### **Robeson v The Meadows** Ypsilanti Township

Su-Juan Robeson accepted a \$2,500 mediation award to settle her disability complaint against The Meadows. Ms. Robeson, who is disabled, needed a railing along the three steps up to her front door and a parking space near her unit. A letter requesting reasonable accommodation was sent by FHC staff. The Meadows responded by erecting a rickety, splintering railing and denying her request for a handicapped parking space. Cooperating Attorney Eric M. Spector filed suit on behalf of Ms. Roberson in Washtenaw County Circuit Court, the case was assigned to Judge Melinda Morris. The lawsuit claims violations of the Michigan Persons with Disabilities Civil rights Act.

**Court: State                      Settlement: \$2,500**

### **Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living / The Ability Center of Toledo v PTL and DuBose** Monroe

The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living and The Ability Center of Greater Toledo accepted \$26,000 to settle their disability discrimination lawsuit against Coral Ridge Apartments in Monroe, Michigan. The suit alleges violations of the Federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1989. Both plaintiffs are non-profit disability advocacy groups. The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living has an office in Monroe. According to the Fair Housing Act, all multi-family housing built for first occupancy after March 13, 1991, must adhere to seven design requirements regarding wheelchair accessibility for ground floor units. The only access to the common areas of the buildings are staircases with five or six steps. The groups were represented by Stephen M. Dane and Dusty R. Tinsley of Cooper & Walinski.

**Court: Federal                      Settlement: \$26,000**

## 1992-2002: Fair Housing Center Marks 10th Anniversary

**Help Us Expand Our Services.** With your help, the Fair Housing Center can turn stories of discrimination into stories of justice. The FHC is the only group in Washtenaw, Lenawee or Monroe County providing testing services — often the only way to uncover evidence of housing discrimination. We need your support in providing investigative services, advocacy, advice, conciliation, attorney referral and community education to all three counties. All donations are tax deductible.

**Make a Special End-of-Year Gift.** We deeply appreciate those of you who have already made a donation to the FHC this year. Will you consider making a special end-of-year contribution? Any contribution, big or small, keeps the FHC working for equal housing opportunity. Just clip and mail the form on page 3 in the envelope provided. And thanks for your support!

**Consider a 10th Anniversary Membership of \$100.**

**Salowitz v Weatherstone and  
Ann Arbor Realty**

Ann Arbor

Edward Salowitz filed a disability discrimination lawsuit against Ann Arbor Realty and the Weatherstone Condominium Association. Earlier this year the Condominium Association began fining Mr. Salowitz, who has Multiple Sclerosis, for parking in the handicapped parking space nearest his unit. Mr. Salowitz has used this parking space since 1993. Mr. Salowitz asked Ann Arbor Realty and the Condominium Association permission to use this parking space as a reasonable accommodation of his disability. When they refused, Mr. Salowitz contacted the FHC for assistance. When the fines continued, FHC referred Mr. Salowitz to Cooperating Attorney, Steve Tomkowiak for litigation. Mr. Tomkowiak filed suit on behalf of Edward Salowitz and his wife Susan in U.S. Federal District Court, the case is assigned to Judge John Corbett O'Meara. "I look forward to going to trial," Edward Salowitz told the Fair Housing Center.

**Court: Federal      Status: Open****Mackey v Parkhill Apartments**

Ypsilanti

When Rashawnda and Marcus Mackey, an African-American couple, were denied an apartment at Parkhill Apartments, Ms. Mackey was suspicious. She contacted the Fair Housing Center to report the denial. FHC Coordinator of Investigations Mary Bejian sent teams of African American and white testers to the Ypsilanti apartment complex. When the testing sup-

ported Ms. Mackey's claim of race discrimination, FHC staff met with the Mackey's to discuss their next step. They decided on litigation and chose FHC Cooperating Attorney Steve Tomkowiak. Mr. Tomkowiak filed suit on behalf the Mackey's in U.S. Federal District Court, the case is assigned to Judge Denise Page Hood. In 1997 FHC assisted Pamela Thomas with a lawsuit against Parkhill Apartments. Her familial status case settled for \$7,500.

**Court: Federal      Status: Open****Warren v Ypsilanti Housing Commission**  
Ypsilanti

Soon after Aaronica Warren contacted the police to report an incidence of domestic violence by her former boyfriend, her landlord sent her an eviction notice. Focusing on a HUD one-strike policy, the Ypsilanti Housing Commission contended that Ms. Warren should be evicted because, according to her lease, a tenant "will be responsible for the household regardless of whether or not he or she was personally engaged in the prohibited ... criminal action on the premises." When Ms. Warren decided to pursue fair housing litigation she was referred to Cooperating Attorneys Debra McCulloch and William Thacker of Dykema Gossett through the ACLU of Michigan. The lawsuit, filed in Federal District Court, alleges discrimination based on sex, and asks that the Housing Commission be prohibited from evicting tenants because they are the victims of domestic violence. Ms. Warren's case was featured in a *Detroit Metro Times* (April 24-30, 2002) cover story.

**Court: Federal      Status: Open**

## membership drive

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## Become a New Member.

If you are one of the first 10 new members by December 31, 2002, we'll send you a new FHC T-shirt, adult and kids sizes available! Get the FHC off to a strong start in 2003!

## Renew Your Membership

Whether you gave last year or five years ago, you remain important part of the fight against housing discrimination. We need you!

**Membership form inside!**

## FHC Expands into Lenawee County and Monroe County

New name, new logo, new turf. Now in our second decade, we've expanded our service area and changed our name. Our new area covers Lenawee County and Monroe County along with Washtenaw County, and we changed our name to Fair Housing Center of Southeastern Michigan. Outreach to Lenawee County is going well: in the first half of 2002, 14% of our complaints came from places like Adrian, Tecumseh and Blissfield. In previous years only 2-3% of complaints came from Lenawee County. This supports what we already knew: A little outreach goes a long way.



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Total FHC aided settlements now exceed \$770,000.

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