



Irene Gomez-Bethke Papers.

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Minnesota Department of Human Rights

December 8, 1987

Irene Gomez-Bethke
4649 Decatur Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55428

Dear Ms. Gomez-Bethke:

The Department of Human Rights, in conjunction with the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights, the Saint Paul Department of Human Rights, and the League of Minnesota Human Rights Commissions, is commemorating Human Rights Day on December 10, 1987. One of the major events this year is a 20th Anniversary Celebration to be held from 6:30 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. at Town Square Park. This event consists of a program and reception honoring the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Department of Human Rights. The program will be hosted by Jan Smaby and feature the reading of a proclamation from Governor Rudy Perpich; messages from Kwame McDonald, Marilyn Johnson, Emma Hixson, and Stephen Cooper; and music by Gary Hines of the Sounds of Blackness. There is a social hour with a cash bar before the program and a reception following the program with cake, coffee and punch. The public is invited to this event at no charge.

It was an oversight that we did not extend a personal invitation to you earlier. As a former commissioner of the department you are one of the honored guests whose presence would be most welcome. We hope, even at this late date, you can make arrangements to attend this celebration which honors the accomplishments of everyone who made the first twenty years of the department possible.

Again, we are sorry this invitation comes so late but we hope you can attend.

Sincerely,

Stephen W. Cooper, Commissioner
Department of Human Rights

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

500 BREMER TOWER
7TH PLACE AND MINNESOTA STREET • SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55101
(612) 296-5663

COMMISSIONER GOMEZ-BETHKE SUBMITS RESIGNATION

Department of Human Rights Commissioner Irena Gomez-Bethke today issued a statement on her resignation.

"I hereby resign from my position as Commissioner of the Department of Human Rights, effective Friday, February 3. While I realize my resignation in and of itself will not solve the long-standing problems in the agency, I am stepping down in an effort to allow the Governor to proceed with proposed changes which hopefully will result in overcoming the monumental problems facing this department."

"My past year as commissioner has been one of total commitment by me to the concept of human rights and I intend to continue my advocacy for victims of discrimination."

I have been assured by the Governor that I will continue to be a part of his Administration in addressing our mutual concerns.

I look forward to working with the Governor and his staff.

"I believe there must be a stronger commitment from the Legislature to the area of human rights. This must include adequate funding to insure that the department will succeed in carrying out its mandate to protect all Minnesotans from discrimination."

#77



July 3, 1987

Dear Sir:

This letter is in response to an incorrect statement made in the July 3, 1987 article: "Perpich Appoints First White Male As Human Rights Chief", where you state; "In January 1984, Perpich fired Irene Gomez-Bethke after news reports showed the department had a backlog of 3,000 cases".

This statement is untrue and damaging to my reputation. To set the record straight, I was not fired by Governor Perpich. I resigned my position as Commissioner of Human Rights for the state of Minnesota in February 1984, because the strategies that were proposed to resolve the political issues regarding the Human Rights Department were in conflict with my personal convictions and values. I have always championed the cause of human rights.

Furthermore, it was unfair and unfortunate that I became the focal point, focusing away from the critical issues that had been facing the Department for many years and my efforts in addressing them.

Let history record that during the thirteen months as Commissioner of Human Rights, I met the challenges of moving the Human Rights Department forward by implementing:

1. The Backlog Reduction Project to resolve the 3,000 cases that I inherited from previous administrations.
2. The Department reorganization plan.
3. The Mediation Project where select cases were referred to the Mediation Center.
4. Sponsored a Human Rights Day Conference. *(1st in the State)*
5. Developed planning for the conference on the new amendments to Act related to disability discrimination.
6. Appointed 10 staff members to revise and further develop the existing administrative rules for the Department.
7. Appointed a Task Force on Police Practices and Community Relations in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In addition, the Department met all of its contracts. These achievements were made in managing the Department, despite the intensive scrutiny from the four external investigative units which were:

The Management Analysis Division in the Department of Administration, The Governor appointed Blue Ribbon Task Force, The Legislative Audit Commission and the WCCO T.V. I-Team.

I support Governor Perpich's appointment of Stephen Cooper as an excellent choice for the Commissioner of Human Rights.

For me, truth is critical for advancing a healthy society. Each of us must palace human rights. John Fitzgerald Kennedy said that the purpose of America was, "To demonstrate that the organization of men and societies on the basis of human freedom is not an absurdity, but an enriching, ennobling, practical achievement."

Sincerely,

Irene Gomez-Bethke

IGB/jtb

Corrections

Irene Gomez-Bethke was not fired as commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights in 1984 as reported on Friday's page 14A. She resigned.

■
The dates of the Trans-Am auto races at Brainerd International Raceway were reported incorrectly on Friday's page 5D. They are July 18-19.

The Star and Tribune has a Reader's Representative to investigate complaints about the accuracy, fairness and completeness of reports and headlines in the newspaper. When a report is found to be wrong or misleading, a correction or clarification will be published in this space. Phone 372-4450 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m Monday through Friday.



1526 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036

Oct. 10, 1985

Dear Comm. Bethke:

Your notification of
resignation from the WNDC
has been received by the
Membership Committee.

We accept your resignation
and regret to lose you as a
member. It is our hope that
at some future time you will
ask to rejoin us.

Sincerely,
Lillian M. Schecter,
Membership Committee
WNDC

Department of Human Rights
5th Floor Bremer Tower
7th Place & Minnesota Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TASKS INITIATED

1. Compliance Rules and Regulations
2. Budget Review Committee
3. Reorganization Study
4. Standards Indicators - Human Rights Enforcement Officer Proposal
5. Alternative Resolution Project/Mediation Project
6. Backlog Reduction Plan
 - (a) State Old/State New
 - (b) Internship
7. Public Relations Committee
8. Rules/Regulations Committee (1975)
9. American Indian Project June '83
10. HUD Proposal, Title I and Title II money - St. Paul and Minneapolis Civil Rights Departments
11. Disability Conference (Fall) Planning for '84
12. Human Rights Day (December 10, 1983)
13. Department of Corrections case
14. Blue Ribbon Task Force (Technical Assistance)
15. Police/Community Relations Task Force
16. Stress Management Seminar for Staff (in progress)
17. Mobile Unit Proposal
18. National Association of Human Rights Workers (NAHRW) Organization being formed
19. Won National HUD Conference Bid
20. Internship Program with Metro University
21. Constituent Relations - Local and State-National Agencies
22. Revised and Reviewed Policy and Procedural Manual with Staff
23. Developed Agency Work Plan
24. Interviews in Progress for Nine Investigators 2 are in place,
25. Hosted the Regional EEOC Conference Hiring 3 now,
26. Press Releases 3 will start in two weeks.
27. Supported Passage of Disability Legislation (504 Staff Person's Assistance)
28. Worksharing Agreements with:
 - (a) Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights
 - (b) St. Paul Department of Human Rights
 - (c) Consumer Services
 - (d) EEOC
 - (e) HUD

Accomplishments and Tasks Initiated (continued)

29. Co-Sponsored Fair Housing Conference
30. Worked with Local Human Rights Commissions (Technical Assistance)
31. Appointments to Boards:
 - (a) National Board of National Association of Human Rights Workers
 - (b) Minnesota Society for Open Communities (Joint Venture between Minneapolis/St. Paul and State)
 - (c) Midwest Hispanic Voters Registration Drive
 - (d) Minnesota Affirmative Action Association
 - (e) United Way
32. Documentary of Commissioner Gomez-Bethke and the Department of Human Rights (Produced by Independent School District #279)
33. Most years, about ten cases go to hearing. The Attorney General has cleared a backlog of cases so that this year forty-five cases are moving through the hearing process
34. Memberships:
 - (a) Minnesota State Affirmative Action Association - American Society of Public Administrators
 - (b) International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies
 - (c) National Association of Human Rights Workers
35. The number of cases closed: 1069 - total closed
70 - referred to S.A.A.G.
1139 - total
36. The amount of monetary awards and punitive damages: \$860,844.62 or an average award of \$4975.98 for 173 cases

NEED:

More money for court costs
Replacement for Assistant Commissioner of Enforcement
Legislation

Function:

The Department of Human Rights is responsible for enforcing the Minnesota Human Rights Act. It is the public policy of this state to secure for individuals freedom from discrimination because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability or familial status in connection with employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, and credit extension.

The department is comprised of two major organizational units: the Enforcement Bureau, which processes charges of discrimination and monitors contract compliance, and the Planning Division, which operates the computerized case tracking system and which implements the department's educational programs.

ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

The Enforcement Bureau receives, investigates and conciliates charges of alleged unfair discriminatory practices. When conciliation efforts fail, the commissioner issues a formal complaint and the case is litigated. Certificates of compliance are issued to firms bidding on state contracts which have affirmative action plans approved by the department.

PLANNING DIVISION

The Planning Division operates the management information system, a computer-based system used for monitoring case activity and for conducting research projects. Public information and education is provided through responses to: telephone and mail inquiries; the publication of brochures, news releases and biennial reports; and presentations to the public.

NORTHERN DIVISION

Services to northern Minnesotans are provided through a contract with the Office of Consumer Services. Individuals may request information about the law or file charges with the Office of Consumer Services located in Duluth.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

The Administrative Services Division formulates departmental policy and procedures; promulgates rules and regulations; coordinates personnel activities; develops and implements long and short term agency goals and objectives; coordinates and maintains office management, accounting functions, and central records.

I. WCCO coverage of the MDHR; Quality of reporting, editing and producing, is this a case of irresponsible journalism? Three important questions that demand accountability on the part of WCCO:

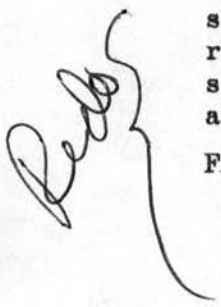
A. These questions must be addressed to Ron Handberg.

1. How can you justify: Interfering with the lawful investigation of a state agency, as in the case of a WCCO reporter alledging to a student that St. John's was using their legal representative to stone wall the investigations and that this was done in collusion with the MDHR, and using intimidation tactics to try to force students to make damaging statements?

SOURCE: Memo 1-6-84 to Human Rights Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Special Assistant, and Supervisor.

2. How can you justify: In the second broadcast 1-31-84 of the I-Team report on the MDHR in the case of Monson-Hokenson vs. Willows Convalescent Centers, WCCO reported that there were no witnesses interviewed in this case. This is a direct fabrication and reckless disregard of the facts, since interviews were documented with two witnesses. How can you justify this?

SOURCE: Case E10810, August 1983 Mem to the File.

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3. How can we believe in the credibility of WCCO as fair and unbiased when in the example of the I-Team report on the MDHR, documentation shows that the reporting by WCCO bordered on obstruction of justice, reckless disregard of the facts, as well as politically motivated, since John Lindsey, Producer of that I-Team report, in the past was a political adversary with the Human Rights Commissioner?

FACT: John Lindsey worked for Mayor Al Hofsted. The HRC at that time lead the fight as Chair of the Hispanic Advisory Council to the Mayor of Minneapolis, in defending the Mpls. Hispanic Housing Commissioner.



North Carolina Department of Administration
116 West Jones Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27611 • Telephone 919-733-7232

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor

Jane Smith Patterson, Secretary

February 13, 1984

Ms. Irene Gomez-Bethke, Commissioner
Department of Human Rights
5th Floor - Bremer Tower
7th Place and Minnesota Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Irene:

I am delighted that you will be joining us at the Computer Training Seminar on February 22-24 in San Jose, California. Working with the staff of the IBM Corporation we have developed an interesting and comprehensive program. I will be arriving on the 21st late in the evening. John Keene of the IBM Corporation will be available should you need assistance with any program materials.

I look forward to working with you in San Jose. Please call me if you have any questions. If I cannot answer them I can certainly find out the answer for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Smith Patterson".

Jane Smith Patterson

JSP/bh



KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

REPLY TO

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LOUISVILLE, 40201-0060
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January 13, 1984

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PADUCAH

Ms. Irene Gomez-Bethke, Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Human Rights
500 Bremer Building
7th Place and Minnesota Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Irene:

I tried to obtain a phone number to call you on a Friday evening about two weeks ago, but was unsuccessful. Late that day, I had received a call from Mary Feidt of Station WCCD-TV in Minneapolis. She was, and did call me back the next day (Saturday), and I had to talk with her.

She has since called again and they have decided to send at least one person to interview me on Tuesday, January 24. They were also considering Pennsylvania, and might still go there as I really encouraged them to do. In any case, there was no way I could refuse to talk with them.

My point in writing is that I need every bit of background information I can get from you in order to respond intelligently and to avoid doing anything that would harm you and your agency. Would you please send me every clipping, or letter, or notes, etc., that might be of help on what is going on up there and why they are so interested in this subject.

I have a terribly busy week next week because my Commission meets on Wednesday, and the IA0HRA Board meets on Friday in St. Louis. I wish you and I could talk on Monday, January 23, after I get any written materials. But in any case, we must talk before those people interview me.

Thanks for your kind note regarding the November IA0HRA newsletter.

Sincerely,

*rather than
Kentucky

1984 JAN 18 9 43 AM
WM DEL
Galen Martin

GAM:mdj

Why is
WCCD
spending
so much
\$4000
on this?

November 21, 1983

Irene Gomez-Bethke, Commissioner
State of Minnesota
Department of Human Right
500 Bremer Tower
7th Place and Minnesota Street
St. Paul, MN 55101

Dear Ms. Gomez-Bethke,

Two important points I wish to make. The first is your appointment by the Governor as the Commissioner of Human Rights for the state. I cannot think of anyone more qualified and dedicated for the position than you Irene.

The second comment is "thanks" for your support. It has been most challenging for the radio station to get support from the Hispanic community. It is leaders like Irene Gomez-Bethke, that will continue to be the "doers" in providing quality Hispanic programming through financial support.

Gracias,



Rafael "Ralph" Peralez

Rafael "Ralph" Peralez, Producer

cc: Marion Watson, Station Manager

