

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2003

CONTACT: Larry Pincus
Public Affairs
(212) 336-3667
Nora E. Curtin
Senior Trial Attorney
(212) 336-3693
Lisa Sirkin
Supervisory Trial Attorney
(212) 336-3697
TTY: (212) 336-3622

EEOC Settles Sexual Harassment Suit for \$2.3 million Against SH&E and Reed Telepublishing

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) today announced the \$2.3 million settlement of a lawsuit alleging sexual harassment at New York-based airline consulting firm Simat, Helliesen & Eichner (SH&E) and Reed Telepublishing under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The suit alleged that the former president of SH&E sexually harassed female employees at its Manhattan office. SH&E was an affiliate of multinational publishing company Reed Elsevier Inc. prior to January 1, 1996.

In the lawsuits, EEOC v. Simat, Helliesen & Eichner; 97 Civ. 7168 and Tesoro, et al. v. Simat, Helliesen & Eichner, 97 Civ. 7 176, E.D.N.Y., filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, the EEOC alleged that certain female employees were subjected to a hostile work environment. In addition, the EEOC alleged that SH&E and Reed failed to take prompt and appropriate action to end the sexual harassment.

The Consent Decree states that Reed, on behalf of all Defendants, will pay monetary damages, totaling \$2,300,000 to the group of four women and their private counsel who filed sexual harassment complaints. The Consent Decree requires SH&E and Reed to conduct intensive sexual harassment training for their managers and their employees. Reed and SH&E will continue to honor their commitment not to discriminate against any individual because of his or her sex or subject any employee to retaliation for complaining about discrimination. This settlement demonstrates Reed and SH&E's commitment to work constructively with the EEOC toward the mutual goal of a diverse workforce. By entering into this Decree, none of the Defendants admit or concede, expressly or impliedly, and in fact deny, that they have in any way violated Title VII.

"Employees are entitled to work in an environment free of sexual harassment," said Katherine Bissell, the EEOC's Regional Attorney in New York. "The EEOC takes very seriously allegations of sexual harassment, particularly when the accused harasser is a high-level executive, as is the case in this lawsuit."

Spencer H. Lewis, EEOC New York District Director, said, "The EEOC wants to ensure that every individual has the freedom to compete in the workplace on a level playing field -- regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. Employers in general, and the American economy in particular, benefit when every employee has the opportunity to achieve his or her fullest potential."

In addition to enforcing Title VII, as amended, which prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including sexual harassment or pregnancy) or national origin and protects employees who complain about such offenses from retaliation, the EEOC enforces the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, which protects workers age 40 and older from discrimination based on age; the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which prohibits gender-based wage discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the federal sector; Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employment discrimination against people with disabilities in the private sector and state and local governments; and sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Further information about the Commission is available on the agency's web site at www.eeoc.gov.

This page was last modified on February 26, 2003.