

Lawsuit accuses Louisville lawyer of molesting 2 clients

By ANNA CLARK
The Courier-Journal

Louisville lawyer Norman L. "Nick" Belker allegedly molested two women he was representing in personal-injury cases, according to a lawsuit filed on their behalf yesterday in Jefferson Circuit Court.

Katherine McClure, 33, and her sister Angela Rogalinski, 25, say in the suit that they went to Belker in 1994 for help in their workers' compensation claims for carpal tunnel injuries from repeatedly lifting heavy objects on the job.

Although Belker was successful in winning their claims, both women have now accused Belker of fraud, oppression, reckless disregard of their rights, infliction of emotional

distress through outrageous conduct, assault, battery and gross negligence.

They allege in the suit that Belker touched their breasts and nipples. McClure claims in the suit that after Belker learned she had previously been treated for back trouble, he asked her to unzip her pants and felt her lower back and buttocks. She also claims that on another occasion, he squeezed her thighs and touched her vagina. McClure also took off her clothes and lay on the floor while Belker lifted her legs and asked whether it hurt, the suit claims.

Rogalinski claims in the suit that Belker touched and squeezed her thighs, buttocks and vaginal area and unzipped her pants to touch her stomach and hips.

Rogalinski's husband, Henry, is

also a plaintiff in the suit, claiming loss of companionship.

The suit seeks compensatory and punitive damages.

Claims made in filing a lawsuit give only one side of the case. Belker could not be reached despite numerous calls to his home and office yesterday and last night.

William McMurry, the lawyer who filed the suit on the women's behalf, said Belker denied the claims when the women filed complaints with the Kentucky Bar Association in May.

"This is not about money," McMurry said. "Their primary objective is to stop this man from doing this kind of conduct to other women."

In the lawsuit, the women allege that Belker told them he had a medi-

cal background and needed to examine them to help win their cases. He told both he needed to check to see whether their injuries might be thoracic outlet compression syndrome instead of carpal tunnel.

Dr. Harold Kleinert, a renowned Louisville hand surgeon, said in an interview yesterday that thoracic outlet compression syndrome can be related to carpal tunnel and involves nerves starting around the shoulder bone. Kleinert said, however, that the breast area is not involved.

According to the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure, Belker does not have an active or inactive license to practice medicine in Kentucky.

McClure and Rogalinski allege in the suit that Belker gave them psychological exams about their self-esteem on their first visits, and told

them after they finished the tests that they had low self-esteem.

When the women complained about the procedures, they claim Belker bejiltled them and told them they had to trust him fully for him to win their cases. The suit claims the women signed fee agreements with Belker stating that they agreed to cooperate fully with him in all areas of the investigation, or risk losing his representation.

Regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit, the state bar's inquiry tribunal may conduct its own investigation and take its own disciplinary action against Belker if it chooses.

"The only way we would settle is his resignation from the bar," McMurry said. "These women will not stop until this man is removed."

CJ Belker suit filing 1996

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