

ORU Being Sued by Former Professors

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Three former Oral Roberts University (ORU) professors filed suit against the school, its president, Richard Roberts, and three other staff members Tuesday, claiming they were wrongfully terminated. In a 13-page suit, the three claim that they lost their jobs after submitting a report alleging that Roberts and his family charged personal expenses to ORU, gave university scholarships to unqualified family friends and that the staff provided the IRS “inaccurate information” regarding the school’s financial involvement in political campaigns, the *Tulsa World* reported. The plaintiffs are seeking actual and punitive damages each in excess of \$10,000, as well as attorney fees and other costs. In a statement, university officials said the lawsuit is based largely on “a compilation of incomplete statements, unsubstantiated rumors and innuendos” that ORU would address through the legal process. “This lawsuit ... is not about wrongful termination,” Roberts said Wednesday during an address to ORU faculty and students, the *Tulsa World* reported. “It is about intimidation, blackmail and extortion. Make no mistake about it; this suit is about money, as most suits are. But there is one problem: I am not intimidated by blackmail or extortion.” Roberts also said the attorney representing the professors has brought numerous unsuccessful lawsuits against the school in previous years. The former professors—John Swails, former chairman of the history, humanities and government departments; Tim Brooker, a professor coordinating the school’s government program; and his wife, Paulita Brooker, an adjunct professor in the history, government and humanities department—allege that they were terminated only after they submitted a report that documented moral and ethical problems involving Roberts and his family. The petition stated that “some of the more

salacious entries" in the report were omitted "to preserve, as much as possible, the remaining positive image" of ORU. The three other defendants named in the lawsuit are ORU Provost Mark Lewandowski, Associate Provost Jeff Ogle and Wendy Shirk, dean of the College of Arts.