

Court Sends Stern Message to Universities Forcing Professors to Bend to LGBTQ Agenda

An Ohio federal appeals court has sent an adamant warning to universities that infringe on professors' rights of freedom of speech: lay off or you will pay.

After a three-year battle, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit recently ordered that Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio, must pay one of its professors, Nick Meriwether, \$400,000 after Meriwether sued the institution for its demand that he use a student's preferred pronoun in his classroom.

Meriwether told Fox News that the demand was "an egregious assault on my freedom of speech and my religious beliefs."

"The student basically approached me after class and said that he wanted to be referred to as a female," Meriwether says. "I tried to find an accommodation with the student. He was willing to use his female proper name.

"Initially, the administration was willing to go along with that, but the administration changed course and demanded that I defer to the ideology, that I refer to the student as a female. I simply could not do that."

The "coercion" of his Christian convictions was only part of the issue Meriwether faced. The other, he said, was simply a violation of his First Amendment rights.

"I believe that God created men and women, male and female," Meriwether says. "But also, the idea my speech could be

coerced, could be compelled by the administration ... The college classroom is to be a place of debate and discussion and freewheeling idea. The university has no place in telling professors how they are to think with the students.

The university wrote a memo and put it in Meriwether's personal file that said due to this issue, "Further corrective action could be taken."

"Basically, what could have happened is that I could have been fired," Meriwether says. "If that incident had occurred again and if I had again refused to use preferred or benign biological pronouns, I could have been fired. So that's why I filed the lawsuit."

Alliance Defending Freedom represented and assisted Meriwether in his case. Tyson Langhofer, the ADF attorney representing Meriwether, says hopefully universities will sit up and take notice of this edict before putting such demands on another professor.

"It is done, and we are hopeful it sends a message to all universities and professors. We shouldn't be compelling professors to say things they don't believe," Langhofer says.
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