

Jerry Falwell Jr. Files Defamation Lawsuit Against Liberty University

In a lawsuit filed Wednesday, Jerry Falwell Jr. claims Liberty University tarnished his reputation and breached its contract with him. The damage to his reputation, he said, involved a series of statements, "published in print and spoken in large public forums and streamed online."

The statements were allegedly made after his forced resignation from the university, which followed widely distributed media reports on his alleged knowledge of and complicity with a longtime affair between his wife, Becki, and former Falwell business partner, Giancarlo Granda.

On Aug. 23, Falwell released a lengthy statement about his wife's infidelity and resultant problems. He revealed the affair and that "her former lover had threatened them over the past several years," "leading to his own depression."

After difficult discussions, the university officially accepted Falwell's resignation Aug. 25.

Filed in Lynchburg Circuit Court, the former university president and chancellor accuses the university of acting contrary to the teachings of Christ and breach of contract.

According to Quinn Emanuel, lead counsel for Falwell, "these statements had the effect of affirming false claims that an individual made publicly against Mr. Falwell after years-long attempts at extortion against Falwell and his wife Becki. Based on research and investigation, this individual appears to be supported financially by political opponents of Mr. Falwell in the midst of a heated presidential campaign, likely including the anti-Trump political action committee called

'The Lincoln Project.'"

"Other than God and my family, there is nothing in the world I love more than Liberty University," said Jerry Falwell, Jr. in the news release. "I am saddened that university officials, with whom I have shared so much success and enjoyed such positive relationships, jumped to conclusions about the claims made against my character, failed to properly investigate them and then damaged my reputation following my forced resignation. While I have nothing but love and appreciation for the Liberty community, and I had hoped to avoid litigation, I must take the necessary steps to restore my reputation and hopefully help repair the damage to the Liberty University brand in the process."

Liberty University's most recent public statement, released on Oct. 20, didn't mention Falwell by name, but did announce that a forensic investigation into the university's business operations has been launched by an outside accounting firm. To help gather information, a secure website portal—not part of the university's system—is open to provide a place for confidentially submitting sensitive information "from current and former Liberty University employees, contractors and business affiliates."

"Those with information they believe might be useful to the forensic investigation into potential misconduct in business operations of the university and/or any improper decisions or actions by current or former members of university leadership, are encouraged to visit the portal here to learn more and file a confidential report," the news release states.

The portal will remain open until Sunday, Dec. 20.

Falwell served as president of Liberty University from 2007 until his recent resignation. He took over as president after his father, Dr. Jerry Falwell, died. Dr. Falwell founded the university in 1971.

Today, the university has an enrollment exceeding 100,000 students. It grew significantly under Jerry Falwell Jr.'s leadership.

Please join the Charisma staff in continued prayers for Liberty University as well as for Falwell and his family.
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