

# College settles with transgender teacher: EEOC mediation yields agreement

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Spring Arbor University in Michigan reached a financial settlement last month with fired transgender professor Julie Nemecek, who had filed a discrimination suit. “It was a difficult thing for me and for the university, but I think we both walked away happy,” Nemecek said. As part of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mediation agreement, the amount of the settlement was not disclosed.

Officials at the university, affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, fired the 55-year-old adult-studies professor February 26, less than a month after her story went public in the *Jackson (Michigan) Citizen Patriot*. It has since been printed, broadcast and blogged worldwide.

Nemecek, 55, an ordained Baptist minister, was a professor at SAU for 16 years as a man. Nemecek was diagnosed with a gender identity disorder and began the transformation to a woman. She was scolded by university officials for appearing as a woman on or near campus. She was notified in late December that her contract would not be renewed at the end of May.

University officials have said little publicly, except that staff are expected to present themselves as Christians.

Nemecek and her wife, Joanne, have been married 35 years. They have three grown sons and have pledged to remain together. *-Religion News Service*