

The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission



congratulates the
**University of South Carolina
Men's and Women's
Basketball Teams!**



Congratulations to
Coach Dawn Staley and the
2017 Women's Basketball Team
NCAA National Champions!

THE BULLETIN

SOUTH CAROLINA HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION
1026 SUMTER STREET, SUITE 101, COLUMBIA, SC 29201 OR
P.O. BOX 4490, COLUMBIA, SC 29240

Happy to Have You Here!



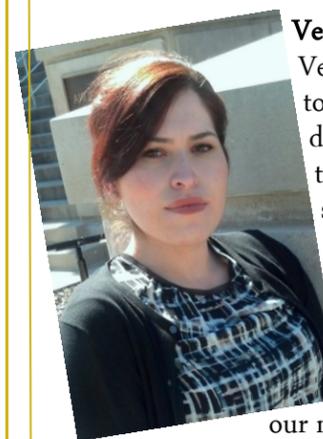
Abigail Sexton

Born and raised in Argentina, Abi spent most of her childhood there before coming to America. She attended Florida International University in Miami and graduated with a BA in Fine Arts. Since graduating, she spent several years gaining experience working in the Banking Industry, as well as in real estate. Just prior to joining SCHAC, Abi worked for the State of Alaska with their Department of Health and Social Services. Abi will be working primarily with the Compliance Division investigating allegations of employment discrimination.

However, she will be assisting all departments with her bilingual skills as needed. Welcome Abi!

Lauren Mims

Lauren joined SCHAC initially as a receptionist, but has recently been extended the position of investigator. A graduate of USC, she was a Ronald E. McNair Scholar, Magellan Scholar, Membership Chair of the NAACP, and Historian of the Association of African American Students. Furthermore, she had the opportunity to intern with Congressman Jim Clyburn, Mayor Steve Benjamin, and South Carolina Senator Karl Allen. She is a native of Greenville, SC where she began a Mentoring Program entitled "The Skin I'm In" which was created to help foster and develop positive self-esteem in adolescent girls. We are excited to have Lauren grow with us!



Veronica Gonzalez

Veronica is originally from California, but eventually relocated to South Carolina and attended USC. While completing her degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice, she took a position at SLED as a Communications Specialist. She now assists SCHAC as an employment discrimination investigator, and also provides translation services for other departments at the agency. In her free time, she enjoys shopping, traveling, and dancing. She is also the proud mother to a handsome nine-month old Labrador named Pluto. We are honored that she has chosen to work with us in furthering our mission!

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Tel: 803-737-7800 Toll Free: 800-521-0725 Fax: 803-737-7835 E-mail: information@schac.sc.gov

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Housing Division *On the Move* During National Fair Housing Month

Listed below are a few of the activities that the Housing Division will participate in during the month of April.

The Fair Housing Summit is a forum to discuss the important role Fair Housing has in protecting everyone. Our goal is to educate attendees on understanding their rights & responsibilities. Join us to discuss how we can work together to better implement Fair Housing practices on April 13 from 10:00a.m. - 2:00p.m., at the Charleston County Library, 68 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401.



The 2017 Palmetto Affordable Housing Forum will be held on April 18 & 19 at 9:00a.m., at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, 1101 Lincoln Street, Columbia, SC.

Recognized as a leading state resource, the Palmetto Affordable Housing Forum provides the best platform for housing-related professionals to collaborate on ways to expand the housing choices in South Carolina. The Forum is a time to network and brainstorm with colleagues.

EEOC FILES RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION LAWSUIT AGAINST J.C. WITHERSPOON, JR., INC.

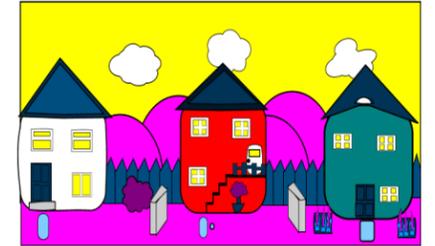
After the thorough investigative work by the SC Human Affairs Commission's Employment Investigator Latarnya Whitmire, this case was forwarded to the EEOC for further action. The EEOC decided to litigate this case after the company refused to conciliate.

J.C. Witherspoon, Jr. Inc., a South Carolina corporation headquartered in Alcolu, allegedly violated federal law when it refused to accommodate a truck driver's religious belief and fired him because of his religion.

"Under federal law, employers have an obligation to endeavor to fairly balance an employee's right to practice his or her religion and the operation of the company," said Lynette A. Barnes, regional attorney for EEOC's Charlotte District Office. "This case demonstrates once again the EEOC's commitment to fighting religious discrimination in the workplace."

YOU + Fair Housing = A Better Community

The major federal fair housing law is the Fair Housing Act. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability and familial status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18).



Find out what fair housing is, what kinds of activities are prohibited, who is protected and what types of housing are covered by attending a Fair Housing Month activity in your community. There are a number of events related to this issue taking place throughout the state during the month of April. We encourage you to learn more about our State's Fair Housing Law.

If you think you have been discriminated against in housing, you should contact the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission at (803) 737-7800 or 1-800-521-0725. Discrimination can be very subtle and often people may suspect they have been discriminated against, but they are not sure they can prove it. The South Carolina Fair Housing Law prohibits the following acts based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or familial status. Examples of housing discrimination based on the protected classes are:

- refusing to sell or rent housing;
- evicting someone from housing;
- lying about the availability of housing;
- discrimination in terms of conditions of housing; such as rent, security deposits, the use of facilities or financing.

We Are Prepared to Assist the Latino Community



Hats off to Luis Gamarra Mendoza, Housing Investigator/Outreach Consultant and Abi Sexton, Employment Investigator/Translator. They made presentations that were very well-received at the Alianza monthly meeting in March. Alianza's mission is to serve as a catalyst for bringing organizations interested in mobilizing the Latino community in South Carolina through advocacy, education and social services. Also in attendance were Veronica Gonzalez, Employment Investigator/Translator and Outreach Consultant Anita Dantzler (not pictured), Outreach Consultant.



SOUTH CAROLINA HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



Commissioner
Raymond Buxton, II

Si usted piensa que ha sido discriminado en la vivienda o en el empleo, debe ponerse en contacto con la Comisión de Asuntos Humanos. La Comisión investigará su queja y si hay una violación de la ley, la Comisión puede ayudarle a conseguir soluciones legales a los que usted tiene derecho. Si es necesario, la Comisión puede llevar casos de discriminación a una audiencia o a la corte. No importa su estado legal, la Comisión lo ayuda.

Board of Commissioners

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Cheryl F.C. Ludlam

3rd District

Ashley P. Case

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Rev. Willie Thompson

5th District

Andrew C. Williams

7th District

Harold Jean Brown

At Large

Joe F. Fragale

Mission Statement

Our mission is to eliminate and prevent unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations and promote harmony and betterment in the lives of South Carolina's residents.

Vision Statement

The South Carolina Human Affairs Commission's Vision is to be well known with a positive image and a mission that is understood and accepted by the public. SCHAC is a fully resourced, customer-friendly Agency with a diverse, well-trained and efficient team working together effectively in a safe and supportive work environment in fulfillment of the Agency's mission.

Mock Trial Enactment for Board of Commissioners

In February, the SCHAC Legal Division and a few talented thespians from the Compliance division, trained the Commission Board in a unique way. The entire Board was invited to participate in judging a 'mock administrative hearing.' This training was undertaken in an effort to hone the skills of staff and Commissioners alike. Alex Pate and Emma Bennett-Williams, two of three SCHAC attorneys, 'represented' the opposing sides of the mock hearing. The story of the hearing drew from actual complaints filed at the agency, but was ultimately a fictional fact pattern that hit on several issues frequently seen in investigations.

Investigators Rosemary Drake, LaTarnya Whitmire, and Henley Ellis played witnesses during the course of the hearing. They familiarized themselves with the evidence and arguments prior to jumping into the characters they portrayed. Investigator LaTarnya Whitmire said, "it was interesting to see a case played out in this setting. Oftentimes, you attempt to gauge the intent and impact of individuals involved in a case, which is sometimes hard to do by just reading it. Seeing the witnesses and hearing the arguments brought the case to life. For me, the experience of this mock trial reiterated the importance of conducting a thorough investigation."

The Board of Commissioners has seen some new appointments in recent years. The hearing offered the Commissioners, both seasoned and new, an opportunity to engage in a mock hearing to prepare them for hearing real-life grievances. The idea took root from Attorney Lee Ann Rice's experience with the South Carolina Bar's High School Mock Trial program, and Furman University's illustrious Mock Trial team. A graduate of both programs, she now coaches the Brookland-Cayce High School team (pictured below), which competed in the Regional Tournament in Lexington, SC three days after the mock hearing was held at the Agency. "I love being a part of mock trial programs at Furman and BCHS," Rice said. "I get to see the students grow from year to year. They always learn so much through this activity and I thought, why not try it with the Agency?"



Anita Dantzler & Lee Ann Rice ... Co-Editors Betty Dennis ... Copy Editor

