

Sexual discrimination alive, more subtle, speaker says

Stereotypes said responsible for work difficulties

By Roger Price
Staff Reporter

Recent Supreme Court rulings have established that gender does not have to be the sole cause for discrimination in sexual discrimination suits, a researcher said Monday.

Susan Fiske, a professor of psychology at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, told about 80 people that as long as gender is a factor in the way an employee is treated, that employee has grounds for a sexual discrimination suit.

This decision, she said, allows people who aren't perfect but are capable of performing their jobs to bring discrimination suits if they feel their race or gender has played a role in their treatment.

"You don't have to be perfect to win," she said. "Otherwise it's only superstars that can win."

Fiske, who has researched sexual discrimination and has served as an expert witness to two key court cases,

was in Lincoln to give the Roberta Morris Lecture, an annual endowed lecture sponsored by the psychology department in memory of Morris, an alumna and professor at UNL.

Fiske said sexual discrimination has become much more subtle but still occurs in many work places.

"Prejudice has evolved from the most blatant sexism and racism to prescriptive stereotypes," she said.

Prescriptive stereotypes, she said, are a certain set of actions that a group is expected to follow to be considered normal. Examples of prescriptive stereotypes include thinking that all blacks should be street smart, all Asians should do well in math and science and all women should act feminine.

"People who fail to meet prescriptive stereotypes are viewed as difficult," she said.

Because they are considered difficult, the employee who does not conform to prescriptive stereotypes is usually passed over for promotions or fired, she said.

Employers, she said, should be open to considering that their judgments are influenced by prescriptive stereotypes.

Fiske said research shows that people immediately notice sexual and racial differences within the first second

of contact but have the power to override these initial reactions if they have the desire.

"If a person is sufficiently motivated, they can overcome these stereotypes," she said.

When employers know that accurate judgments are important or that their decisions will be evaluated, they are more likely to override initial stereotypes.

Another form of sexual discrimination, she said, is sexual harassment.

For people to prove that they have been the victim of sexual harassment, she said, four conditions must be met. The four criteria are unwelcome sexual conduct and conduct based on gender. It must alter the terms of employment or job conditions, and the employer must be proven responsible.

She said lawyers will often call into question the credibility of a woman who claims to be the victim of sexual harassment but delays reporting it.

But, Fiske said, most people would rather try to solve their own problems before taking legal or administrative action.

"They need to realize that complaining is a last resort," she said. "People prefer to solve their problems in a less risky way."

Apollo

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handle restoration of the capsule, he said.

"I wouldn't have any hesitation sending it there," he said.

Max Ary, director of the cosmosphere, also disputed Schultz's observations.

"We are not a private organization," he said. "We are a public, non-profit organization."

Ary said the cosmosphere is the only organization besides NASA to have space capsules from all three — Gemini, Mercury and Apollo — space missions, and said the cosmosphere is the only museum in the United States that has been selected to receive Soviet space artifacts.

Schultz's estimates of \$3,500 to \$6,000 to restore the spacecraft do not make sense, he said.

"I think he needs to understand what restore means," Ary said. The capsule must be taken apart piece by piece to be restored, he said.

The cosmosphere is not looking for a battle with UNL, Ary said, but it does want some action taken on the capsule soon.

"The most important aspect of this is to save the spacecraft — whether we do it or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln does it," he said.

Letting the capsule deteriorate has brought great embarrassment to UNL,

Ary said.

"I don't think they recognize the tremendous historic obligation they have accepted," he said.

And, Ary said, the cosmosphere has already lost \$600,000 in grants to restore the spacecraft because of the delay by UNL.

Getting further funding to restore it will be difficult but not impossible, he said.

The main difference between the cosmosphere and UNL is that the cosmosphere places a high priority on restoring the craft, Ary said.

"All they are worried about is losing it off their campus," he said.

Bill Splinter, interim vice chancellor for research and dean of graduate studies, said he has maintained his position that UNL must either restore the capsule or trade it to the cosmosphere.

"If we can't do it, then we have a responsibility to let someone else do it," he said.

Professionals such as those at the cosmosphere are needed to restore the capsule, Splinter said.

"We can't just let somebody tinker with it that doesn't know about space capsules," he said.

UNL must act responsibly in regard to the capsule, he said.

"If we cannot come up with the funding (to restore it), it would be foolish for us to keep it," he said.

Potter

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what was going on," he said. "We were very low profile because we were not with the embassy or military."

His experience in Turkey has spurred him to seek other international research experience.

Potter said he would like to research in South America. He is scheduled to teach for a month in Sao Paulo, Brazil, during the summer of 1993.

"My main interest is to find the commonalities in developing places around the world, rather than the specifics of a certain area," he said.

Potter said his interest in the effects of architecture on people started when he was working as an architect.

"My motivation started as a sense of dissatisfaction when I was a practicing architect," he said. "I see people as the center of architecture. How they want to live their lives is central to architecture."

As well as research, Potter said he works to improve human environments through his involvement in professional organizations.

He is the chairman of the board of directors for the Environmental Design Research Association. Design professors, sociologists and behavioral scientists make up the EDRA and are "dedicated to improving the quality of human environments through research based on design," according to the group's

statement of purpose.

"The EDRA is the largest organization of its kind in North America," Potter said.

Potter, 49, described himself as a "lifetime learner." He obtained his undergraduate degree from California Polytechnic in architectural engineering. Potter then worked as an architect in San Francisco and Boston before attending graduate school at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he received a master's degree in architecture.

"I just intended to get a master's degree, but in Buffalo I found that I enjoyed the academic life," Potter said.

He received his Ph.D. in man/environment relations from Pennsylvania State.

He began teaching at UNL in August 1981 after teaching at Texas A&M for four years. Before his trip to Turkey, he served as chairman of the architecture department.

This semester, he is teaching a graduate-level design studio and an architecture class that examines the social and behavioral factors of architecture.

Potter said he has enjoyed working at UNL.

"I find the students excellent," he said. "The people in the administration have been very responsive to ideas and the things I've wanted to do."

Potter also said that the department shares the goal of international involvement.

Scholarship

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a full tuition scholarship," the flier quotes R. Edwards of the University of Nebraska.

The Omaha post office box, to which students are to mail fees, is registered to Rodney Edwards and Utopia International.

Representatives from Utopia International in Omaha could not be reached for comment.

Beacon said that last year a private company offered to find financial aid and scholarship sources for students at a cost of \$60. The company also guaranteed a refund of the registration fee if aid was not found.

But to receive the refund, students had to show proof that they had been denied aid from all of the associations to which they applied. Often students received information about where to apply after deadlines had passed so they couldn't show proof of being turned down, Beacon said.

"Why pay somebody for that service?" he said.

James Griesen, UNL vice chancellor for student affairs, said students should first try to find scholarships through parents' jobs, military background and organizations of which

they are a member.

Students also can apply for scholarships at UNL's Scholarship and Financial Aid Office or at Nebhelp, located at 1300 O St.

The Nebraska Higher Educational Loan Program, or Nebhelp, conducts computer searches to match students with national private scholarships.

Deana Unger, director of the Lincoln Educational Planning Center, said that because Nebhelp is sponsored by the Nebraska Student Loan Program and the Nebraska Higher Educational Loan Program, it can help students for free.

"We feel that we provide the same service for free," she said. "So we encourage students to come in here instead (of paying for the service)."

Griesen agreed that students shouldn't pay for financial aid information.

Students paying money to organizations to help them find sources of scholarships and financial aid are "spending money on a hope that is very slim," he said.

And the response students get from organizations selling scholarship information often isn't useful, Griesen said.

"I'm not going to call it a scam," he said. "It's just an unnecessary expense."

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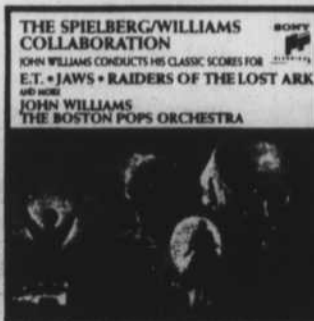
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