

# AFGE says manager is rewarded for her outrageous behavior

What does the Social Security Administration do with a manager who locks-up all of the office supplies (including pens and paper clips), institutes a dress code (which the agency doesn't have), and tells employees not to take beverages to the front-end interviewing area or front desk?

Counseling or a suggestion that she retire would seem like good ideas, but SSA did neither of those in the case of Sylviane Haldiman, the former manager of the New Haven, Connecticut, office.

Instead, her career was recently given a boost when she was chosen for the agency's Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

"This is really incredible," said Richard Couture, the Regional Vice President for Boston, "and I don't mean that in a good way. Good managers who help their employees do their jobs are seldom recognized, but the ruthless, vindictive ones are routinely given awards and promotions. This one spent more than three years making life very difficult for employees in the New Haven office.

"You'd think that upper management would want to move those who help build a culture of cooperation into positions with greater impact; instead, they give Haldiman a promotion and eventually she'll have even more responsibility and the chance to impact even more lives in a negative way."

Working conditions in New Haven were outlined in the March, 2008 UNITY. Chaisnel Ford, a clerical employee with several

years of experience, has been reprimanded for taking a drink to the reception desk. She was counseled about wearing a blue-jeans jacket to work and was once suspended for processing a Social Security card application.

Ford was also charged with being

AWOL in early 2007 because she took emergency leave to care for her nine-year-old son during the Christmas holiday season. He was out of school and Ford could not find daycare for the youngster.

AFGE has filed grievances over all of those issues.

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## *Manager retires after employees complain*

Two weeks after employees in the Poteau, Oklahoma Social Security Office wrote a letter criticizing District Manager Jack Armstrong, he suddenly went on leave and then announced his retirement.

The letter was signed by eight of the nine female employees in the office. It was addressed to Emerson Lattimore, manager of the Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity (CREO) office in the Dallas Region, with copies sent to Area Director Dianne Vaughn, Regional Commissioner Ramona Schuene-myer, and the President of AFGE Local 2505.

"The manager of the Poteau SSA Office has created a hostile work environment for all of us," the employees alleged. They also claimed that he used racial epithets to describe African-Americans and "he has made derogatory remarks about Hispanics in front of us, also."

"DM Armstrong has never given an African-American applicant more than a 7 minute interview," the letter stated. "When receiving

calls from one of the PCs, DM Armstrong would ask someone to take the call because he 'couldn't understand that black woman.'"

To help remedy the situation, the employees asked for EEO Counseling and Alternate Dispute Resolution.

"Poteau is a horrible place to work," they charged. "We should not have to endure such comments and epithets. This atmosphere is making us sick. We scatter...when DM Armstrong is on the floor. We become physically ill when we have to see (him) over anything, including leave approvals.

"None of us women take breaks. When we have, DM Armstrong comes in to see what we are doing. If he doesn't come in, (another male employee) comes in every 5 minutes to check up on us. The men in the office should NOT be spying on the women. (The male employee) basically roams around the office like a spy like he is going to catch us women doing or saying something 'wrong.'"