

# Judge Rules Against Lawyers for ATL TV Station (WANF-TV Formerly WGCL-TV) in Black Journalist's Discrimination Case

*Judge Rules Against Lawyers for ATL TV Station (WANF-TV Formerly WGCL-TV CBS46) in Black Journalist's Discrimination, Retaliation & Wrongful Termination Lawsuit*

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“

We believe the Defendant discriminated against Mr. Dunston because he's a Black man, violating his civil rights.”

*Helen Kim, Founding Partner  
HKH Law LLC & Counsel for  
Mr. Dunston*

journalist [Mike Dunston](#), represented by Atlanta firm HKH Law LLC, defeated in federal court two motions to dismiss from lawyers for WANF-TV (formerly WGCL-TV CBS46) now owned by Atlanta-based [Gray Television](#).

CIVIL ACTION FILE NO. 1:21-CV-05032-MLB-JEM

Background: Despite stellar reviews and earning among the highest ratings at the tv station, when primary anchor positions opened at WGCL-TV; Mr. Mike Dunston a weekend evening anchor of more than 5 years, was never

afforded auditions or interviews, despite requesting to be considered for the open positions as primary anchor. When speaking with then news director Steve Doerr and voicing his concerns of discrimination, Mr. Doerr told Mr. Dunston, African-American males were “spoken to [but not interviewed]” because they were not “good enough.”

After Mr. Dunston's repeated complaints, and after filing an internal EEO complaint with Meredith, Mr. Dunston experienced retaliation, and was wrongfully terminated in May of 2020.

"It's puzzling as to why my client was not afforded equality of opportunity.

Mr. Dunston was a proven ratings-getter, had great annual performance reviews and was the second most tenured news anchor for WGCL (now WANF).

We believe the Defendant discriminated against Mr. Dunston because he's a Black man, violating his civil rights.

We believe the Defendant had fixed and biased conceptions of who they believed viewers would

trust and would want to see as one of the primary anchors. We allege their decision to not promote and ultimately terminate Mr. Dunston were discriminatory actions which violate federal law.

My client is grateful, leaning on his faith in God, and thankful for the many supportive calls, texts, and emails of Metro-Atlanta community members, former and current WGCL/WANF employees and friends and colleagues throughout the news industry.

For my client, this action is also about making things better for employees who've experienced discrimination, retaliation, and wrongful termination while standing up for themselves," said HKH Law LLC founding partner Helen Kim who's counsel for Mr. Dunston.

A past lawsuit alleges a history of discriminatory statements against Black men employees at Atlanta television station (WGCL now WANF).

According to an NBC News 2005 digital article, Kevin O'Brien, the former head of Meredith's local broadcast

group is alleged to have said according to a company memo revealed in a lawsuit:

"We can't right all the wrongs of the Civil War; we've got to quit hiring all these Black people."  
"You shouldn't hire old Black guys. These guys don't listen, they have attitudes, and you can't control them." (see NBC News article link below):

<https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna7163988>

Gray Television acquired Meredith Corporation's television stations in 2021.

And like the former company based in Iowa, racial diversity among the decision-making executives who run Gray Television is severely lacking (see Gray Television leadership link below):

<https://gray.tv/about#leadership>

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Head Shot of Mike Dunston

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