

Suit charges Ramos was 'scapegoat'

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The battle for control of rural college education in Alaska is now being waged in court.

Elaine Ramos filed suit last week in Superior Court in Fairbanks, asking that she be reinstated as Vice President for Rural Educational Affairs at the University of Alaska. She also asked that the university and its president, Robert Hiatt, pay her damages for making false statements about her performance and preventing her from protesting their action.

Before it is over, the court fight may be seen as a contest between Hiatt and Ramos over their philosophies of rural education.

Ramos, a Tlingit from Yukutat, assumed the new position of Vice President for Rural Education in January, 1976. Her job was to lead a reorganized and expanded university effort to deliver college education in the bush.

Ramos was abruptly removed from her position in December and reassigned to an unnamed position. In a November 22 memorandum, Hiatt complained to Ramos "the administrative demands of your present position exceed your capacities at

this point in time, and your performance is not meeting our expectations."

Ramos has a contract to run the rural education program until June, 1977.

In her complaint, Ramos charges that statements made by Hiatt to the press have severely damaged her reputation and that her demotion was a violation of the state and federal constitutions because she was never given a chance to protest her removal.

According to Ramos, she was never given any reason to believe Hiatt was unhappy with her work until she received his Nov. 22 memo. After that, she had the impression that he had not made a final decision to reassign her. She learned of her dismissal two days after Hiatt informed the press of his action.

Ramos filed a grievance with the university, claiming, she had been removed because she was a woman and an Alaska Native:

"After plaintiff filed her grievance, the University added new regulations to old grievance procedures and created a grossly unfair new grievance procedure—in a deliberate attempt to prevent the plaintiff to proceed with her grievance," the complaint says.

The lawsuit raises the possibility that Ramos is being blamed for someone else's mistakes:

"I also believe that I am being demoted by President Hiatt so

that I can serve as the scapegoat for University mismanagement which occurred prior to the time I first assumed my position in January, 1976."