



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 11, 2014

University Must Promote Christian Professor It Discriminated Against

On April 8 a federal court ordered the University of North Carolina-Wilmington to promote a Christian teacher it discriminated against to the position of full professor and to give him \$50,000 in back pay he would have earned over the past six years. As reported earlier by [The New American](#), in March a jury found that the school had retaliated against Dr. Mike Adams, a former atheist, because of his vocal Christian views.



The university hired Adams, who holds a Ph.D. in criminology, as an assistant professor in 1993, promoting him to associate professor five years later. Throughout that time Adams, who was an avowed atheist, received enthusiastic support and professional accolades from his colleagues — that is, until 2000, when his conversion to Christianity dramatically altered his views on political and social issues.

With that personal change came a marked alteration in the attitudes of his colleagues and the administration towards him. According to the civil case Adams filed against the university with the help of the conservative legal advocacy group [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), Adams became the target of academic persecution led by a tag team of the feminist chairperson heading the university's department of sociology and criminal justice — a campaign that culminated in Adams being denied a promotion to full professor, despite an award-winning record of teaching, research, and scholarly publication.

The case faced a roller coaster trajectory of federal rulings and counter-rulings over the past six years before going to trial. That trial resulted in a victory for Adams, with a jury ruling March 20 that UNC-Wilmington was indeed guilty of retaliation against Adams over his religious and political views. The ruling coming down from the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Southern Division, stated, "The court hereby orders the defendants confer upon plaintiff full professorship as of the date of this order, with pay and benefits in the future to relate back to August 2007, when plaintiff's 2006 promotion application would have gone into effect had it been successful."

ADF attorney Travis Barham said after the ruling that "as the marketplace of ideas, universities must respect the freedom of professors to express their points of view. The jury found that disagreeing with an accomplished professor's religious and political views is no grounds for denying him a promotion. The court's order rights the wrong done to Dr. Adams by granting him the full professorship he has long deserved."

Following the ruling UNC-Wilmington Chancellor Gary L. Miller sent an e-mail to faculty and staff saying that the university "is committed to a number of fundamental values, among them academic freedom; freedom of speech; and the essential nature of peer review, based on merit, within the faculty evaluation process." Miller insisted that university officials "have steadfastly supported and will continue to support the right of Dr. Adams and all faculty to express those beliefs openly and without fear of retaliation."

As for Adams, he responded to the long-delayed ruling in his favor with the wry observation that



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“people often say every man has his day in court. But after this experience I am more inclined to say every man has his decade in court.”

He added that “I believe the university took a dangerous position on free speech” when it retaliated against him. “I don’t think that it’s a battle we should have to have fought.”



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