



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 29, 2019

## White Professor Sues Black University for Racial/Age Discrimination

Marshall Burns never did try the Elizabeth Warren [technique](#), [fabricating minority racial status](#). Instead, the 73-year-old white physics professor finds himself suing Alabama's historically black Tuskegee University for racial and age discrimination after years of being underpaid relative to his darker-complected colleagues.

As the Daily Beast [reports](#):



Burns' 12-page lawsuit, filed Friday in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, contends his salary is 30 to 50 percent lower than that of Tuskegee's younger professors despite his more than four decades of tenure at the private university.

The physics scholar began working at Tuskegee as an assistant professor in 1976, according to the lawsuit, and was promoted to full professor in 1980. Burns published a textbook that was recognized by the state legislature and was named Teacher of the Year in 1989, the complaint claims.

That same year, Burns' lawsuit claims that when the school was seeking more money from the legislature, it was his "level of scholarship, and his white race, [that] helped Tuskegee University succeed in obtaining additional funding from more conservative legislators."

"It's just wrong," Burns told The Daily Beast of his [...] pay gap on Wednesday.

Burns, who earned a Ph.D. in 1972, states that he still receives only an associate professor's salary despite requesting a raise at least a dozen times; his lawsuit alleges that black and Asian-descent instructors are paid more than he is even though they're younger and have less seniority at Tuskegee.

As to the details, he states this amounts to being "paid \$60,500 while younger full professors make between \$78,000 and \$90,000. He says the denial of a full professor's salary has cost him \$400,000 over his career," [writes](#) the Associated Press.

Note that [just 3.4 percent](#) of Tuskegee's professors are white; almost twice as many are Asian (6.6 percent), and 82.2 percent are black. In other words, it's entirely possible that Burns was hired by the school as a "token" who could be a "face" when convenient, such as when seeking the aforementioned funding. Of course, with today's political correctness ensuring that a primarily black institution (Tuskegee has [less than](#) 25 white students) should have no trouble getting government money, Burns just may have outlived his "usefulness."

Yet [that funding](#) is the point. While freedom-of-association trumping anti-discrimination law could possibly come into play regardless, receiving taxpayer funds (a disproportionate amount of which come from whites, mind you) makes a school wholly subject to government regulations.

As to determining the school's culpability, note that racial/group disparities *alone*, without any further context, have often been viewed by statist social engineers as proof of unjust discrimination. For



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example, the mere fact that women and blacks have performed worse on certain tests (e.g., police exams) has been used as a pretext for declaring them discriminatory, and eliminating them, based on “disparate impact” theory. Moreover, what would the reaction be if Burns’ were an underpaid black professor with superior qualifications at a primarily white school?

The question, though, is whether the same standards will be applied in Burns’ case or if, as is common, the powers-that-be will discriminate in their discrimination-law application?

Whatever the case, the professor certainly doesn’t get much sympathy in certain quarters. Just consider the *Root*’s Jay Connor, who wrote last Thursday that a historically black college being slapped with a lawsuit alleging age and racial discrimination by a white guy is “something I never thought I’d live to see” (interesting bubble that ol’ Jay lives in). If Connor thus reacts because he believes “Only whites can be ‘racist,’” it would be no surprise: He also opined that Burns’ case “means we live in a world in which a white male has somehow squandered his privilege.”

It’s striking that someone thinks an elderly Caucasian man of modest means — a salaried employee, no less — would enjoy “privilege.” Not only are white men perhaps the only group (certain Asians might have joined them now, though) that doesn’t benefit from affirmative action, quotas, and set-asides, but “old white men” has become a pejorative used to dismiss and scoff at those it describes.

In fact, a common sentiment among liberals now is that they don’t want a white male as a presidential nominee, and even the day-late-and-dollar short *Washington Post* finally [concluded last year](#) that the worst thing to be in today’s Democrat primaries is a white man.

Yet none of this matters because “white privilege” has become a left-wing article of faith. For example, some years ago I had a radio debate on the subject with a fellow boasting a Ph.D. in “ethnic studies” (but who, it came out, didn’t even know our country’s racial make-up). After he cited whites’ higher incomes as proof of privilege, I put him on the spot and asked him if, since Jews earn more than whites as a group, he would speak of “Jewish privilege.” His answer?

No, he said, because we know that Jews are victims of discrimination.

It was circular reasoning. He was saying, translated, “Higher incomes prove my thesis’ claim of privilege — except when my thesis says that higher incomes do not.”

That’s not logic. It’s prejudice. But it’s also fashionable right now, so it’s called intellectual.

But perhaps the best refutation of white-privilege pap is a walking, talking (too much!) one, presidential aspirant Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.). Why do you think she claimed minority status based on having a mosquito-meal-size amount (a dab’ll do ya’?) of American Indian blood?

When black job candidates start claiming white status based on having one drop of white blood, we can talk about white privilege.

Image: [Screenshot of Tuskegee University ad](#)



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