

# Newsday

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## LONG ISLAND

# Priest Wins Suit Against School

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STAFF WRITER

A dying priest had one of his final wishes granted Friday by a federal jury, which found that his civil rights had been violated by administrators at State College of Technology at Farmingdale.

The Rev. Edward Werring, a former chaplain and professor at the college, said he had been retaliated against and passed over for promotion after a committee he chaired in 1997 found the administration had discriminated against an African-American professor. The jury at U.S. District Court in Uniondale agreed, awarding him \$201,700 for back pay and emotional distress under federal and state civil rights laws.

"I feel fantastic," Werring, 55, said by telephone yesterday from Southampton, where he is on oxygen 24 hours a day because of the effects of renal cell carcinoma. "This is the first time in a long time that the administration has been held accountable for its actions. It took 3½ years to bring it to this point."

## Jury awards \$201G in discrimination case

The jury found former college President Frank Cipriani liable for \$15,000, business school Dean Frank Del Bene liable for \$35,000 and the college liable for \$150,000 plus \$1,700 in back pay.

Cipriani, who retired as college president earlier this year, said yesterday that there had been no retaliation against Werring, whom he hired two decades ago.

"Father Werring is the kind of individual who is very insistent about what he believes in," Cipriani said. "That was one of the reasons I liked him. That was one of the reasons I brought him to the campus." The lawsuit alleged that Werring headed a three-person committee that found Del Bene guilty of discrimination for eliminating the job of a profes-

sor in 1997 based on his age and race. SUNY officials denied the allegations. Then, later that year and in 1998, Del Bene—who was also Werring's dean—did not recommend Werring for promotion. Del Bene declined to comment other than to say he did not retaliate.

Werring was promoted to associate professor only last August, said his attorney, Frederick K. Brewington of Hempstead, days after the administration learned his illness would prevent him from returning.

"That's a terrible thing to say," Cipriani said. "The process takes place long before that, and the decisions would have to be made with the deans and the provost."

Two administrators were not found liable: Michael Vinciguerra, the provost and acting president, and Robert Mark, dean of arts sciences.

Kathryn Coley, a college spokeswoman, said she did not want to comment before speaking with lawyers from the state attorney general's office who defended the college. She said there would likely be an appeal.