

College settles lawsuit related to Dec. 2019 armed rape

Sami Mirza, Editor-in-Chief | May 26, 2023

Trigger warning: sexual assault, gun violence

Allegheny College has settled a lawsuit related to the December 2019 armed rape at Ravine-Narvik Hall. The plaintiff, listed as “Jane Doe” to protect her identity, first filed suit in July 2020 in the United States Western District Court in Erie seeking \$75,000 in damages.

The case was dismissed at the request of lawyers for both sides in a motion signed May 11 by U.S. District Judge Susan Paradise Baxter.

“We have reached a confidential settlement in this case which allows for our former student to have closure,” the college wrote in a statement to The Campus. “Allegheny College is steadfastly committed to working continually to support our campus community members and their safety.”

Doe was represented by Philadelphia law firm Kline & Specter. Tom Kline, the lead attorney for Doe, told the Erie Times-News, “We reached a confidential settlement with Allegheny College, which provides compensation and closure to our client”

Kline & Specter did not respond to a request for comment from The Campus by publication time.

Doe was a second-year student living on campus when she was raped at gunpoint in her third-floor room. Montelle Brown of Meadville, who was 28 at the time, pleaded to two counts of rape in the Crawford County Court of Common Pleas in November 2021 and was



sentenced to 13 to 40 years in prison a few months later. Brown said he gained access to the hall after a door was left propped open by a rock, according to the Meadville Tribune.

In the lawsuit, Doe claimed that the college was aware of multiple on-campus forcible sex offenses. Despite this knowledge, the lawsuit argued, the college failed to properly respond and improve security and was therefore negligent and reckless in providing secure housing for students.

The lawsuit claimed that the College's Daily Crime and Fire Log reported 30 forcible sex offenses on campus in the three years before the attack, including 24 in 2018 and nine in 2019.

The lawsuit further argued that the college failed to secure residence hall doors and provide peepholes on students' residence doors and that the card entry systems for Ravine's exterior entrances "regularly failed to operate or function," which caused students to prop open doors.

Allegheny has made a number of changes in response to the attack, including improvements to external entrances, installing peepholes in dorm rooms and adding security cameras to dormitory halls — starting with Ravine-Narvik — The Campus reported in September 2020.

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