

Media Articles on Law Firm

CalFarm General Counsel Hit With Harassment Suit

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By J. Nils Wright

CalFarm Insurance Com. and its general counsel have been slapped with a sexual harassment lawsuit by the chief attorney's legal secretary.

Edward M. Broderick III, the company's general counsel, has been accused of sexually harassing his secretary, Margaret Caballero.

A lawsuit filed Jan. 26 by Caballero accused Broderick of requiring his secretary to open and read pornographic mail addressed to him.

"There is no story as far as I'm concerned," Broderick said, when asked about the lawsuit. Arlington Ansbro, CalFarm's president, refused to comment.

The lawsuit alleges that Caballero was harassed "by Broderick and other male employees." It alleged that Broderick hid pictures of obese women in Caballero's desk and required Caballero to read sexually related cases from the Daily Appellate Report, a legal publication.

Clement Kong, an attorney representing CalFarm, said his office had just been served with the lawsuit and has not yet initiated any interviews or investigations into the matter.

"CalFarm has a strong policy against sexual harassment," Kong said, and has implemented "semiannual seminars and training on the issue."

Bob Reaver, president of CalFarm Life, a sister company, said he was unaware of the lawsuit, but added, "sexual harassment is not tolerated at CalFarm."

Caballero was subjected to sexual innuendo "throughout her employment," her suit alleged. She has worked for the insurer for four years and is still employed there. Since filing suit, Caballero has been on medical leave, said Michael Damore, her attorney.

Caballero also filed a claim Jan. 26 with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing. No similar complaints were on file.