

# MACY'S SORDID HISTORY

When we learned that Macy's had fired Javier Chavez for his Catholic *beliefs*—he expressed disagreement with allowing cross-dressing men to use the women's bathroom, but agreed to abide by the policy—we spoke out. We also researched other instances of intolerance by Macy's. What we found is a sordid history:

- Natalie Johnson, an African American employee at Macy's San Antonio Rivercenter store, was fired after she told a cross-dressing man he could not use the women's changing rooms.
- Army Specialist Kayla Reyes had returned home after a year-long deployment in Afghanistan when she applied for a job at Macy's Fresno, Calif. store. But Macy's treated Reyes' military service as a *disqualifier*! Having been "over there (Afghanistan)," Reyes says she was told, "you wouldn't really know how to approach people." Only after this became public did Macy's offer her a job. She turned it down.
- When elderly widows Karen Padgett and Dr. Sonia Saceda, both of Florida, found charges on their Macy's credit cards for purchases they did not make, they contacted Macy's and were assured the charges would be removed. Instead, Macy's harassed Saceda, 79 and a 20 year army veteran, with constant phone calls and threats of legal action; while Padgett, 75, kept receiving monthly statements with not only the bogus charge, but interest and late payment penalties added! Then Macy's threatened to send a collection agency after her.
- Anabelle Mayi had been working at Macy's flagship store in Manhattan for two-and-a-half years when she was diagnosed with a high-risk pregnancy. Macy's denied her request for reasonable accommodations, like a chair or stool so she could sit periodically while working at the

counter. When Mayi took several sick days for pregnancy-related illness, her employee access was blocked. Then she was terminated.

- In June of 2013, Macy's paid a civil penalty of \$175,000 after the U.S. Justice Department determined that the company had engaged in unfair practices against work-authorized immigrants. The government found that although these workers were already legally permitted to work in the United States, Macy's demanded documentation that they don't require of other employees. This added burden caused economic harm to some employees, in lost wages or seniority.
- In 1998, Macy's West was facing three separate class action lawsuits for violating both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the California civil code, in its failure to take steps to make merchandise accessible to disabled customers. The lead attorney for Oakland-based Disability Rights Advocates, which brought all three suits, said they received more complaints about Macy's than any other retailer.
- Back in 2005, Macy's paid New York State \$600,000 to settle a complaint that its New York stores engaged in racial profiling—detaining disproportionate numbers of black and Latino shoppers on suspicion of shoplifting. Then in 2014, Macy's was nailed again, on complaints from 18 customers—all from African-American, Latino or other minority communities—detained on suspicion of shoplifting at its Herald Square store in Manhattan. Macy's agreed to yet another payout, this one for \$650,000.
- Jenny Mendez was an NYPD officer for less than a year when she found herself wrongfully arrested for shoplifting at Macy's—and out of a job, because she was still in her probationary period with the NYPD. She was later acquitted—and a Macy's store detective testified that her boss had told her to lie in claiming that Mendez had admitted the theft.

- Samya Moftah was accused of shoplifting at Macy's flagship store in Manhattan. Taken down to the basement to what she said "looked like jail cells," she was threatened with handcuffs and taunted for stealing during Ramadan and being a Muslim. A Macy's manager told her to sign some documents and pay \$500, and she could go home. When she refused to pay, her credit card was removed from her wallet and charged for the \$500. The charges against Moftah were later dismissed, and a judge subsequently ruled that Macy's had violated her due process rights.
- Kevin Schiller had worked for Macy's in Texas for 21 years when he was injured on the job. Suffering persistent headaches, memory loss, disorientation and extreme sensitivity to bright light and loud sound, he was unable to work regularly. Macy's, however, claimed the accident never happened, and implied that it was staged. They cut off all benefits for medical care and lost pay. Schiller lost his house and pick-up truck as a result. Doctors Macy's sent him to concluded that he was either psychosomatic or faking. However, specialists Schiller went to at his own expense—about \$90,000—diagnosed a traumatic brain injury. And a Social Security judge declared Schiller disabled.
- Even in its use of store mannequins, Macy's managed to offend. After many people protested displays of a black mannequin with an unflattering look, they were forced to stop using it.

This is just a sampling of the intolerance and abuse displayed by Macy's toward customers and employees alike, at stores all across the country.