

Twin Cities Pioneer Press: St. Thomas Facing Potential Title IX Lawsuit With Elimination Of Tennis Programs

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St. Thomas Facing Potential Title IX Lawsuit With Elimination Of Tennis Programs

5/24/2021 by John Shipley

The University of St. Thomas women's tennis team clinched an unbeaten championship MIAC season with a 5-0 victory over Gustavus Adolphus on May 8. Three days later, the team was informed it was their last match.

Summoned to a hastily called meeting in the school's auditorium on May 11, team members who could make it were surprised to see school president Julie H. Sullivan, vice president and director of athletics Phil Esten and senior associate athletics director Megan Jacobson walk out on stage.

"We thought, 'Oh, we're getting new coaches for next year since we're going Division I,'" said Olivia Paradise, a junior from Mahtomedi. "They all of a sudden, the president walked in. The president never came to any tennis events or was involved in tennis in any way and it was like, 'That's not good.'"

The school's senior leadership informed the teams that the school would be dropping the tennis programs beginning next year.

"We left the meeting," Paradise said, "and within five minutes they emailed the entire school."

Paradise and her teammates haven't gone quietly. At last weekend's NCAA Division III regional tournament at Wisconsin-Whitewater, the Tommies women's players declined to wear their school uniforms, opting instead for black tops and white shirts. "Absolutely no purple," Paradise said.

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Members of the team have retained veteran Title IX attorney Arthur Bryant to challenge the school's decision to drop the program. Bryant sent a letter to Harris on May 20 and has given the school until Thursday to respond. Otherwise, Bryant wrote, his firm, Bailey and Glasser of Oakland, Calif., will pursue a class-action lawsuit against St. Thomas for violating Title IX, the federal law that requires schools receiving federal funds to provide equal opportunities for men and women.

[Click here to read to the full story from the Twin Cities Pioneer Press about Bailey Glasser's work on this case.](#)

Attorneys

Arthur H. Bryant

Practice Areas

Name, Image, & Likeness (NIL)