

Canal Street landlord sued for discrimination

by CityBusiness staff reports

Published: December 20th, 2010

Like

65 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

The landlord of a Canal Street apartment complex faces a lawsuit from the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center alleging potential renters were excluded from living there because of their race.

The lawsuit, filed Friday, claims the Bouchon Family Limited Partnership and Betty Bouchon discriminated against black renters. GNOFHAC followed up on complaints of discrimination about the operators of the 16-unit complex at 4905 and 4919 Canal St.

Last year, the center sent mystery shoppers to the complex. A white male posing as an interested renter recorded Betty Bouchon ([listen here](#)) saying she had "all nice tenants" in the complex and that it was in a "very safe neighborhood."

"I hate to tell you," the 86-year-old Bouchon says in the recording, pausing briefly. "You know what I'm going to say.

"Not necessarily, but that's all right," the mystery shopper replied.

"What I want to say is we don't have any blacks here," Bouchon said.

She later told the man she didn't return calls from blacks who left messages on her voice mail expressing interest in renting her apartments (



[listen here](#)).

"There are so many blacks, I can't answer the phone," Bouchon said.

According to GNOFHAC, Bouchon informed another white mystery shopper that she saw a black woman who she thought was interested in seeing the apartment so she left the premises so that she wouldn't have to show the woman a unit.

There was no answer this morning at the phone number for 4919 Canal St., which is listed under Betty Bouchon.

The Louisiana Secretary of State's corporation database lists the Sapphire Corporation as the general partner of the Bouchon Family Limited with Betty's son and daughter, Lester Bouchon Jr. and Beverly Bouchon Scala, both of Metairie, as limited partners.

Lester Bouchon Jr. and Beverly Scala are the registered agents and officers for the Sapphire Corp., along with Betty Bouchon, whose Metairie address is listed as the domicile for the partnership and corporation.

There was no immediate response to a message left at the home of Lester Bouchon Jr. this morning.

Following its investigation, GNOFHAC filed an administrative complaint on Sept. 24, 2009, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Louisiana Department of Justice followed up on the complaint and issued a charge against Betty Bouchon and the Bouchon Family Limited Partnership, determining there was reasonable cause to believe discrimination took place. The GNOFHAC followed with the lawsuit filed last week.

"Our investigation discovered that over the course of more than a year, Ms. Bouchon engaged in a pattern of illegal, intentional, racial, housing discrimination," GNOFHAC Executive Director James Perry said in a statement. "I am saddened that in 2010, such execrable bigotry still persists. The finding in this case serves to embolden the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center as we advocate for fair housing choice for all New Orleans residents."

The Law Offices of Matthew M. Dietz is serving as co-counsel in representing GNOFHAC in the lawsuit. •

To sign up for CityBusiness Daily Updates, click [here](#).

Complete URL: <http://neworleanscitybusiness.com/blog/2010/12/20/canal-street-landlord-sued-for-discrimination/>