

# Ex-coach sues Webster police and schools

## Kali Watkins' lawsuit is moved to federal court

Gary Craig

Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

Kali Watkins, the former Webster Schroeder High School coach who was exonerated on charges he raped a teenager, claims in a federal lawsuit that the police investigation into the allegations was slipshod, myopic, and ignored evidence of innocence.

He also contends in the lawsuit that school officials, including Superintendent Carmen Gumina, closed their eyes to proof that he was wrongly accused and paid no heed to his likely innocence.

“This was an injustice,” states the lawsuit, filed earlier this month. “An innocent man subject to public humiliation and financial ruin all because of personal animosity and a reckless and malicious investigation.”

Watkins, represented by attorney Kamran Hashmi, filed a lawsuit in November in state court. The defendants then asked for the case to move to federal court because Watkins alleged civil rights violations.

Watkins then filed an amended lawsuit in federal court.

Webster police declined to comment this week and Webster school officials did not respond to a message left asking for comment.

The lawsuit details the steps that led a jury in Au-



**Kali Watkins, a former Webster teacher and coach, was exonerated on charges he raped a teenager.** TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

gust 2019 to find Watkins not guilty of the criminal charges.

Prosecutors and police provided a time frame of two months for the alleged 2017 rape of the 14-yearold in a gymnasium locker room at the school. The girl who made the claims was a player on Watkins' high school basketball team.

Watkins had previously had consensual relations, the lawsuit says.

“They interviewed a long line of former girlfriends, faculty members and students who had no discernible connection with the time, place, and manner of the alleged occurrence,” the lawsuit states.

But, using her testimony about when the rape allegedly occurred, Watkins' defense team narrowed the time frame to a single game at which he had an alibi for much of the time. There was a very small window during which an attack could have occurred, but the gymnasium was very active at that time.

The police only interviewed one player on the team and did not speak with assistant coaches about how unlikely such an attack would have been, the lawsuit states. And, instead of trying to seek proof of the alleged assault, investigators instead spoke with women whom

Instead, Watkins' defense was left to unearth the proof of his innocence — evidence the police ignored, the lawsuit claims.

The school district, meanwhile, “bullied” employees who may have supported Watkins, especially including one who believed he was being “railroaded” and said so, the lawsuit alleges.

*Contact Gary Craig at [gcraig@gannett.com](mailto:gcraig@gannett.com) or at 585-258-2479.  
Follow him on Twitter at [gcraig1](#).*