

January 8, 2018

Jacques Frémont  
President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of Ottawa  
550 Cumberland, Room 212  
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5  
f: 613-562-5103  
e: president@uOttawa.ca  
By email and by fax

**Re: Ending the University of Ottawa's unrelenting punishment of me**

Dear President Frémont,

I was a professor in the department of physics at the University of Ottawa from 1987 until 2009. I occupied the highest academic rank of Full Professor beginning in 1997.

I am recognized as an expert in my profession and have taught thousands of students. I am a much appreciated teacher and research supervisor and I have published over 100 articles in leading journals in several areas of science ([my present h-index score is 35](#)).

I taught the Senate-approved course "Science in Society", which I created following campus-wide student demand, in the largest auditorium on campus. It was informally known as the activism course.

I was a critic of the university and I defended students against what I saw as institutional discrimination and racism. In so doing, I used Malcolm X's political term, "house negro". I did this in the context of a struggle for justice and in good faith, as attested to by the attached letters to you from community activists: Hazel Gashoka, Jean-Marie Vianney, and Cynthia McKinney.

The university dismissed me in 2009 using the pretext of my having assigned high grades to all 23 students in one advanced physics course, and then spent over \$1 million sponsoring a large defamation lawsuit against me.

You have emptied out my bank account by court order, you have repeatedly threatened to take my family's home, and you have asserted that you will continue to enforce recovery of your legal costs in excess of \$1 million. Therefore, I am not able to pursue my work as a teacher and scholar, since you would take every penny.

You destroyed my career and took everything I have. You have done enough. I'm hoping that your sense of decency will cause you to grant this request for relief.

The university's punishment of me has been relentless, including the following.

### **Destroyed scientific samples**

Recently this year, as I sought to continue my scientific work, the university said that it destroyed my large and unique collection of scientific samples — when it locked me and my students out of our laboratory while I was still a full professor.

Many of the samples are irreplaceable and priceless, and I considered myself their custodian on behalf the scientific community. The Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO) has assumed my \$1.25 million grievance concerning this destruction.

The destroyed scientific samples included:

- (a) The only large non-oxidized piece of the Santa Catharina meteorite, in which the meteoritic metallic phase "antitaenite" was discovered.
- (b) The only large sample of remnants of the K/T boundary meteorite that may have killed the dinosaurs, collected in the field by a leading-expert collaborator, and kept in a sealed atmosphere.
- (c) Unique suites of synthetic layer silicate compounds, which led to several fundamental discoveries.
- (d) Suites of loess-paleosol samples (ancient soils) from two sites, in China and Eastern Europe.
- (e) Preserved samples of sediments from 100 lakes in Canada, from the largest study of its kind in the boreal forest.
- (f) Several suites of samples of synthetic compounds and alloys having unique electronic, magnetic, and magneto-volume properties.

For years the university threatened to destroy my personal papers, too. Since 2008, the university refused to give me access to my belongings from my personal office in the physics building. The materials were research notes, original course content, unpublished book manuscripts, two decades of correspondence, specialized books, and much more. Only recently, thanks to your direct intervention, was I able to recover the more than 200 cubic feet of paper materials.

### **Student spy**

The university hired a student spy (Maureen Robinson) to covertly surveil me for more than one year while I was a professor. Her actions were condoned by her immediate supervisors (the dean and the legal counsel of the university) and included using a false cyber identity ("Nathalie Page") and falsely representing herself personally to third

parties. The student spy provided weekly reports about me to the university. Her role was described by an Ontario appellate-court judge in his motion ruling in the following terms: <sup>1</sup>

MAUREEN ROBINSON

[15] The circumstances of Maureen Robinson's involvement in this entire matter is troubling at best. Throughout the relevant portion of the Award by Arbitrator Foisy, Ms. Robinson's written notes were referred to [as] "the report on Professor Rancourt's address prepared by a University of Ottawa student".

[16] Pursuant to the Udell Affidavit, and based on evidence from the hearing, the student being Maureen Robinson was the editor of the student newspaper who had been hired by the University in what the University described as in a clerical capacity to assist Professor Rancourt in his office, without his input on her hiring.

[17] Either in consultation with her employer, the University, or on her own, she monitored the activities of Professor Rancourt both on and off campus and reported her findings back to the University. In an email to Dean Lalonde, she admitted to having a "personal grudge" against Professor Rancourt and went so far as to liken her monitoring of Professor Rancourt as "posing as a young girl to catch a pedophile". Ms. Robinson was not called as a witness at the hearing and, the parties agreed that her "report" would be considered as an "aide memoire" only.

[18] The University referred to the "report" thereafter as a transcript which such description was objected to by the APUO. Similarly, Arbitrator Foisy made certain findings which appear to be based solely on the report which was not evidence.

[Underlined sub-title in original]

### **Covert psychiatric report**

In 2008, the university's VP-Governance coordinated a capture of my intimate childhood information for use by a hired psychiatrist to make a written "psychiatric opinion" of me without my consent or knowledge.

The university thereby violated my constitutional privacy rights, my personal dignity and integrity, and numerous ethical codes regarding expert medical diagnoses.

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<sup>1</sup> [\*Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa \(APUO\) and University of Ottawa\*](#), Superior Court of Justice for Ontario (Divisional Court), dated 2015-10-26, Court File No. 14-2022, Justice Robert Scott, paras. 15 to 18

The university followed this by not informing me of its actions, and by vigorously opposing my access to the psychiatric report until the final hour of an appeal in litigation for access in 2017.

You have a reputation as an advocate of human rights, and you recently took charge of the university's case with me.

I write to you now to ask for a fair resolution that will allow me to resume my work as an educator and scientist, and to earn my living in this way. As it stands, the university would seize all of my income, just as it recently seized my bank account. The interest alone that you seek is more than \$30,000.00 per year.

Please assure me that you will instruct the university lawyers that a settlement is needed that will allow me to resume my career.

Yours truly,



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Professor Denis Rancourt

[REDACTED]  
Ottawa, ON [REDACTED]

t: [REDACTED]

e: denis.rancourt@[REDACTED]

Encl.: Letters from Hazel Gashoka, Jean-Marie Vianney, and Cynthia McKinney

December 13, 2017

Jacques Frémont  
President  
University of Ottawa

Dear President Jacques Frémont,

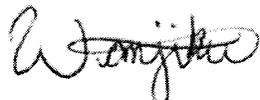
I have had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Denis Rancourt for the last decade. I met Dr. Rancourt when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Ottawa and, at that time, he was a physics professor. During the years of our acquaintance, I have known Dr. Rancourt in his capacity as a staunch advocate for human rights for all people – particularly racialized students.

As former Chairperson of the Student Federation of the University of Ottawa (SFUO)'s Black History Month Committee, former president of the Kilimanjaro Black Student Association, Member of the 2008 Racism Task Force on Campus, co-founder of black caucus, and former student member of senate, I devoted all of my leisure time to issues of social justice and equity for racialized students at the University of Ottawa. I frequently attended seminars, rallies, and debates in relation to social justice and equity and one familiar face was always there: Dr. Denis Rancourt. In fact, the first time I met Dr. Rancourt was at a rally for Palestinian rights in the Agora square in the Jock Turcot Centre in 2007. Throughout the years, the SFUO's Appeal Centre held several press conferences to defend student rights and Dr. Rancourt was always present. Moreover, Dr. Rancourt assisted me when I experienced anti-Black racism in the classroom.

I have closely followed the defamation lawsuit against Dr. Denis Rancourt. While Dr. Rancourt used the term "house negro", it was done in defense of racialized students. The aim of Dr. Rancourt's blog post was to expose the University administration's involvement in Professor St. Lewis' evaluation of the SFUO's Appeal Centre 2008 report about racism. Moreover, the term "house negro" is based on the definition by the renowned and revolutionary civil rights activist Malcolm X. Dr. Rancourt did not use the term "house negro" in a malicious way. I am confident of this because Dr. Rancourt has worked alongside me – and several other racialized students – to support, develop, and advance our racial justice initiative at the University of Ottawa. As such, based on his tireless record for advocating on behalf of racialized students, it is clear to me that Dr. Rancourt actions were done in good faith and that he did not mean harm against Professor St. Lewis.

Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,



Hazel Gashoka, BA (Hons)  
M.A. Candidate, Health Policy & Equity  
York University, School of Health Policy and Management

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Email: hazel.gashoka@[REDACTED]



UP/MREF  
L'Union fait la force

# UNION PROVINCIALE DES MINORITÉS RACIALES ET ETHNOCULTURELLES FRANCOPHONES

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Ottawa, 19 décembre 2017

Jacques Frémont, Président

Université d'Ottawa

Cher Mr. Frémont,

Je suis ami avec Mr. Denis Rancourt depuis que nous étions animateurs ensemble pendant plusieurs années à la radio communautaire CHUO 89.1 FM. En plus de produire sa propre émission, il a souvent contribué à mon émission « Afrique Plus/Ici l'Afrique ». Nous sommes restés de bons amis depuis nos premières collaborations en 2007 et lorsque je suis devenu coordonnateur l'émission du matin "Jambo Ottawa" pendant deux ans et demie comme chroniqueur et analyste et j'ai suivi ses difficultés avec l'université et avec le procès en diffamation que l'université a financé contre lui.

Denis Rancourt est un défenseur acharné des droits de la personne, et ses contributions médiatiques et d'activiste depuis 2005 le démontrent amplement. J'ai aucun doute de son dévouement pour le bien-être de tous et contre le racisme et l'injustice.

Denis a utilisé l'expression « house negro » (nègre de maison ou reine nègre) en voulant protéger les étudiants contre des abus discriminatoire et racistes. Il l'a fait de bonne foi et avec la conviction de bien faire. Sa critique aurait été irréprochable dans l'opinion publique s'il était noir; comme moi, étant membre de la communauté et venant tout juste d'assister au lancement de la Fédération des Canadiens Noirs à Toronto. La critique de monsieur Rancourt est donc irréprochable et rentre dans la démarche de La Décennie Internationale des personnes d'ascendance africaine proclamée par l'ONU dans sa résolution 68/237 de 2015-2024.

À mon avis monsieur Rancourt fait ici une critique politique de l'institution qui n'était aucunement basée sur une animosité personnelle.

Dans sa résolution, l'ONU demandait aux organismes nationaux et internationaux; aux pays; aux institutions ...de prendre des actions concrètes pour améliorer les conditions des victimes et des populations ci-dessus mentionnés à sortir de la marginalisation; de souligner leur contribution; la promotion de leur plein intégration; éliminer/lutter contre le racisme et toutes formes de discriminations...à leur endroit. De ce fait, monsieur Rancourt il est un allié; une solution au problème et non le problème car les enjeux qu'il a soulevé en 2011 n'ont toujours pas de solutions.

Dans l'espoir que vous saurez prendre en considération les propositions suivantes pour appliquer un jugement positif à l'égard de Denis Rancourt.

Bien à vous,

Jean-Marie Vianney,

Coordonnateur, comité ad-hoc UPMREF,

Ancien Coordonnateur Jambo Ottawa

Producteur, animateur (CHUO-TV-Rogers, Unique FM)

Journaliste, Leader communautaire Ottawa-Gatineau

Trésorier ADAC,

jm\_vianney@[REDACTED]

Tel. [REDACTED]

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# CYNTHIA MCKINNEY, PH.D.

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*<http://www.northsouth.edu/faculty-members/shss/pss-fm/cynthia.mckinney.html>*

January 5, 2018

Jacques Frémont  
President  
University of Ottawa

Dear President Jacques Frémont:

In 1992 I was elected the first African-American woman to represent Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Member of Congress. I remained in the U.S. House of Representatives for 12 years, elected as a member of the Democratic Party. Before that, I had been elected to serve as a Georgia Representative in the Georgia General Assembly for 4 years. In 2008 I was the U.S. Green Party nominee for President in the federal election. I served as a Juror on the Bertrand Russell Tribunal on Palestine, and sat at each of its Sessions in Barcelona, London, Cape Town, New York, and Brussels. My entire career has been devoted to fighting bigotry, injustice, and intimidation, especially the state sanctioned varieties against citizens.

I am currently a professor at North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

I have known about Professor Denis Rancourt since I first heard of his 2005 activism course. As I see it, Dr. Rancourt stood up for University of Ottawa students and then got fired for doing so.

As you know, I made a petition in support of Dr. Rancourt in 2014, regarding the defamation lawsuit that your university sponsored against him. The sponsorship of the defamation trial was a disservice to all justice-seeking citizens.

I have already made a published analysis of the meaning and discourse necessity of the term "house Negro". Dr. Rancourt's use of the term was not malicious and was part of his valid criticism of a perceived systemic racism at the University reported by students and the student union. I urge you to rectify the disproportionate abuses that the University of Ottawa has made against Dr. Denis Rancourt.

Yours truly,

Cynthia McKinney, PhD