

Tucson Citizen

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Carmona, TMC settle surgeon's suit in '93 firing

by Citizen Staff Writers

Tucson Medical Center and Dr. Richard Carmona have settled his high-profile Superior Court lawsuit over his 1993 firing as chief trauma surgeon at the hospital.



Carmona

Under settlement terms, TMC today ran full-page ads in the Tucson Citizen and The Arizona Daily Star, apologizing to Carmona.

The out-of-court settlement reportedly also includes a sizable

payment to Carmona.

"All we can say is a settlement has occurred," Silas Shultz, Carmona's lawyer, said today. "The court has told us the specific terms of the settlement are confidential. All of the lawyers and all the parties are bound by a gag order."

Shultz would not comment on a TMC settlement figure - published in an article in today's Star - of \$3.5 million, saying only that there are "a lot of rumors." The figure came from an anonymous source, the Star stated.

The case was filed before Judge Lina S. Rodriguez.

In the ads, Henry G. Walker, president and chief executive officer of TMC, said Carmona and the

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hospital have "resolved their differences" and settled the 1994 suit.

"Tucson Medical Center regrets the emotional impact this matter has caused Dr. Carmona and his family and wishes him the best of luck in the future," Walker states in the ad.

"Tucson Medical Center wishes to publicly acknowledge Dr. Carmona's excellent skills as a general and trauma surgeon and thank him for the job he did as Director of Tucson Medical Center's trauma program," Walker added.

"The ad speaks for itself," Mike Letson, a TMC spokesman, said this morning. "There's no discussion or anything on it."

"As a rule, we don't discuss issues of litigation or legal action - especially on this case. There are

restrictions."

Carmona was out of town and could not be reached this morning for comment. Today's ads quote him as saying he "wishes the best" for TMC in the future.

He filed a 40-page wrongful-discharge complaint against TMC in court in April 1994, demanding a return to his job as chief trauma surgeon.

According to hospital officials, the settlement does not include Carmona's return.

He was hired by TMC to head its trauma center in the summer of 1985 and was fired in June 1993. He was selected in June as chief executive officer of county-owned Kino Community Hospital.

Carmona claimed in the suit that TMC defamed him. And he accused TMC in the suit of preventing him from being hired by the University Medical Center trauma

center.

The suit alleges that Carmona was discharged without cause and without any chance to correct alleged problems in his performance.

At the time of Carmona's discharge, TMC claimed he was not being fired, but his job was being eliminated in the merger of the TMC and UMC trauma units.

Hospital officials at the time also publicly stated that Carmona was "not a team player," and sources linked to TMC commented then that Carmona's management style made joint UMC-TMC teamwork impossible.

Carmona was known for being colorful and high-profile during his years at TMC, volunteering time with a local police special weapons and tactics team and frequently being quoted in news stories about trauma issues.

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