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To advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

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Chichilnisky v. Columbia University

AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund Plaintiff Settles Suit with Columbia



WASHINGTON - Release Date 07/08/08 – An AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund –supported plaintiff has settled her lawsuit against Columbia University for an undisclosed sum.

In *Chichilnisky v. Columbia University*, Graciela Chichilnisky, one of Columbia's most distinguished international economists and mathematicians, sued the University for Pay Discrimination under the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Columbia did not admit to any wrongdoing.

"I was awarded a substantive monetary settlement," Chichilnisky said. "I am pleased and ready to move forward." Chichilnisky has been a tenured, full professor at Columbia since 1979. She studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at the University of California, Berkeley and has two doctoral degrees, one in mathematics and one in economics.

"Despite being internationally recognized for her research and publications, Professor Chichilnisky was still confronted by pay discrimination," said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. "Her case illustrates the inequities women continue to face. AAUW is committed to breaking through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance."

AAUW contributed significant funds to offset Chichilnisky's latest round of legal expenses. Members of New York City area AAUW branches attended her recent trial to show their support.

The case is Chichilnisky's second suit against the University for Pay Discrimination. In 1991, she alleged that the university had violated the Equal Pay Act and Title VII, after she found out that her salary was roughly 30 percent lower than the median salary of her male colleagues in her department. She won a \$500,000 settlement in 1995.

In 2000, Chichilnisky went back to court, contending that the university retaliated against her and reneged on the settlement terms. She also claimed that her pay once again lagged dramatically behind that of her male counterparts. Columbia later filed counterclaims against Chichilnisky, charging that she had violated the university's rules by not reporting that she had a second job and that she had breached settlement terms. CONTACT: **Lisa Goodnight**, 202-785-7738, goodnightl@aauw.org