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When twenty-one employees were terminated from Seagate Technology in 2004, they were devastated. Some had been with the company for as many as 30-35 years. Few were emotionally or financially prepared to have their careers ended prematurely.

Seagate's terminations came as a shock to all. For years Seagate rated the vast majority of these employees as exceptional performers. They worked long hours for the benefit of the company. Several had extensive intellectual property portfolios that significantly contributed to Seagate's "bottom line". The late career terminations have meant financial and employment disaster for the group. Most of the terminated have been unable to find comparable employment or employment at all. While many potential employers seem at first interested in the credentials of these experienced employees, it becomes very clear that they too are not interested in older employees.

These twenty-one employees have filed a lawsuit against Seagate Technology alleging discrimination on the basis of their age. The individuals were all terminated as part of a nationwide reduction-in-force done by the company in or around July 2004. The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis charges Seagate with age discrimination in violation of the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act. These employees are represented by Bertelson Law Offices, P.A. and Dorene R. Sarnoski Law Office.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs, allege that Seagate intentionally terminated or forced loyal, productive long-term employees into retirement. The Complaint alleges that after the 2004 and 2005 terminations many of the older terminated employees found that:

- many of their positions were not eliminated,
- when they later applied for their positions that were posted after their terminations they were not rehired or even granted interviews;
- employees under age 40 were transferred to other positions within Seagate
- a disproportionate number of the employees in the mass lay offs were age 40 and older;
- Seagate hired a disproportionate number of employees under age 40 before and after the mass layoffs to take over the older employees responsibilities.

After being terminated, two employees filed charges of age discrimination against Seagate with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), a federal agency that investigates allegations of discrimination against employers. After a two-year investigation, the federal agency found that, “the evidence obtained during the course of the investigation establishes reasonable cause to believe that the plaintiffs had been discriminated against based on age, and that a class of employees has been discriminated against based on age.”

The EEOC also found through its investigation that the release Seagate presented the former employees violated EEOC statutes because it required employees to waive their right to file an EEOC charge. The plaintiffs claim that this decision along with a recent U.S. District Court of Minnesota decision in a class action against Guidant Corporation, Pagliolo v. Guidant Corporation, Civil No. 06-943 (D. Minn. April 4, 2007) opens up the right to proceed against Seagate for allegations of an illegal termination despite the earlier signing of a release. Attorneys for the plaintiffs anticipate that the scope of the lawsuit could include a potential class involving hundreds of former Seagate employees.