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PEER REVIEW

**Half a Million Reasons to Leave Harvard;
Support for Sex-Bias Suit Against Columbia**

By ROBIN WILSON and PIPER FOGG

BACK TO COURT: Graciela Chichilnisky, a tenured professor of statistics at Columbia University, has received some hefty support for her sex-discrimination claims against the institution. The legal-advocacy fund of the American Association of University Women has recently given \$15,000 to back her second lawsuit against the university.

Ms. Chichilnisky, 66, first sued Columbia in 1991, alleging that the university paid her less than male professors of similar experience. The university settled the case in 1995, paying her a lump sum of \$500,000, raising her salary to \$107,000 from \$62,975, and promising her \$50,000 a year both for the Program on Information and Resources, which she directs, and for an endowed chair created for her and partially financed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Now Ms. Chichilnisky has concluded that the university breached the settlement agreement by ending those annual payments, denying her adequate office space, and attempting to do away with the Unesco chair, in effect retaliating against her for filing the original suit.

Ms. Chichilnisky says she decided to go back to court after she entered the program's offices in February 2000 and saw her computers "lying on the floor, disconnected," including those containing key research and sensitive files. "The cables were severed. They looked like spaghetti. I couldn't even walk into the room."

Officials told her they were moving the entire program, with seven offices' worth of equipment, to her small academic office in another building, Ms. Chichilnisky says.

In 2000, she filed her complaint against Columbia in a New York state court, which issued an injunction stopping the university from dismantling her offices. She is asking the court to permanently enjoin Columbia from retaliating against and harassing her, and she wants \$1-million in damages. The case is in the discovery phase. A Columbia spokeswoman declined to comment, citing the pending litigation.

"It's painful to talk about," says Ms. Chichilnisky, but she hopes her case will help prevent further discrimination against female faculty members. "The only way you can alleviate this pain is by helping others."

Sylvia Newman, president of the Legal Advocacy Fund's Board of Directors, says that Ms. Chichilnisky's case illustrates the continuing hurdles faced by female scholars, even after they've broken through the glass ceiling.