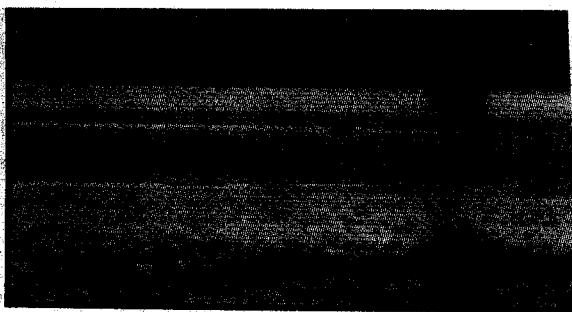


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The AP



Former banker files suit

by **REBECCA MULLINS**
Register Staff Writer

Former Richmond Bank Vice President Robert E. Puckett filed an age discrimination lawsuit against Richmond Bank today in Madison Circuit Court.

The suit also names Richmond Bank's parent company, United Bancorp of Kentucky Inc.

Puckett's attorney, Robert Abell of Lexington, claims in the suit that Richmond Bank has a history of discriminating against employees, customers, "would-be customers" and others.

Puckett, 46, was fired by Richmond Bank in June after nine

years of employment there for allegedly discussing possible money laundering through the bank with federal authorities.

"I was in an age group that didn't fit the image of the bank," Puckett said Wednesday. "A reason of equal importance with age discrimination was my cooperation with federal authorities concerning a particular customer's account in March 1994, but I think it's a host of reasons.

"I think they (Chief Executive Officer William E. Walters and the bank) found themselves in a very unique and advantageous

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LAWSUIT

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position (with me)," Puckett said.

According to previous comments made by Puckett and Richmond Bank employee John Landreth, who has sued the bank's Chief Executive Officer William E. Walters and bank security officer Bernie Reddy for defamation of character, it was bank policy to cooperate with federal authorities. Puckett only acted with Walters' go ahead, Puckett's lawsuit states.

Puckett says he was an arduous, exemplary employee of the bank during his nine years of service and always followed customary bank procedure.

The suit alleges, "During the course of Puckett's employment with defendants, Walters expressed on numerous and many occasions his preference for a young workforce, stated that some older employees did not fit (properly) the image he desired for Richmond Bank ..."

The lawsuit further states that Puckett and other employees were

asked to cooperate with bank officials in creating "pretextual," or false, reasons as justification to fire other employees.

The bank's attorney, Paul E. Sullivan, of Brown, Todd and Heyburn of Lexington says that Abell's and Puckett's claims against the bank and its officials are false.

"At no time has the bank engaged in any act to discriminate against its employees based upon their age and you have not provided any evidence or facts to substantiate such an allegation," Sullivan stated in a letter to Abell dated Aug. 26.

Sullivan's letter also states Puckett resigned from the bank.

However, a bank document, provided to The Register by Puckett, states he was terminated. The document is signed by Richmond Bank human resources Vice President Denise Cotton July 5.

His lawyer is asking for Puckett's reinstatement, back pay and benefits from Richmond Bank, both punitive and compensatory damages, court costs and anything else the court feels is owed.