

## **\$500 awarded in lawsuit against Pine Lake officer**

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**Pine Lake** Police Officer R.W. Elkins used excessive force when he responded to a 1988 dispute involving DeKalb County resident Vickie Lewis, a federal jury recently determined.

Mrs. Lewis was awarded \$500 in compensatory damages after asking the court to award her more than \$120,000 for lost wages, medical expenses, legal expenses, and punitive damages. She was displeased with the ruling.

"It is disappointing that they don't have a concept about black people," she said last week. "A picture can be painted that they are a violent and ignorant person, and that is what the jury sees."

Mrs. Lewis criticized the verdict and makeup of the jury, with seven white members and one black member. "[The jury ] did not even give Elkins a slap on the wrist," she said.

Frank Jenkins, attorney for Officer Elkins, said that they are also dissatisfied in the ruling, but that the award is a sign that the jury did not find any injury to Mrs. Lewis.

The July 31 civil ruling in U.S. District Court in Atlanta ended a lawsuit Mrs. Lewis filed against the **Pine Lake** officer, stemming from a dispute between Mrs. Lewis and Shannon Wread at a DeKalb County automated teller machine.

Officer Elkins, who was on duty in **Pine Lake** at the time, responded to a call he heard while monitoring DeKalb County's police radio frequency.

Mrs. Lewis alleged in the suit that Officer Elkins "maliciously and falsely" arrested her outside his jurisdiction, and that he physically harmed her.

In a separate criminal case, Mrs. Lewis was found not guilty on charges of simple battery against Mrs. Wread and not guilty of obstruction of a law enforcement officer.