

Betty Dukes

Hometown: Pittsburg, Calif.

Employed by Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., May 1994 – Present in Pittsburg, Calif.

Betty Dukes, a named plaintiff in *Dukes v. Wal-Mart* class action lawsuit, had 20 years experience in retail and a proven track record as an excellent employee when she joined the company in 1994. Within the first 30 days of employment, she knew she wanted to stay with the company and advance her career. Her Store Manager told her to complete her first 90 days of employment first. She did, received a \$0.25 pay raise – bringing her hourly pay to \$5.25, and never heard another word about how to advance her career.

Early on, Dukes, 61, and now employed as a Wal-Mart “greeter”, noticed that rarely were there any job postings nor did the store have an application process for career advancement. Dukes repeatedly asked her Store Manager for promotions or, failing that, more responsibility and assignments. She continued to be denied promotions and was unaware of any information about management training.

In 1998, Dukes began receiving retaliatory coaching after a manager claimed she returned late from breaks. “Male employees returned late from breaks and lunch, and even failed to clock out for their breaks, and were not disciplined. I am unaware of any male employee receiving a coaching for this infraction,” she said.

After a coaching session in August 1999 she was demoted from Customer Service Manager to cashier and her pay was decreased \$0.37 an hour. Furthermore, she was now ineligible for promotion for a year. “I was directed by my Store Manager and Assistant Manager to take my lunch break and return to work as a cashier,” she recalled. “I have never witnessed a similar public humiliation of any male employee.”

When Dukes was again eligible to apply for a promotion, she watched as positions were filled without having been posted — with most going to male employees. She has not been subject to discipline since 1999.

Dukes became aware of many male associates who were paid more than she was for the same job, despite her experience and seniority. In fact, after she joined the lawsuit, she found out that two men who had been hired long after she was—one had been hired less than a year earlier—were paid more as greeters than she was. In 2003, after nine years of employment at Wal-Mart, Dukes was earning just \$8.44 per hour.

On June 19, 2001, Betty Dukes and five other former and current female employees of Wal-Mart and Sam's Club, a subsidiary of Wal-Mart, filed a class action lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco called *Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.* Their lawsuit charges that Wal-Mart discriminates against its female employees in making promotions, job assignments, pay decisions and training, and retaliates against women who complain against such practices.

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