

Charline Rolley can keep \$26K for paid leave, Baltimore jury finds

By **BETH MOSZKOWICZ**

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The wife of former mayoral candidate Otis Rolley III does not have to repay the city \$26,000 she received for maternity or sick leave she took while she was working for the **Baltimore City Council** president, a jury concluded Thursday.

The Rolleys had argued that Charline Rolley reasonably relied on information from the City Council's human resources officers, who told her that she had the leave available. They also accused Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake of forcing City Council President Bernard C. "Jack" Young to make Charline Rolley take time off while her husband was running for mayor last year.

Both Rawlings-Blake and Young have denied that charge.

The city asked Charline Rolley to repay the money in August 2011 and sued her in January after she declined to do so.

The jury reached its verdict after a four-day trial in **Baltimore City Circuit Court** before Judge Edward

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CHARLINE ROLLEY

R.K. Hargadon.

Lester Davis, a spokesman for Young, referred all comments to City Solicitor George Nilson.

Nilson said his office "tried very hard to handle this case like we would any other case and not to elevate this case because Rolley was and is the spouse of someone who ran for mayor."

Charline Rolley said she was pleased with the jury's verdict.

"This has been going for such a long time, and I am just happy that it is

over," she said. "I am just relieved."

She said she had no doubt that the actions against her were politically motivated.

"They told me when I came back from maternity leave that the mayor wanted me out because of Otis running, and I was hurt," she said.

Otis Rolley, who was the city's planning director between 2003 and 2007, said the lawsuit has consumed "far too much of our time and effort."

Brooke Lierman, an attorney with **Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP** who represented Charline Rolley, agreed.

"The city spent a lot of time and resources trying to blame one of its most dedicated employees," she said.

In response, Nilson there was no cash out-of-pocket expense to the city in pursuing the lawsuit.

"At the end of the day she got a jury verdict, and more power to her," he said.

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