

Accuser in HP case claimed work was cut

18 August 2010, By JORDAN ROBERTSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- The woman whose sexual harassment allegations led to the ouster of former Hewlett-Packard Co. CEO Mark Hurd claimed her work with the company dried up because she rebuffed Hurd's advances, a person close to the investigation told The Associated Press.

The substance of the complaint that led to Hurd's resignation from the world's largest technology company had not been publicly known until late Tuesday.

Hurd denies making any advances on Jodie Fisher, who worked as a contractor for HP's marketing department from 2007 to 2009, according to this person, who requested anonymity because of not being authorized to discuss the case.

Fisher, 50, is an actress and businesswoman who helped HP organize networking events for customers and introduced executives to each other. She and Hurd would often dine together after the events.

HP determined that Hurd didn't violate the company's sexual harassment policies in his interactions with Fisher. But the company said it did find falsified expense reports connected to those meetings, and said those led to the board's unanimous decision to seek Hurd's resignation. Hurd says he didn't prepare his own expenses and that Fisher's name was not intentionally left off any reports.

He resigned August 6 and was given a severance package that could top \$40 million.

Fisher's lawyer, celebrity attorney Gloria Allred, declined to comment, as did an HP spokesman.

Fisher worked more than a dozen events in her two years with HP, the bulk of which occurred in her first year, according to the person with knowledge of the investigation. She was paid up to \$5,000 per event.

Her work dwindled in the second year because HP's marketing budget was cut and had nothing to do with her relationship with Hurd, the person said.

Hurd settled with Fisher for an undisclosed amount before his resignation.

HP had urged Hurd for weeks to settle the case, and Hurd eventually agreed because his lawyers convinced him it would be cheaper than taking the case to trial, according to the person close to the investigation.

Hurd had decided to step down a week before the resignation was announced because the board wanted to publicly disclose the harassment allegation based on advice from a public relations firm and lawyers, even though the company's investigation found the claims to be without merit, the person said.

Hurd claims he still doesn't have an accounting for all the expenses he is alleged to have falsified.

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