

# New website fordered by court for same-sex singles

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TRENTON, N.J. – Online dating service eHarmony said Wednesday it will launch a new Web site which caters to same-sex singles as part of a discrimination settlement with New Jersey's Civil Rights Division.

The settlement is the result of a complaint New Jersey resident Eric McKinley filed against the online matchmaker in 2005. McKinley, 46, said he was shocked when he tried to sign up for the dating site but couldn't get past the first screen because there was no option for men seeking men.

"It's very frustrating and it's very humiliating to think that other people can do it and I can't," he said. "And the only reason I can't is because I'm a gay man. That's very hurtful."

Neither the company nor its founder, Neil Clark Warren, acknowledged any liability. Under the settlement, eHarmony will pay New Jersey state division \$50,000 to cover administrative costs and will pay McKinley \$5,000.

McKinley called the settlement "fabulous" and said he was happy with the outcome. He's considering signing up for the new site once it launches.

Pasadena, Calif.-based eHarmony said it plans to launch its new service, called Compatible Partners, on March 31.

The site will be free for the first 10,000 users who register within a year of its launch. After that, pricing for the new site will be equal to that of eHarmony.

"With the launch of the Compatible Partners site, our policy is to welcome all single individuals who are genuinely seeking long-term relationships," said Antone Johnson, eHarmony's vice president of legal affairs.

Theodore B. Olson, an attorney for eHarmony, said that even though the company believed McKinley's complaint was "an unfair characterization of our business," it choose to settle because of the unpredictable nature of litigation.

"eHarmony looks forward to moving beyond this legal dispute, which has been a burden for the company, and continuing to advance its business model of serving individuals by helping them find successful, long-term relationships," Olson said.

The popular online matchmaker has been sued before for discrimination.

Last year, a Northern California woman sued the online dating service. She also alleged discrimination against gays, lesbians and bisexuals.

In 2005, a San Francisco man filed a similar complaint to McKinley's, but the state determined no discrimination laws were violated.

Another California man sued eHarmony in 2005 for refusing to help him find a date. The company said there was one good reason for that: He was still married. That case was dropped on the eve of trial.

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Beth DeFalco  
Associated Press Writer

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/print/20081120/eharmony-agrees-to-provide-same-sex-dating-service.htm>