

## Judge and lawyer sue newspaper

April 14, 2011 by Amy David



For the second time in two years, a local newspaper must again defend itself against charges of defamation.

Southside Voice Inc., the parent company of the Richmond Voice, lost a slander lawsuit in 2010. Now the company is being sued for defamation and libel by an attorney and the judge who worked that first case.

It all started when Southside Voice was sued for slander in summer 2009 over a letter to the editor it published about a Henrico County middle school teacher.

That teacher won his case and in March 2010 was awarded \$125,000 in total damages from both the Voice and the author of the article.

The Voice, a weekly newspaper that caters to an African American audience, was miffed by the court's findings. It wrote an editorial on the ruling a week later, defending its publishing of the piece and questioning how the case played out in court.

Now that article, too, has come back to bite the Voice.

On March 24, **Wayne Barry Montgomery**, the attorney who represented the slandered teacher, and **Melvin R. Hughes Jr.**, the Richmond Circuit Court judge who presided over the first suit, sued the Richmond Voice and its president Jack Green, alleging defamation and libel.

Montgomery and Hughes are seeking \$1 million in compensatory damages and \$350,000 in punitive damages. The suits were filed in late March in Chesterfield County Circuit Court.