

Detroit Free Press

www.freep.com

Posted: Dec. 16, 2010

Detroit lawyer: Ex-cop monitor stalling repayment

By JOE SWICKARD
Free Press Staff Writers

Sheryl Robinson Wood — ousted as Detroit's police reform monitor because of a secret affair with Kwame Kilpatrick — and her former employers can't hang onto \$10 million in fees by blaming each other or the former mayor, city attorneys argues in legal papers filed this morning federal court.

"They are doing what defendants usually do," said Thomas Murray, one of the city's outside lawyers seeking repayment of the fees. "They start pointing fingers at each other."

Murray and his partner Stephen King said Wood and her that employers — Kroll Inc. and the law firms of Saul Ewing LLP and Venable LLP — were happy to boast of their roles in overseeing the court-mandated police department reforms until the secret relationship was uncovered last year in Kilpatrick's text messages by the FBI.

"It's like the old saying, 'Victory has a hundred fathers but defeat is an orphan,'" King said.

The city wants repayment of \$10 million in fees paid while Wood was overseeing the reforms from 2003-2009, saying that Wood's role as an independent monitor was fatally tainted by the affair. Ending the affair after 16 months did not rehabilitate Wood, the city lawyers said.

"You shouldn't have to guess if your monitor is independent and unbiased," Murray said.

Wood and the companies said the work was up to par and the city shared some of the blame because, they argue, some of the harm was inflicted by Kilpatrick, the city's chief executive

The city lawyers said that Detroit is more than Kilpatrick or any mayor. The lawyers also say that the reforms were only 29 percent complete during Wood's tenure but have risen to 58 percent since Robert Warshaw took over.

U.S. District Judge Julian Abele Cook Jr. is overseeing the reforms that were triggered by a Free Press series exposing a high rate of fatal shootings by Detroit police coupled with often-cursory and questionable investigations. The newspaper also found widespread abuses in the homicide division including improper dragnet arrests and detention of witnesses.