

# \$21,000 paid in suit over kids sharing room

BY DAVID MCKAY  
Free Press Staff Writer

A mother who was denied an Ypsilanti Township apartment because her infant daughter would have shared a room with a 6-year-old brother has won \$21,000 from the would-be landlord.

Carmel Oliver had accused Cobble Creek Apartments of discrimination based on her gender and familial status in a lawsuit filed April 1 in U.S. District Court in Ann Arbor.

The money settles that suit, according to the Ann Arbor-based Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County, which represented Oliver.

"I feel relieved, and I'm happy that something has been done," said Oliver.

In a statement she said, "Women

shouldn't be afraid to take action against what they see as wrong."

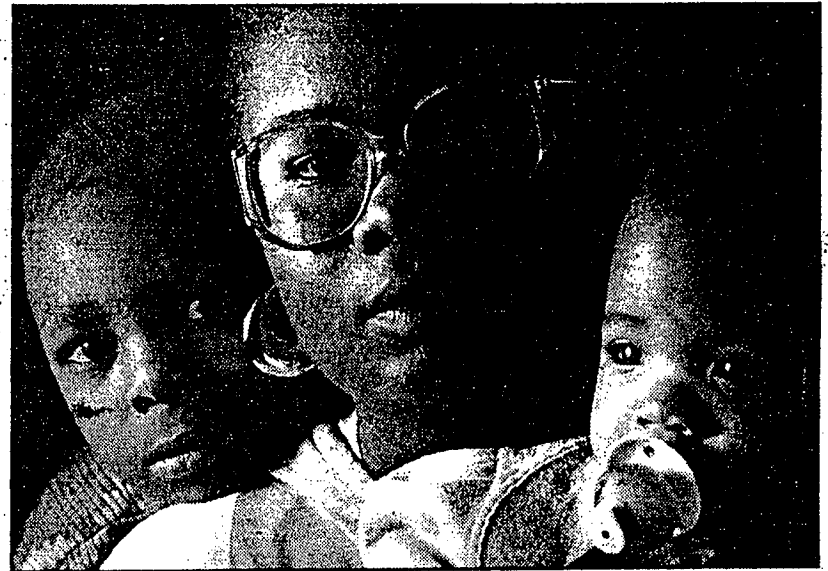
Douglas Hyman, attorney for the complex's owner, Scott Management, declined comment.

Oliver said the manager of the Steven Drive complex told her in January that her daughter, Carneisha Skinner, 8 months, could not share a bedroom with her brother, Joshua Young, because of a policy prohibiting children of different sexes from sharing a bedroom.

Manager Richard Lupu confirmed the bedroom rule when the suit was filed.

Lupu's office declined comment Wednesday.

The case was a first for the housing



File photo

**Carmel Oliver sued the owners of an Ypsilanti Township apartment complex after being told her daughter and son couldn't share a room.**

center, which previously was not aware such policies existed, said Pam Kisch, executive director of the private, nonprofit office that opened in February 1992.

She said that what complex managers quoted as a housing regulation violated the federal Fair Housing Act's protections on the basis of familial and gender status.