

New York Daily News - <http://www.nydailynews.com>**Eviction battle in East Village**

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The family of a Columbia University dean is evicting all the residents of a 15-apartment East Village tenement - to create a mansion for the dean's daughter.

Residents of 47 E. 3rd St. are fighting in state Supreme Court to stop Catherine Economakis and her husband Alistair from booting them out of rent-stabilized flats where many have lived for more than 25 years.

Economakis - who works for apartment-management firm Granite International Management - is the daughter of Kathryn Yatrakis, Columbia College dean of academic affairs.

"There are many issues here that are properly being handled within the legal system," said Yatrakis, who is not involved with the property.

The dean teaches an urban studies course that examines economic and social problems in cities. The building's residents will have economic problems of their own if they're forced to move out, one tenant said.

"These are very predatory landlords who look to evict people of modest means heartlessly, and don't seem to be concerned about people who can't afford market-rate apartments," said David Pultz, a technician for a film company.

He and other residents are working people - and a retiree - who make ends meet, thanks to stabilized rents of \$500 to \$1,000 per month.

Economakis said she's "sensitive" to the fact that she's displacing rent-stabilized tenants, and has tried unsuccessfully to set up meetings with them to offer help, such as moving expenses.

But "this is the only building we own - and we would like to live in it," she said.

She and her husband plan to turn the 104-year-old building into a five-bedroom, six-bathroom home for themselves and their child - with a gym, a two-story living room with a walkway overhanging it, and a bedroom suite for a nanny.

Several tenants said they think Economakis doesn't really intend to live on their gritty block - where a homeless shelter and the Manhattan headquarters of the Hells Angels are located - and is clearing the building of rent-stabilized tenants so she can resell it or turn it into condos or market-rate rentals.

Economakis and her husband insist they're serious about living on 3rd St. - and would take out a bond to prove it.

That's no consolation for Miriam Garcia, who shares an apartment there with her husband and two adult sons. One of them, she said, is mentally disabled and "worries now - he thinks we are going to be homeless."

"We're a working family trying to keep a roof over our heads," Garcia said. "How do they sleep at night?"