



Willowbend loses again in discrimination case

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MASHPEE — A woman who won nearly \$1 million in damages from a 2009 age discrimination suit against Willowbend Country Club is a winner again.

On Tuesday, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination awarded Virginia Dilorio, 65, of Florida \$314,000 in attorneys' fees and determined that in 2009 a hearing officer rightly found evidence of age discrimination.

"Her award was conservative, not an error or abuse of discretion," MCAD commissioners Julian Tynes, Sunila-Thomas George and Jamie Williamson wrote.

At the time, she was awarded \$922,000 in damages, emotional distress, interest, and back and front pay, the decision states.

Willowbend executives including David Wood, who was named in the original suit, had appealed to the state board to take another look at the case, triggering Tuesday's decision.

"We're very pleased," Dilorio's attorney Marc Redlich said Friday. "This confirms our belief that she was discriminated against and deserves compensation."

Dilorio has yet to receive any money from Willowbend because of the appeal, Redlich said, "but we hope they will now see that the case should be resolved and treat Mrs. Dilorio right."

Wood declined to comment Friday.

Dilorio was let go from her job in 2005. She had worked at the club since 1991 and became vice president of sales in 1995 or '96, Times archives state.

She filed an MCAD complaint in May 2006 for age discrimination and another in September 2006 alleging that the club retaliated against her and her husband by barring them from Willowbend.

Among other claims, in their appeal Willowbend executives contested the award amount and said the hearing officer's view of the situation was wrong.

But the commission determined there was enough evidence that Dilorio's age played a role in her job loss.

Further, "by communicating (her) banishment from Club property through her friends, Wood's actions caused embarrassment" and drove her to "permanently relocate to Florida," it states.

Redlich had requested \$486,000 in fees and \$12,000 in costs, according to MCAD's decision.

In January, after three years of ownership by a group of around 150 members, Willowbend was transferred back to Paul Fireman, a former chief executive officer for Reebok International, who originally purchased the exclusive country club in 1997.

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