

Good Luck and Good Fishin'

By Reg P. Wydeven
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I've never been known as a good angler. Even though I grew up on the Fox River, I never caught any fish. I saved my money and bought an awesome lure that looked like a frog, and I lost it in a tree on my very first cast. I've actually been accused of not even being able to catch a cold.

One year I bought an awesome rod and reel from a sporting goods store. Keeping with tradition, I didn't catch anything but weed bass. I mounted the weed bass above my fireplace, because even weeds are better than nothing. Perhaps I should have sued the sporting goods store to get my money back because I didn't catch any fish.

Well, that's kind of what Trina Thompson is doing.

Thompson graduated this spring from Monroe College of New York with a bachelor of business administration degree in information technology. Last month she filed suit against Monroe in Bronx Supreme Court because she was unable to lure any job offers.

In her complaint, Thompson alleges that Monroe's "Office of Career Advancement did not help me with a full-time job placement. I am also suing them because of the stress I have been going through." Thompson is seeking \$72,000: \$70,000 in reimbursement for her tuition and \$2,000 to compensate her for the stress from her three-month job search.

Thompson claims that she has done everything she can to set the hook for getting a job, including firing off cover letters and résumés to companies listed on Monroe's e-recruiting website. Only two employers had responded, however, and she has yet to land a job. Thompson insists that Monroe's job placement office is not pulling its weight.

Thompson alleges in her complaint that, "The office of career advancement information technology counselor did not make sure their Monroe e-recruiting clients call their graduates that recently finished college for an interview to get a job placement. They have not tried hard enough to help me." According to Thompson, the counselors are supposed to say, 'I got this student, her attendance is good, her GPA is all right -- can you interview this person?' They're not doing that."

To back her assertion that she would be a catch for any employer, Thompson cites her 2.7 grade point average and strong attendance record. She accuses Monroe's Office of Career Advancement of giving preferential treatment to students with excellent grades, claiming, "They favor more toward students that got a 4.0. They help them more out with the job placement."

Monroe countered by insisting that it offers job-search support to all its students, but job offers just aren't jumping in the boat. The college released a statement stating that "while it is clear that no college, especially in this economy, can guarantee employment, Monroe College remains committed to working with all its students, including Ms. Thompson, who graduated only three months ago, to prepare them for careers and to support them during their job search."

Thompson has not hired an attorney to represent her because she cannot afford one. She also filed a "poor person order" when she filed her complaint, which waives the filing fees associated with the lawsuit.

If Thompson wins her lawsuit and recovers her tuition, does she have to give her diploma back?