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### When telling means paying

*Basu Rekha*

*Staff*

Rekha Basu

Julie McElroy says that she was "shell-shocked . . . in a stupor" for a while after being subjected to what she describes as a month of relentless groping, come-ons and threats by her Iowa State University professor.

It happened during a field trip to Russia in 1995. "It finally got to the point where I was so immobilized, I couldn't do anything," says McElroy, who was 34 and working toward her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction. "I knew I couldn't go on if I didn't tell."

At first, telling seemed to have been a good thing. The department chair and dean were supportive. An investigator found Lynn Glass had engaged in sexual harassment and ordered him to take sensitivity training and be suspended for a year without pay.

Then other people took over the program. Glass appealed. He developed cancer -McElroy had also been diagnosed -and the university dropped the complaint, lifting the sanctions. McElroy says Glass flagrantly violated a no-contact order, taunting and stalking her, and the university retaliated against her, cutting her teaching contracts and pay in half.

She felt like a leper at school people believed she'd lied. "I was absolutely petrified to go to work." Eventually, in 1997 she quit.

Eight years after the trip, with Glass long dead and new people running the department, a Polk County jury decided McElroy was telling the truth. It has ordered ISU to pay her more than \$3 million. A jury in 1999 ruled against her, but the state Supreme Court found on appeal that the judge's instructions on what constitutes sexual harassment were flawed.

"I thought I'd have this huge sense of victory and relief, but I really haven't," said McElroy, who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. "Mostly I feel sad that it takes some huge award like that to make change happen."

Is \$3 million enough to make ISU start taking sexual harassment seriously?

The university has repeatedly paid to settle sexual-harassment suits when it could have invested at the front end by requiring staff to take prevention classes, and by promptly firing those responsible. Last year, the school embarrassed itself with its non-handling of a residence-hall mural depicting a date rape that women had complained of. It took their going public to get rid of it. In 1999, ISU paid \$200,000 to two women over accusations against former education professor Michael Simonson. In 1998, it paid \$50,000 to settle suits against current professor Neil Harl. In 1996, it paid \$157,700 to settle three women's sexual-harassment suits against research park director Leonard Goldman. Even with the charges pending, it had signed him to a lucrative five-year contract, later buying him out for \$200,000. An ISU vice president says about six people have been fired in the last five or six years for sexual harassment.

An ISU lawyer has said he'll press to appeal the Glass case.

Glass apparently began his mischief on the plane to Russia, plucking McElroy from the group to join him in first class. He ordered her champagne glass be kept filled, gave her perfume with a card saying he wanted to make it the "best month of your life" and signed "Love, Lynn," tried to hold her hand, put his hand on her thigh, caressed her face, kissed her forehead and described his boring sex life with his wife, McElroy claims.

In Russia, she says, he had booked them in the same hotel room and got angry when she insisted on moving her bed into the

suite's living room he'd enter and sit on her bed without permission. She began sleeping in her clothes.

"He would go in cycles between trying to seduce and flatter me . . . and when I wouldn't respond, break down crying. . . . or angry and yelling," she said, even telling her she could kiss her Ph.D. goodbye. "I couldn't demand to be sent home, so I just had to figure out what were the consequences of every action I took."

She says it shot her belief in herself -"that whatever comes along, I could handle." But the university's indifference was worse, and suing was a last resort.

Still, she wonders -with good reason -why ISU wouldn't just do the right thing on its own.

REKHA BASU can be reached at [rbasu@dmreg.com](mailto:rbasu@dmreg.com) or (515) 284-8584.

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