Ex-attendant sues for job back

A 38-year-old woman, fired as an attendant at Willowbrook State School, after she was found guilty of misconduct, in connection with the alleged beating of a patient, is trying to get back her job.

The woman, Doris J. Townes of 709 Henderson Ave., West Brighton, claims in a Supreme Court petition that she was cast in "the role of scrapegoat for the administrative blunders that have come to light at Willowbrook during the past few years."

Mrs. Townes obtained a court order directing Dr. Miodrag Ristic, the institution's director, to show cause Feb. 23 why an order shouldn't be entered setting aside the misconduct charge and her dismissal and reinstating her as an attendant.

Insisting on her innocence and saying that she always had d e d i c a t e d employe," Mrs. Townes charged that the finding was "arbitrary and capricious and not supported by substantial evidence.

Through her attorney, Daniel D. Leddy Jr., Mrs. Townes said, "The conduct of the hearing was so fundamentally unfair and so permeated with blatent errors of law as to deny (her) due process of law."

Mrs. Townes, an employe at Willowbrook for more than 10 years, was notified of her dismissal last Jan. 10, after a h e a r i n g officer, John J. O'Connor, found her guilty of misconduct, in connection with the beating of the patient Oct. 24 in Building 23.

The patient had bruises and key marks on her shoulders, back, thighs and abdomen. She also had scratch marks on her back and neck.

Mrs. Townes was formally charged with misconduct Nov. 14, and on Dec. 5 a hearing took place pursuant to Civil Service rules.

Mrs. Townes contended that O'Connor chose to overlook the testimony of two witnesses—one of them a supervisor—and "accept the testimony of a patient who functioned in the moderate to severely retarded range and who admittedly wanted to see her fired . . ."

Mrs. Townes was arrested on an assault charge, in connection with the alleged beating. Last Nov. 27, she was sentenced to a conditional discharge in Criminal Court.