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MAY 16, 2017

FORMER STUDENT SUES KENT SCHOOL FOR SEXUAL ABUSE IN LATE 1980'S

In the latest in a recent wave of revelations of sexual abuse at prestigious boarding northeastern boarding schools, today a student who attended Kent School filed a lawsuit against the school in Connecticut Superior Court. Kent School is a boarding school located in Litchfield County Connecticut. In her lawsuit, the former Kent School student alleges she was sexually abused by a married Kent School teacher, Clyde Douglas Fenner, when she was a boarding student from 1987-1990.

Although this is the first known filed case involving sexual abuse at Kent School, the case comes on the heels of a report issued in recent weeks by another prestigious Connecticut boarding school, Choate Rosemary Hall. The investigation found that Choate boarding students were subjected to decades of sexual abuse by Choate staff members. In recent weeks, other prestigious area boarding schools, including Emma Willard School and The Brearley School in New York, have also been confronted by reports of sexual abuse of students.

The Complaint is found at:

<http://civilinquiry.jud.ct.gov/CaseDetail/PublicCaseDetail.aspx?DocketNo=LLICV176015476S>

The Complaint against Kent School (alleges that Fenner, a married teacher in his late forties who taught in the Kent School French Department, used his authority and influence as a teacher to gain Ms. Briggs' trust and then exploited that trust to sexually abuse her. The sexual abuse took place from 1987 through 1988 and occurred at numerous locations on and around Kent's campus, including in Fenner's on-campus housing, in his car and in various off-campus locations in the town. The complaint also alleges at least one other teacher knew about the sexual abuse when it was occurring and failed to report that information to the appropriate authorities, which would be a violation of Connecticut's mandatory reporting law.

The plaintiff also alleges that after the sexual abuse was made known to the administration, she learned Fenner left the school to teach at another school in Evansville, Indiana. According to the complaint, after Fenner's departure, Kent School provided no support to the student, instead subjecting her to punishing criticism, verbal reprimands and hostile and cruel treatment from Kent staff and students who were made aware of the sexual misconduct. As a result of the sexual abuse and the treatment by Kent staff and students in the aftermath of the sexual abuse, the lawsuit claims, the plaintiff has been seriously psychologically and emotionally injured. The complaint contends the sexual abuse has significantly negatively impacted most parts of her life.

The plaintiff is represented by attorneys who have handled many high-profile child sexual abuse cases in and out of Connecticut, Paul Slager and Jennifer Goldstein of Silver Golub & Teitell in Stamford and Paul Mones of Los Angeles. Paul Slager represented the family of Yale graduate student Annie Le, who was sexually assaulted and murdered on campus in a Yale University laboratory. Mr. Slager and Jennifer Goldstein also obtained a \$12 million verdict in Waterbury on behalf of a man who was sexually abused as a child by his Connecticut Boy Scout troop leader. Paul Mones focuses his practice on representing victims of sexual abuse in youth serving institutions including private and public schools, sports organizations, the Boy Scouts of America, the Catholic Church and other similar organizations throughout the nation. Mr. Mones will be applying for pro hac vice admission in the case.

Paul Slager said, “We are honored to represent this brave woman who has stepped forward to place her faith in our justice system in order to right the wrongs that were done to her at the Kent School. She is relieved to come out of the shadows and eager to hold the school responsible for its actions.” Paul Mones said, “Our client hopes that by coming forward she will help give comfort and a voice to other boarding and private school students who have been sexually abused to let them know that they are not alone. “

Both attorneys believe this case – and recent revelations of sexual abuse at other boarding schools – is just the beginning. According to Mr. Mones, “The recent numerous news accounts suggest that the problem of sexual abuse at private boarding schools has been widespread.” Mr. Slager added “sadly, we expect there are many more people who suffered similar experiences.”

Mr. Mones and Mr. Slager encourage any witnesses or individuals including former Kent students to contact them with any knowledge Clyde Douglas Fenner or any of the allegations in the lawsuit.

CONTACT:

PAUL SLAGER, ESQ.: 203-325-4491 pslager@sgtlaw.com

PAUL MONES, ESQ.: 503-706-7318 pamon@comcast.net