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First Sexual Abuse Lawsuits Detailed Today Under Maryland’s New *Child Victims Act*
Justice-seeking survivors cite horrific serial abuse by priests and prep school teachers in separate filings

Baltimore, MD (September 29, 2023) – Two Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) schoolgirls were groomed to respectfully genuflect before Church figures, then they were repeatedly raped by the notorious predator-priest Father Anthony Joseph Maskell. In Gaithersburg, a serial predator priest in “treatment” for his pedophilia, forced a young parishioner to perform oral sex during a church picnic. And in Annapolis, at the private, “progressive” Key School, two teenage female students were deftly manipulated by male faculty members, then transformed into their personal sex slaves. Horrifically abused as children decades ago, tormented throughout their emotionally fractured lives, today these five courageous survivors will be among the first to file catastrophic injury lawsuits under Maryland’s new [Child Victims Act of 2023](#). Their signed complaints will be officially filed with the courts Sunday, October 1st, when the CVA becomes effective. Meantime, the plaintiffs, and their long delayed search for justice, were the focus of a joint press conference presented by attorneys from [Jenner Law](#), [Grant & Eisenhofer](#), and [Baird, Mandalas, Brockstedt & Federico](#).

Robert K. Jenner (Jenner Law), Steven J. Kelly (Grant & Eisenhofer), and Phil Federico, (BMB&F), and members of their team hailed the filings in the following statement: *“This is what courage, aimed at obtaining justice through the courts, looks like; it’s what state legislators intended when they fought hard, then passed the CVA, and the Governor signed it into law. True justice, not merely thoughts and prayers, is no longer elusive for these first filers and all those that follow; we are humbled and proud to represent them as they seek accountability – including restitution for their injuries and a life of pain and suffering - from those responsible for their devastating and destructive abuse.”*

The attorneys, along with Kurt Wolfgang, Executive Director of the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center (MCVRC), and advocates Gemma (‘The Keepers’) Hoskins, and David Lorenz of Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), acknowledged the historic significance of the present and future filings by the countless survivors finally allowed to seek redress from their perpetrators, and those that enabled their monstrous, sexual predation.

The first-to-file plaintiffs-survivors, their claims, and defendants - AOB and Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. - followed by Key School defendants, are summarized below:

- **Kimberly Mills-Bonham**, 62, was a 9-year-old student at the AOB’s Our Lady of Mt. Carmel parish school, Essex, Maryland, when she first encountered Fr. Maskell (at that time he was a school counselor at Archbishop Keough High School in Baltimore). Her mother was referred to Maskell to help Ms. Mills-Bonham work through anxiety caused by some domestic issues. Instead, it is alleged in the complaint (*Mills-Bonham v. Archdiocese of Baltimore, Baltimore City Circuit Court*) that during the years 1970-1972,

while under Maskell's pastoral "care" at Keough, the priest repeatedly raped Ms. Mills-Bonham, on school property, and on at least one occasion on the chapel altar, along with another man "in dark clothes". During these attacks, her parents were in another part of the building, being "counseled" by a Maskell colleague. It is also alleged that when she was 10-years-old, Maskell sent her to the notorious predator Dr. Christian Richter, who also had raped Ms. Mills-Bonham. At no time, it is alleged, did anyone in the AOB act to protect her, despite knowing Maskell was a sexual predator. Both he and Richter, neither of whom were ever criminally charged, are long deceased. The incidents recounted in the complaint are also explicitly presented in the [Maryland Attorney General's Report](#) on the AOB and sexual abuse. Her career has been devoted to early childhood education; she is a public school kindergarten teacher.

- **Eva Dittrich**, 68, is another victim of Maskell, and the systemic sexual abuse culture allowed and perpetuated by the AOB. Born and raised in Lansdowne, Baltimore County, her family belonged to the AOB's St. Clement Parish. In fact, the church rectory – Maskell's residence – was just around the corner, and as pastor he took more than a casual liking to the little girl, one of nine siblings. According to her complaint (*Dittrich v. Archdiocese of Baltimore, Baltimore City Circuit Court*), Maskell repeatedly raped Eva. He allegedly drugged and groomed the girl, as he had Ms. Mills-Bonham and countless others, starting when she was about 11 years old. He told her, including in the confessional, she was being "cleansed of her sins" when she was forced to sexually submit to him and others who wore the collar, on and off church grounds. She vividly recalls, as a pre-teen, being taken by Maskell for a boat ride where she was sexually abused by him and another man. All along, it is asserted that AOB officials and the leaders of St. Clement Parish knew Maskell was engaging in sexual abuse of children and did nothing to prevent or stop him.
- **David Schappelle**, 46, was only 9 in 1986 when, it is alleged in the complaint (*Schappelle v. Archdiocese of Washington, Circuit Court for Montgomery County*) he was sexually abused by serial predator Fr. Wayland Brown at his family's St. Rose of Lima Catholic parish picnic in Gaithersburg. Brown was assigned to St. Rose of Lima as a seminarian from 1973-1977 and later assigned to archdioceses in Georgia. Brown was, unbeknownst to parishioners, a serial pedophile from the Savannah, Georgia Archdiocese who was in Maryland while he received "treatment" for his predatory behavior at St. Luke's Institute, a rehabilitation site for pedophile priests in Silver Spring. Mr. Schappelle, a Maryland father of five, who until just a few years ago was unable to confront the months-long abuse he suffered as a child in Gaithersburg, could also never suppress the image of the perverse clergyman (who died in prison in 2019 following a conviction on abuse charges) showing him a handgun right before he violated the child (who he made consume his "sacramental semen", and forced him to perform oral sex on him and another pastor) inside an isolated house on the picnic grounds: "*He said he wanted to make sure I didn't tell anyone what happened,*" it is alleged. Mr. Schappelle joined Ms. Surrick and numerous other survivors who testified earlier this year in support of the new Child Victims Act of 2023. Like all of the other plaintiffs-survivors, he has suffered physical and emotional wounds since childhood. He works as a corporate HR manager.

- Valerie Bunker**, 64, a Maryland native so traumatized by her child abuse at the “progressive”, independent Key School (from 1973 through 1977) she left the state, and now resides elsewhere, was, according to her complaint (*Bunker v. Key School et al.*, *USDC, Northern District of Maryland*), groomed, incapacitated with drugs, alcohol, or both, and repeatedly sexually abused – including raped - by teachers Eric Dennard and Vaughn Keith (both deceased). “Predictably, Ms. Bunker suffered severe emotional trauma that has impacted nearly every aspect of her life in the ensuing decades. Dennard and Keith preyed upon Ms. Bunker and other young students as part of a wider pattern of serialized child abuse which was fostered, and even encouraged, by Key School administrators and officials,” asserts the complaint. The abusive culture was long well known as “commonplace” on campus, and then magnified in a 2018 *Washington Post* investigative article that sparked an institutional inquiry led by an area law firm. “The Kramon & Graham Report merely scratches the surface of the full extent of the horrors Ms. Bunker endured as a Key School student. For those horrors and the devastation they wrought, Ms. Bunker seeks long-delayed justice to the fullest extent of the law,” states her complaint.
- Carolyn Surrick**, 64, of Annapolis, was at Key School for most of the years Ms. Bunker was there. She asserts in her complaint (*Surrick v. Key School, Richard E. Sohmer, and Paul Stoneham, Anne Arundel County Circuit Court*) that while there she, too, was groomed, sexually abused, and repeatedly raped, specifically naming three predator-teachers during her 8th through 12th grade years (1972-1976), from ages 13 to 17. Her claims amplify her testimony before the Maryland legislature on the then proposed CVA about the horrors – including being impregnated by one of her perpetrator-teachers when she was 14, who then reluctantly agreed to share the costs of an abortion. Two of the three faculty perpetrators (Stoneham was also Head of Key’s Upper School) are named in the complaint; the third, Eric Dennard (also cited in Ms. Bunker’s complaint), identified as “ringleader” of the cult-like child sexual abusers, is dead. Ms. Surrick alleges the teachers, who were entrusted with her care and custody, instead sexually exploited her, plied her with alcohol and other drugs, and emotionally abused her. “The atrocities committed by the faculty and administration of the Key School Defendants stunted her emotional and intellectual development. It has only been with great resilience and persistence, and the assistance of intensive therapies, that Ms. Surrick has recovered sufficiently to build a fulfilling life for herself. But she lost many years, suffered lasting harm, and continues to suffer egregiously,” states the complaint. Ms. Surrick is an accomplished classical musician and writer; her *#Keytoo* social media posts significantly raised the visibility of the rape culture at Key Culture.

In addition to the attorneys noted above, the legal team includes Kathleen Kerner, Mary Beth Diaz, paralegal (Jenner Law); Beth Graham, Suzanne Sangree, Gordon Novod (G&E); Brent Ceryes, Wray Fitch and Catherine Cramer (BMB&F). The firms acknowledge the support and encouragement of clergy abuse survivor, Frank Schindler, who attended the press conference.

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First Child Sexual Abuse Survivors Filing Under New Maryland Child Victims Act

Effective October 1, 2023



Eva Dittrich, Kimberly Mills-Bonham, David Schappelle (left to right)



Valerie Bunker, Carolyn Surrick (left to right)

Childhood photos: courtesy of the survivors-plaintiffs