

2/16/2020

Daniel S. Connelly, Board President;  
P. David O'Halloran, Headmaster;  
Saint David's Alumni Council, and the  
Board of Trustees and Faculty  
Saint David's School  
12 East 89<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10128

Dear Saint David's Staff, Trustees, and fellow alumni,

I'm writing with a request.

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Saint David's community (including alumni like me) received an email stating that Saint David's had become aware of allegations of sexual abuse of students by a reportedly now-deceased Saint David's teacher about 50 years ago.

We were asked to contact the school's counsel, Ms. Sharon Nelles at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, if we wished to discuss faculty misconduct/sexual abuse while students at Saint David's.

I called Ms. Nelles, and subsequently Dr. O'Halloran, and gave them the name of a teacher who is in fact, **still alive**, and who had, according to recent and long-past conversations with my classmates, abused several of us. This teacher was familiar to Ms. Nelles, but came as a surprise to Dr. O'Halloran, and obviously is not the same teacher indicated in the December 11 letter because he is still alive.

His name is Rey Buono, a faculty member at Saint David's until 1973, when he left to teach drama at Milton Academy outside Boston, through 1987, after which he moved to Southeast Asia. Some current faculty will remember him.

Those of us in Saint David's Class of 1976 – my class – would have last seen Buono when we were in Fifth Grade, unless we – and many did – participated in Buono's Saint David's-sponsored bicycle trips in years following. Stories told to me about those bike trips are horrific; Buono reportedly always booked one too-few hotel rooms, for example, forcing a boy to share a room with him. One man told me recently how he had been woken in the middle of the night to find a "hairy mustache" planted on his lips and his body groped. Another told me he slept in his sleeping bag with a Swiss Army knife blade open to guard himself.

In 2016, a Milton alumnus, James Forbes, approached Milton to report that he had been sexually assaulted by Rey Buono back in the 1970s, on such a bike trip, and then later at school.

Milton went right to action. The school hired an investigation firm to look into Forbes's allegations, and enough evidence was uncovered (over *twelve other students* from the era of 1973 – 1987 also reported being sexually assaulted by Buono) that law enforcement authorities were notified and Buono was extradited from Thailand in 2018 to face three counts of child rape in Norfolk Superior Court in Dedham, Massachusetts.

The case was closely followed by the media (such as "Spotlight" reporters) and child victim advocates.

Buono was tried in 2018, but his case was dismissed in early 2019 because of issues around the statute of limitations in Massachusetts.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts appealed this dismissal to the Supreme Judicial Court, and is now awaiting the Court's decision, which could come at any time. In the meantime, Buono remains under house arrest in some undisclosed location in New England. If the Court upholds the dismissal, Buono will be freed and is likely to disappear into Southeast Asia again.

***However, if Buono were indicted in New York State, he could go to jail:*** because of the 2018 Child Victims Act, the statute of limitations on prosecuting perpetrators of child sexual abuse was extended. If he committed sexual abuse of classmates of mine or any other class in the years he was associated with Saint David's, as has been alleged to me and perhaps to Dr. O'Halloran, Mr. Connelly, and Ms. Nelles, then testimony taken from us could be used in evidence against him, in either civil or criminal litigation, and to potentially send him to prison.

Here is a photo of my 4<sup>th</sup> Grade class in 1973, with a young Mr. McClellan on the left. There are *at least four boys in that photo*, now men, who either recall being molested by Buono or who heard of his actions. The mother of one of those boys complained to the then-Headmaster David Hume, who apparently took no action. Four boys in that one class. There may be more who have not spoken to me yet; I am awaiting replies to inquiries. There are probably more in classes before and after mine.



As you may know, *three out of four abuse survivors do not report abuse when it happens*, out of fear of retribution or despair at being ignored.

Take a look at the Saint David's boys in this photo. Imagine the fear of being held down by a much larger man, sexually touched, and then the fear of talking about it. Imagine the frustration at being told – as many were, then and now – to keep quiet. For some of us older New York males who were kids back then, #metoo is very, very real.

But also: look at that crew and know that many of us went on to thrive, with some, in fact, working intimately with abuse survivor issues in a variety of capacities.

I am an abuse survivor myself. I work with abuse survivors almost every day in my role as a Zen Buddhist hospital chaplain. The effects of sexual child abuse can be long-lasting and devastating.

Dr. O'Halloran writes on the Saint David's website's "Headmaster Communication" that Saint David's students aspire to be "good men" through "... A commitment to ethical behavior and a thorough understanding of what responsible membership in a community means."

The school's mission statement includes "At Saint David's, boys are taught to develop strong moral values... Saint David's is a true community, known for its sense of family, compassion and kindness."

Saint David's certainly instilled those values in me. But values are only as good as the ethical behavior that accompanies them, as Dr. O'Halloran notes. Saint David's taught me to walk the talk, in other words.

Therefore, my request to Saint David's is that the school:

- Commit to ethical behavior, compassion and kindness by following Milton Academy's example in pursuing Rey Buono, and
- Hire an independent investigative firm, or connect with the firm used by Milton (T&M Protection Resources), to dig into the allegations of sexual abuse of Saint David's alumni by Rey Buono,
- Help to bring charges against Rey Buono in New York State courts by informing the appropriate New York and Massachusetts authorities, and
- Stand behind and honor any and all Saint David's alumni who are willing to come forward to testify against Rey Buono, with the ultimate goal of winning a conviction in New York.

I asked Dr. O'Halloran directly on January 27th if Saint David's planned to file a claim against Rey Buono, and he replied only that "The school is taking her [Ms. Sharon Nelles] advice on how to proceed." Earlier that week, Ms. Nelles mentioned to me that "The school is taking all appropriate steps."

How is the school proceeding? What appropriate steps are being taken?

What does Saint David's plan to do, or is already doing, for the alumni who were abused by this teacher? It is not clear if counsel is retained to protect the school from potential claims, or to work with the

school and alumni to pursue perpetrators (or to make claims against the other, deceased perpetrator's possible assets).

Therefore, I respectfully submit to you this request in hopes that Saint David's takes what to me is a truly appropriate step: get behind the men who were molested and go after Rey Buono. This course of action could only amplify respect for the school's reputation for academic excellence coupled with its emphasis on emotional, ethical intelligence.

Years ago, Saint David's unfortunately employed and protected a man who preyed on young boys; this is part of our lineage, and not something to be ignored or denied, but to be acknowledged and forgiven (my Catholic upbringing reminds me that Jesus forgives all sins, while he is also compassionately fierce and intolerant of injustice).

However, Saint David's has a moral obligation to make amends for the transgressions of the past, and to do so transparently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Huschle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Charles Huschle  
Saint David's Class of 1976  
Scholar and Athlete of the House