



Presentation High School Sexual Abuse Victim States Catholic School Paid to Silence Her

Presentation High School forced victim and her family to sign an illegal confidentiality agreement.

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, March 30, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Presentation High School sex abuse victim, Grace Leonis, is publicly coming forward to state Principal Mary Miller, Athletic Director Stacey Mallison, Swim Coach Marisa Cozort, and Counselor Rosemarie Healy all violated the law by failing to immediately report her abuser, a water polo coach, to the authorities after receiving multiple complaints about the coach's sexual misconduct. Additionally, Presentation illegally attempted to buy her silence about the sexual abuse by forcing her to sign a confidentiality agreement.

In an interview with [NBC Bay Area](#), Leonis says in the Fall of 2013, as a 13-year-old freshman, she was sexually groomed and then sexually abused by her Water Polo Coach, Jenna Roe. According to Leonis, "the sexual abuse would never have happened had Miller reported the grooming to the police as she was supposed to do."

An investigation conducted by retired San Jose Police Department Sergeant Michael Leininger revealed that at least three of her water polo teammates reported inappropriate "red flag" grooming behavior to Stacey Mallison, who in turn advised Mary Miller. Leonis' mother also raised concerns to Marisa Cozort and Rosemarie Healy. The four women did not report the suspicious sexual grooming behavior to law enforcement as required by the law. Instead, they worked to cover up the subsequent sexual abuse by bringing in a lawyer who worked to settle clergy sex abuse cases confidentially in the early 2000s. According Sgt. Leininger, who investigated sex crimes for over 25 years, "The failure to promptly report hampered the police investigation as it gave the perpetrator time to destroy critical evidence, jeopardizing a sexual abuse conviction."

According to attorney Robert Allard, "By demanding confidentiality in exchange for money, Presentation High School broke the law. California law prohibits parties from entering into confidentiality agreements involving potential sex crimes against children. These actions demonstrate the lengths Presentation will go to cover up childhood sexual abuse committed by its employees. It is clear the school was acutely concerned about its image and reputation, as the confidentiality agreement expressly states, 'the school will suffer irreparable harm' if the agreement is made public."

Even though the money would never be enough to pay for Leonis' future medical bills from the harm caused by the abuse, Leonis' parents and Grace agreed to the settlement after an intense 11-hour meeting with Mary Miller and her three attorneys. "They wore Grace down, re-traumatized her to the point of a breakdown, and then coerced them into signing the agreement," said attorney Robert Allard.

Leonis states she was terrified and self-conscious about the whole thing. "I didn't want anyone to know about the abuse, and I didn't want to talk about it at all. I thought everyone was going to think it was my fault, especially my friends and teachers at Presentation."

"Presentation High School's actions are no different than the silencing of Larry Nassar's victim,

gymnast McKayla Maroney. In both cases, deals were made to muzzle the victims and to keep the sexual abuse out of the public's eye," said Allard. "Presentation will do anything to silence victims, even going as far as to make silence a condition of mediation." An email sent to Allard from Presentation High School's new legal team on February 14, 2018 states, "My proposal is that we get a mediation scheduled as soon as possible with an agreement that key players on all sides will be in attendance and that there will be a cooling off period in the media in the interim by all sides."

Leonis says she is exposing her traumatic story in hopes that the Presentation High School Board of Directors will make permanent changes in leadership and policy to protect all students from sexual predators. [Make Pres Safe](#), a group of Presentation High School sex abuse survivors and their supporters, is supporting Leonis' efforts to make the school safe for all students.

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