

USA Swimming Sexual Abuse Victims Demand Organization Dismantle a Culture that Enables Coaches to Molest Young Swimmers

An Open Letter to USA Swimming CEO Tim Hinchey by attorney Robert Allard follows the filing last month of three lawsuits on behalf of six sexual abuse victims.

SAN JOSE, CA, USA, July 1, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sexual abuse victims, through their

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Attorney Robert Allard

attorney Robert Allard, have issued an [Open Letter](#) demanding that [USA Swimming](#) CEO Tim Hinchey immediately purge the organization of individuals who have either sexually abused or enabled the abuse of minor swimmers.

“There is no doubt that sexual abuse within USA Swimming can be classified as an epidemic,” Allard said. “For decades, the organization has chosen to treat the symptom instead of fixing the root cause that has led to the molestation of countless children. This needs to end - immediately.”

Swimming victims ask Hinchey to immediately remove eight individuals from the organization, including former Olympic coaches Mark Schubert, Murray Stephens and Paul Bergen. The list also includes John Leonard, the longtime head of the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA), an organization for swim coaches who frequently oppose any regulations on coaches.

According to the letter, Leonard has a long history of opposing meaningful solutions to protect children from abuse. In his role with ASCA, Leonard is accused of honoring Stephens with a spot in the ASCA Hall of Fame during a time that Stephens abruptly resigned from the North Baltimore Aquatic Club due to a sex abuse allegation made by a 14-year-old female swimmer. Since his resignation, USA Swimming has kept the circumstances of his departure confidential and has refused to ban him from the sport.

Hall of Fame coach Paul Bergen is also named in the letter. For the last several decades, Olympic gold medalist Deena Deardurff-Schmidt has accused Bergen of sexually abusing her for a large part of her youth. Despite these credible allegations, USA Swimming has refused to ban Bergen.

It has gone as far as allowing him to attach his name to an international swim meet in Oregon.

Mark Schubert recruited Kelley Currin to swim at the University of Texas in 1989. "When Currin confided to Schubert that she had been abused by her coach Rick Curl, Schubert's reaction was to dismiss her from the team after determining that she was a "distraction"," Allard said. Schubert was on the board of ASCA when that organization presented Curl with the "Coach of the Year" award in 1994.

In calling for the ban of former USA Swimming vice president Mary Jo Swalley, the letter states that Swalley did not intervene to protect an underage swimmer from former USA Swimming National Team Director Everett Uchiyama, then a club coach in Southern California, despite clear red flags.

The other three individuals named all have San Francisco Bay Area ties. They are enablers of serial sexual abuser Andy King, now serving a 40-year prison sentence for his crimes.

Millie Nygren served on the board of Pacific Swimming during the early 1980s when the board refused to renew King's contract due to his sexual misconduct. By failing to alert anyone outside of the board, King would continue to sexually abuse countless women over the next 25 years in California and Washington.

Longtime Pacific Swimming board members Clint Benton and Steve Morselli also had an opportunity to stop King before he molested again. Instead, despite being mandated reporters, both Benton and Morselli stayed silent. They willingly participated in covering up a sexual misconduct complaint.

"It is time to clean house immediately," Allard said. "It is clear to us that there remains a deeply embedded culture within the organization which condones the criminal sexual behavior of coaches towards its underage athletes. This culture is similar to that of the Catholic Church, where a long-standing unofficial code enabled rampant sexual abuse by punishing those who report and rewarding those who remain silent."

A copy of the full letter is available on the Corsiglia, McMahon & Allard [sex abuse website](#).

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