

# Just After Midnight, Landmark First Maryland Child Victims Act Complaints Filed

*"Bankrupt" Baltimore Archdiocese narrowly avoids sexual abuse survivors' lawsuits*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA, October 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- History in the fight for justice for Maryland child sexual abuse survivors was made shortly after midnight today with the

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*Survivors' Legal Team*

filing of three lawsuits under the state's new Child Victims Act (CVA) that went into effect at midnight. One of the catastrophic personal injury complaints was filed by a 46-year-old Ellicott City man against the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.; the other two were lodged by two women in their 60s – teenage students in the 1970s at the “progressive” Key School - and former teachers-predators. The lawsuits, seeking unspecified compensatory and punitive damages, were filed by attorneys from [Jenner Law, Grant & Eisenhofer](#), and Baird, Mandalas, Brockstedt &

Federico; the firms collectively represent survivors throughout the state who are eligible to file claims under the new CVA, that, unlike the prior law, has no age or time restrictions on the filing of claims by child sexual abuse victims.

Attorneys Robert K. Jenner (Jenner Law), Steven J. Kelly (Grant & Eisenhofer), and Phil Federico, (BMB&F), noted after the early-morning electronic filings that they had also prepared complaints against the Archdiocese of Baltimore (AOB) but, by law, those were derailed when the AOB yesterday filed for Federal Bankruptcy Court protection. “It is outrageous that the morally bankrupt Archdiocese of Baltimore at the eleventh hour shielded its assets and deprived survivors of the full measure of justice, including jury trials in state court. The church has opted for bankruptcy rather than acknowledging its historical legacy that includes enabling systemic child sexual abuse. On behalf of our courageous survivors-clients victimized by AOB predator-clergy, we are undeterred and continue to fight for justice, transparency, and accountability.”

The three first-to-file plaintiffs-survivors are:

David Schappelle, 46, of Ellicott City, a former Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. parishioner, (Schappelle v. Archdiocese of Washington, Circuit Court for Montgomery County, No.14089648, 12:05 a.m. ), it is alleged he was only 9 in 1986 when groomed then repeatedly sexually abused - threatened with a gun he vividly recalls - by serial predator Fr. Wayland Brown (who died in a

Georgia prison where he was serving time for criminal sexual abuse) at his family's St. Rose of Lima Catholic parish picnic in Gaithersburg. Like the other plaintiffs-survivors, Mr. Schappelle has suffered horrific physical and emotional wounds; it is only in recent years he has been able to confront the abuse and undergo intensive counseling. He is married and the father of five.

Valerie Bunker, 64, a Maryland native, Key School student from 1973-1977), now resides in the Pacific northwest, (Bunker v. Key School et al., USDC, Northern District of Maryland, No. 1:23-cv-02662, 12:05 a.m.). Her complaint details grooming, incapacitation with drugs, alcohol, or both, and repeated sexually abuse – including rape -- by teachers she and her classmates trusted.

"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.

Carolyn Surrick, 64, was at Key from 1972-1976, (Surrick v. Key School, Richard E. Sohmer, and Paul Stoneham, Anne Arundel County Circuit Court, No. 14084877, 12:06 a.m.). Ms. Surrick, like her classmate, was groomed, sexually abused, and repeatedly raped from ages 13 to 17. It is alleged that she was impregnated by one of her perpetrator-teachers when she was 14; one of them 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 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).

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