

Tyson & Mendes Saves Client \$90 Million in High-Profile Sexual Abuse Case

Tyson & Mendes announced today a major trial victory secured in Los Angeles in a high-profile, high-exposure matter for the Los Angeles Unified School District.



Tyson & Mendes, LLP

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, April 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Los

Angeles County jury has returned a verdict awarding \$6 million, with just 25% apportionment to Tyson & Mendes' client, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) in a high-profile sexual abuse trial where plaintiff's counsel asked for up to \$90.6 million and sought 90% liability against the district instead of the perpetrator. The result—just \$1.5 million against LAUSD—marks a

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significant defense victory for Tyson & Mendes Partners Harry Harrison and William Johnson, who tried the case before Judge Wendy Wilcox in Department W of the Van Nuys Courthouse.

The case centered on misconduct by William Paden, a long-time teacher at the nationally recognized Cleveland High School Humanities Magnet Program. The plaintiff, then a 17½-year-old senior, alleged a single incident of sexual intercourse in November 2006. Paden was criminally

charged and ultimately convicted of misdemeanor statutory rape in 2008, though he did not serve jail time, and his conviction was later expunged.

Plaintiff also alleged abuse by a second teacher, but the defense successfully bifurcated those claims as the court ruled the contact occurred after the plaintiff turned 18, and the claims were time barred. The defense team also secured favorable orders to key motions in limine, allowing the jury to remain focused on the facts and evidence presented.

Plaintiff rejected multiple pre-verdict settlement offers, including an \$8 million offer. In closing, plaintiff's counsel asked the jury for an award between \$54 million and \$90.6 million, with 90% of the fault allocated to LAUSD. Deploying a key strategy in the firm's proven method, the defense gave the jury a number, urging the jury to award \$2 million or less, and to place the majority of

liability on the actual perpetrator. The jury deliberated before returning a verdict of \$6 million, with 75% of the fault assigned to Paden and just 25% to LAUSD—exactly as the defense proposed.

Going in, the team was aware of the potential for this case to incite juror anger. “This was a high-stakes case with emotionally charged allegations, but we stayed grounded in the facts and trusted the jury to see through the noise,” said Harry Harrison.

“By giving a counter-anchor, clearly arguing apportionment, and holding to a consistent common-sense message, the jury followed reason,” said William Johnson. “We were clear, consistent, and strategic from the very start, and that clarity made all the difference in helping the jury deliver a fair and reasonable verdict.”

“This outcome was the result of careful preparation and smart strategy at every phase,” added Susan Oliver, who leads the firm’s Sexual Abuse and Molestation practice. “Securing bifurcation early allowed us to simplify the case for the jury and remove highly prejudicial elements, empowering them to deliberate based on common sense and reasonableness.”

The verdict delivers a strong message about shared responsibility in cases involving third-party criminal conduct and reflects Tyson & Mendes’ success in applying its signature trial strategies to some of the most complex and emotionally charged matters to avoid Nuclear Verdicts®.

The case was Doe v. Los Angeles Unified School District, et al., Case Number 22VECV01431.

For more information and to view career opportunities, visit www.tysonmendes.com.

About Tyson & Mendes LLP

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Serving 22 states nationwide, Tyson & Mendes is one of the fastest-growing civil defense firms in the U.S. and is proud to offer one of the fastest and clearest paths to partnership for its attorneys of any mid-sized law firm in the U.S. The firm is honored to be recognized as a 2024 Best Law Firm by Best Lawyers, named a 2024 Best Company to Work For: Law Firms edition by U.S. News & World Report, awarded the 2023 Liberty Mutual Insurance External Law Firm Partner of the Year Award, awarded the No. 1 “Ceiling Smasher” in Law360’s 2022 Glass Ceiling Report for female equity partnership, and shortlisted for Financial Times’ 2022 Innovative Lawyers North America Award.

For more information, visit www.tysonmendes.com.

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