

Contact: Gloria Allred
Phone: 323-653-6530
Email: gallred@amglaw.com

JANE DOE STATEMENT

I was 13 when I arrived at Thacher in the fall of 1982. I was an outgoing girl with good grades and was really looking forward to a life of horses, making new friends and escaping an unhappy and unsupportive home environment, which I now see likely made me a target.

Within weeks of my arrival, I garnered the special attention of the school's Headmaster. He would put his arms around me, hug me and call me his “special girl.” This unwanted attention quickly escalated with increased touching, and eventually leading to groping of my breasts and body. He also had a pattern of stalking me when I made my way from my dorm to the horse stables, which was very unsettling and frightening to me.

When I complained to faculty, I was told that he was just being “friendly” or “grandfatherly,” and not to worry about it, although they

would often pull him off of me when he touched me inappropriately or got too close in public. This sexual abuse occurred throughout most of my freshman year. My grades dropped precipitously, and I felt increasingly lost and alone, with no one to turn to.

A separate incident of molestation happened at the hands of a school nurse when I was kept at the Infirmary overnight against my will. When I complained to a female teacher about this incident, my concerns were similarly brushed aside.

I was asked not to return to Thacher after my sophomore year - I believe in large part because I objected to the sexual abuse. My life spun out of control pretty quickly. My home environment continued to deteriorate, and I dropped out of high school in my junior year and was essentially emancipated at 16.

For the next decade or so, I felt lost and without direction or any family support. My life became pretty chaotic, and I engaged in some risky behaviors and poor decision-making. It really took becoming a parent in my mid-20s that gave me the motivation to make something out of my life. I tried to put what happened at Thacher behind me and not think about it, but I realize now that it did have a profound impact on me and my life.

I came forward with my experience after reading the Munger report because so much of what was described there reflected my own experiences of being ignored and the school protecting the perpetrators.

I can't help thinking how my life and the lives of other victims might have been different had Thacher taken my complaints seriously, investigated and ultimately fired Bill Wyman back in 1983. A decade or more of abuse could have been prevented and countless victims could have been spared. As detailed in the Munger Report, this pattern of overlooking student complaints and signs of distress and protecting faculty abusers resulted in many, many children suffering extensive sexual abuse over decades.

Ultimately, Thacher failed in its most basic duty: to protect the well-being of its students and to provide a safe living and learning environment. Thacher failed me, it failed countless other students and our families.

I hope that by coming forward that my experience along with those of other victims can help bring about real change at this and

other similar institutions. First and foremost, schools need to listen to and believe children when they come forward. And they need to look and respond when children are showing signs of distress. Children are the ones who should be protected, not the sexual predators who are victimizing them.

Jane Doe

Represented by Attorneys Gloria Allred and Christina Cheung

October 12, 2022