

Guerry Glover
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September 30, 1997

Members of the Board of Trustees
Porter-Gaud School

Dear Board Member:

In a conversation with my attorney the other day, he relayed to me that your attorney, Bill Craver, said that he had met with the full board and that you thought our legal theory was "novel" and that you were not intimidated by me. Mr. Craver asked what I wanted. What I have wanted from the beginning was for someone to help me appropriately address this problem. I want to, with a clear conscience, know that I have done all that I can do and then move on with my life. I want you to work with me to address the painful and prevalent problem of childhood sexual abuse.

By this letter I am instructing my lawyers to stop all civil proceedings on my behalf I am releasing Porter-Gaud from all legal responsibility to compensate me in any way for the mistakes Porter-Gaud made. This is not about money. It is about protecting children in ways that for whatever reason were not available to protect me or my classmates.

Let me reiterate my personal history for you. I was registered at Porter-Gaud shortly after I was born. I am named after the Rev. Canon Edward B. Guerry, who worked tirelessly to build Porter, as he called it, into the institution that it is. Mrs. Snowden and Mrs. Wills were remarkable teachers who have had a long lasting positive impact on my life. As soon as girls were admitted into the high school, my parents made plans for my sister to join me at the school.

. My sister, as one of the first Porter-Gaud students who was also a varsity cheerleader, met Edward Fischer first in his capacity as athletic trainer for the varsity football team and after school started, as her ninth grade physical science teacher. He became a friend of our family. I was in the sixth grade. Almost immediately after we met, I began to be sexually abused by Mr. Fischer. He sodomized me, he performed oral sex on me and he had me perform oral sex on him. This occurred hundreds of times over the next several years; sometimes in his office in the Porter- Gaud library building, sometimes at my parents' house but mostly at his bedroom at home. He took polaroid pictures of me nude. He told me about other students he was molesting and showed me their nude photographs. I saw the abuse. When I was a young boy, he showed me the grocery bag full of photographs he kept in his attic, others he kept in his safe and inside books.

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For many years, I did not know what I could do to stop Mr. Fischer. Secrecy is the cement that enables this to continue, and I did not know how to say what was happening. The deep feelings of shame that go along with sexual abuse feed the secrecy. I was terrified of what people would think of me if they found out what was happening. I used drugs and alcohol as an anesthetic and developed a serious drug and alcohol problem.

I desperately wanted to leave Porter-Gaud, yet my parents, not knowing what was really happening and doing all they could do to provide the best educational opportunities available, wanted me to stay. I spent several years acting out until finally, in the spring of 1982. I was told that I had to leave the school immediately and could come back several weeks later to take my final exams. My parents were ashamed and disappointed and I left Porter-Gaud branded a discipline problem.. I made arrangements to attend College-Prep that fall.

In the spring of 1982, when I was no longer on campus, Mr. Fischer called me at my parents' home and told me that another student had told Major Alexander that Mr. Fischer was sexually abusing him. Porter-Gaud neither reported Mr. Fischer nor recorded that he had been accused of sexual abuse. My years of effort to leave Porter-Gaud would be to no avail. Mr. Fischer was allowed to finish out the school year and was given a letter of recommendation by Major Alexander, which Mr. Fischer showed me. I understand that your attorney makes various technical arguments that the school had no obligation to report that Mr. Fischer had been accused of sexual abuse. I would like to get beyond technicalities and focus on helping prevent a future similar tragedy. No one should ever have to feel the hopelessness that I felt after receiving Mr. Fischer's phone call.

Mr. **Guerry** visited me one morning on my father's farm after I had been expelled and told me that he, based on his long association with Porter, had asked Berkeley

Grimball if he would intercede and allow me to finish at Porter. This was after I knew Mr. Fischer would be following me to College Prep. Berkeley **Grimball** told Mr. **Guerry** no.

I graduated from College Prep in 1984. Because of Porter-Gaud's silence,, the entire time I was there I was entangled with Mr. Fischer. The sexual abuse continued. New students were added to, the list of victims.

Mr. Fischer is clearly a disturbed man. I am positive he needs help. I am not saying he was not kind to me during the years he was sexually abusing me. At times he was very kind, but his kindness came at a very steep price. One of the good things Mr. Fischer did was to help me address my substance abuse problem in the summer of 1984. He worked with my parents to have me admitted to a treatment center. I have been clean and sober since March 15, 1985.

Slowly, I began to climb out of the deep hole I found myself in. Mr. Fischer and I had no further contact with each other. I went to Porter-Gaud and had a talk with Major Alexander about what had really happened.

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At one point when I was at the College of Charleston, I saw Mr. Fischer driving on Folly Road with a young boy in his car. My -hopes that fie had "gotten over" his problem were dashed. I went to his house with the intent of confronting him. Mr. Fischer told me that I had ruined his life and that he would have been so much better off if he had gotten away from me much earlier. We ended up screaming at each other in the middle of Beaufain Street.

By my senior year in college, I was finally really able to enjoy school- so much so that I wanted to go to graduate school. I earned a Masters of Historic Preservation degree from the University of Georgia in 1994. I was afraid to come back to Charleston because of the many painful memories, however, I decided I was not going to let them prevent me from living in my hometown.

I returned to Charleston in the summer of 1994. I was still uncomfortable knowing that Mr. Fischer continued to teach and have access to children, and had never been reported or held accountable for his sexual abuse. I talked of this pain with my parents' minister, who also happened to be a member of the Porter-Gaud board of trustees. He spoke highly of Mr. **Bondurant**, the new headmaster, he offered to go with me to meet him, and he suggested that it would be appropriate if I put responsibility for action "on Mr. **Bondurant's** desk." I decided to make this man to man.

I gave Mr. **Bondurant** my history, then I asked him to think about it for a week. I knew it was a lot to absorb. He thought I had come to ask for a job. I wanted him to have a chance to think it through, check my information, and to discuss it with his board or anyone else he thought appropriate. I told him about my conversation with the other board member. I asked him to call me, which he did.

Mr. **Bondurant** told me he had spoken with Major Alexander and had confirmed the information of the student reporting Mr. Fischer in 1982. He told me it would be up to me, however, to report Mr. Fischer. Once again, I was facing a dead end. I knew I couldn't do all of this alone. I also knew I was at least the second student who had reported to Porter-Gaud Mr. Fischer's sexual abuse of students. I have reason to believe other students or their parents have also spoken.

For three more years after the 1994 meeting and conversation, I carried the problem of being the only one willing to talk about Mr. Fischer's sexual abuse. Finally one afternoon in May of this year, I had had enough. I went to Mr. **Bondurant's** office without an appointment. I told him I could no longer ignore this and that I had to have some closure. I asked him for his help. I could not continue to carry this burden alone and I was willing to do whatever was necessary. Mr. **Bondurant** suggested I take holy communion. He had to leave for another meeting so again I suggested we meet again in a week. He told me he was very busy so I walked over to his desk calendar and kept turning pages until I got to May **19th** which was blank. I asked him to meet with whomever he needed to and do whatever he needed to do before we met again.

On May 7 Mr. **Bondurant** sent me a note, which I still have, on his engraved note paper, which says, "I shall be unable to meet with you on May 19. I honestly have nothing else to add to the matters we have discussed."

You can imagine my dismay. It felt like a door was slammed in my face.

On May 9 Mr. **Bondurant** apparently changed his mind. He both called me and sent me another note indicating that he wanted to meet with me and a lawyer in his office. After receiving his first note, I was not willing to meet on his turf with only his lawyer present.

Prior to this ~~vju~~ miner, I have never had any business dealings with attorneys. This has all been new to me it is hard to convey to you how afraid I was when I went to the first attorney's office. Someone in the first office I went to told me no one in Charleston would touch this case. I was then referred to Gregg Meyers, who has been working for years to help adult survivors of abuse. After we had worked together for several months and I had become comfortable with him, he had a conversation with one of his law partners which resulted in him having to choose between removing himself from the case because of certain Porter-Gaud board members' business dealings with their firm or immediately leaving the firm. I had to get used to the idea that it was unethical for Gregg to work against Porter-Gaud and I had to start over with new attorneys from out of town, David Flowers of Greenville, SC and Denis **Ventriglia** of Wilmington, NC.

I really am more interested in us all being against sexual abuse than in me being against you. In the process of my having to learn about our legal system, the focus has gotten away from the major issue of preventing the sexual abuse of children. You give of your time to serve on the Board of Trustees at Porter-Gaud because you obviously care for children. You all are much better equipped to work within the legal system than I am. I believe that, working together, we can make a huge difference in how this issue is addressed from now on. If all of this could happen at Porter-Gaud with all of the good people there, think of how prevalent it must be. That has to change. Let's focus on that.

When I learned that Porter-Gaud's attorney said that the Board believes I am only interested in a big payment; that it will use all available technical defenses- of which there are many- to argue that the school had no obligation to help me or any other student who was being sexually abused by Mr. Fischer either at Porter-Gaud or at any school after he taught at Porter-Gaud; that as a non-profit in South Carolina it enjoyed charitable immunity, meaning the most it would have to pay would be \$250,000, I was at a loss. He asked what I really wanted. What I have wanted from the beginning was for someone to help me appropriately address this problem. I want to, with a clear conscience, know that I have done all that I can do and then move on with my life. I want you to work with me to address the painful and prevalent problem of childhood sexual abuse.

I do not want children to have to go through what I went through and am going through. I want the force of law to be on the side of the children so that when they are

able to deal with the harm that they have endured, their attorneys do not have to resort to "novel legal theory" to get around the legal obstacles set up to protect perpetrators and the institutions that protect them instead of the children. I am asking you, the Porter-Gaud Board of Trustees, to join with me to see what we can do to address these problems. I would like Porter-Gaud to have a policy that specifically calls for an independent investigation of allegations of sexual abuse.

This is too much for one person to do. This is certainly too much for a young child

to have to bear. The laws in South Carolina make it practically impossible for victims of sexual abuse to be helped. Help me change that. Let's turn this awful tragedy into the catalyst that pushes legislation through the South Carolina House and Senate that will be the most child-friendly legislation in the country. I can not believe you want anything less. I am proposing that the board join me in supporting legislation to (1) extend the statute of limitations for adult claims of childhood sexual abuse, and (2) expand the reporting requirements of childhood sexual abuse to require reporting of teachers who sexually abuse students. A similar bill made it partway through the state House in 1992 but was killed in the Senate. With your help, we could get that bill passed in 1998. I would also ask your help in working with me to make it easier for children to get out of abusive situations.

This was unbelievably difficult to deal with as an adolescent. The last six months have been almost as hard to go through as an adult. I have had nightmares on a regular basis. My family just celebrated my mother's 70th birthday. Watching my 75 year old father read a draft of this letter was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I know this will be hard on my family. I know this will be difficult on other families involved.

I know this has been a very difficult issue for the board to deal with. This letter has been long, but I wanted my position to be clear. My interest is not in intimidating the Porter-Gaud Board of Trustees over the past but in working on a better future. I want Mr. Fischer to be prosecuted , and to that end I have given a sworn statement to the solicitor and asked that the matter be reviewed. I will cooperate fully with the prosecutor. I know this will be incredibly painful for many people to face. Probably because of discreet communication from my lawyer at the beginning of this process, Mr. Fischer decided to retire from teaching at the end of last year. I do not do any of this lightly, but if it prevents one more person from having to go through the terrible pain of childhood sexual abuse then it is worth it.

Sincerely,

Guerry Glover

cc:
The office of the Solicitor

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The State

The Honorable Arthur **Ravenel, Jr.**

The Honorable Chip **Limehouse**

The Honorable Glenn McConnell

Mr. Gregg Meyers

Mr. David Flowers

Mr. Denis **Vintriglia**

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