

# HOTCHKISS



August 17, 2018

Dear members of the Hotchkiss community,

Over the past two years, you have heard from us on a number of occasions regarding the ongoing investigation into historical incidents of sexual abuse or inappropriate behavior by faculty, staff, or other adult members of the Hotchkiss community. Today, the independent investigator presented her findings to the Board of Trustees, and we write to share her findings and the full report of the independent investigation.

We have read the report with heavy hearts, as it describes multiple instances of Hotchkiss students being abused by teachers or staff members, primarily during the 1970s and 1980s.

To the survivors of abuse, we apologize from the bottom of our hearts. The School did not live up to its commitment to protect you. We apologize with humility -- understanding that words cannot measure our sadness and regret or erase the harm that you endured. You were terribly hurt, and we can only hope to make amends by caring for you now and doing everything within our power to ensure that students now and in the future will be cared for and safe.

We want everyone who participated in the independent investigation to know that we are extremely grateful to you. In particular, we are indebted to every survivor who made the courageous and difficult decision to share her or his story. Thanks to your bravery and strength, we are able to confront directly and openly the School's history so that we can reconcile with the past, support the healing of those who were harmed, and learn so as to assure the safety and well-being of current and future Hotchkiss students.

## **An Overview of the Investigator's Report**

In May 2016, the School initiated an investigation into incidents of sexual abuse of inappropriate behavior by adult members of the Hotchkiss community. We engaged a new investigator, Allison O'Neil, a partner at

Locke Lord LLP, in February of this year to build upon and complete the work that had been done to date. Locke Lord had complete authority and discretion in conducting the investigation, including determining the criteria for corroborating allegations of abuse as well as deciding which individuals to name in the report. Locke Lord had full access to Hotchkiss's records as well as current and former personnel to support the investigation. Interviews were conducted with over 150 individuals, including alumni and current and former faculty, staff, and trustees. The Locke Lord team reviewed approximately 200,000 pages of documents.

The report details instances involving seven former faculty members who sexually abused students between 1969 and 1992:

- **Leif Thorne-Thomsen:** Classics teacher from 1964 to 1992
- **Christopher Carlisle** (deceased): English teacher from 1963 to 1982
- **George "Rick" DelPrete:** Athletic director and history teacher from 1970 to 2004
- **Peter Gott, M.D.** (deceased): Medical director from 1972 to 2005
- **Albert Sly** (deceased): Choral director, organist and music teacher from 1950 to 1970 and 2008
- **Ronald Carlson:** English teacher from 1971 to 1981
- **Damon White:** English teacher from 1983 to 2012

The report discusses other incidents and allegations that did not meet the criteria that Locke Lord established for naming the alleged offender. The report also documents instances in which former administrators were made aware of possible sexual misconduct on the part of a faculty member and failed to comprehend or intervene. This was especially so with regard to reports about Leif Thorne-Thomsen, who served on the faculty from 1964 until he was terminated in 1992.

The complete report of the independent investigator can be accessed [here](#) and is also available on the School's [website](#).

Locke Lord's report is upsetting to read. We are deeply and truly sorry for the enduring pain suffered as a result of the behavior outlined in the report. We cannot say that enough, even though we know that words can bring only limited comfort to those who were harmed and cannot undo the impact of these actions on those individuals and on the Hotchkiss community.

### **Actions the School Has Taken in Response to the Investigator's Report**

The Board of Trustees has taken several actions in response to Locke Lord's report. Specifically, the School has made the appropriate reports to law enforcement and to any known subsequent employers. Where applicable, we are stripping the individuals identified above of any public recognition at Hotchkiss and are banning them from campus. We have also accepted the resignation of Arthur White, who served as the Headmaster from 1983 to

1989 and cooperated in the investigation, as a trustee emeritus. And we have removed the names of any former Heads of School who failed to act on reports of abuse from any prizes, scholarships, endowments and spaces on campus, including portraits which will be placed in the School's archives.

Should any other alumni wish to come forward with an additional report of abuse by an adult member of the Hotchkiss community, we have asked that Ms. O'Neil be available in the coming months to receive any such report. Ms. O'Neil can be reached by telephone at (800) 403-7138 or (617) 239-0729, or by email at [hotchkissinvestigation@lockelord.com](mailto:hotchkissinvestigation@lockelord.com).

### **Our Ongoing Commitment to Survivors**

The School will continue to provide financial assistance to alumni for current and/or past therapy costs relating to sexual misconduct during their time at the School through RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network). Specifically:

- *Current therapy costs:* Hotchkiss will reimburse current weekly therapy sessions of up to 90 minutes in length for any treatment that is recommended by a licensed, qualified mental health professional and is among RAINN's list of approved treatment modalities.
- *Past therapy costs:* Hotchkiss will reimburse up to \$10,000 of costs for previous therapy sessions of up to 90 minutes in length for any treatment that was recommended by a licensed, qualified mental health professional and that is among RAINN's list of approved treatment modalities.

To access financial assistance for current and/or past therapy costs, please contact RAINN directly at the Hotchkiss-specific hotline at (866) 827-4029. The number for alumni who live abroad is (860) 300-3389. More detailed information about therapy referrals and reimbursement is available on the School's [website](#). Please know that all inquiries and funding requests are anonymous to Hotchkiss.

RAINN also operates a national hotline at (800) 656-4673 or [www.online.rainn.org](http://www.online.rainn.org) that can be used to access immediate crisis intervention, information, and resources. The hotline can also provide alumni with a referral to a local counselor or therapist.

### **Hotchkiss Today: Prevention and Awareness**

Hotchkiss is committed to ensuring that its policies and procedures reflect evolving best practices. Over the past several years, the School has developed and put in place a comprehensive set of programs and procedures to protect students and promote their safety and well-being, including the following:

- We require training for faculty and staff members in maintaining proper boundaries with students and colleagues, assuming positive roles in and outside of the classroom, and recognizing and reporting improper behavior.
- We run background checks on all employees as well as all non-employee adults who reside in on-campus housing, and we require them to comply with boundary policies.
- We engage our students in ongoing discussions in the Human Development curriculum (required of all Preps and Lower Mids) and residential life programs about making good decisions and promoting healthy relationships.
- We ensure our students are fully aware of the School's support resources and work to create an environment where they feel comfortable reaching out for assistance and/or reporting any inappropriate behavior.

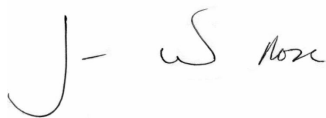
We review our practices regularly and conduct periodic third-party audits to ensure that we are employing current best practices. Most recently, we engaged RAINN to undertake a comprehensive review of our sexual misconduct education and response mechanisms, including existing policies, protocols, and trainings. At the end of this process, RAINN will provide Hotchkiss with an assessment of its current programs and a set of concrete recommendations to ensure that the School meets or exceeds current best practices.

More information about Hotchkiss's safety and support protocols can be found on the School's [website](#), in the Code of Ethical Conduct, and in the Community Regulations section of the [Almanac](#).

## **Conclusion**

We again express our gratitude to everyone who participated in the investigation and our deepest apologies to every survivor. We honor your strength in coming forward by confronting our past. And we pledge that your experiences will inform our ongoing efforts to build a safer, stronger and healthier community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J- W Rose". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Jean Weinberg Rose '80, P'18  
President, Board of Trustees

*Craig W. Bradley*

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Head of School

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