

## Healing Hotchkiss - Follow Up

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Dear Liz and Bob:

Thank you for your letter and for the time you gave us in August to have a candid and respectful conversation about these issues that are so important to all Hotchkiss Alumni. We appreciate you having reached out to us and your willingness to listen to our position on these issues that greatly impact our community.

We know that we speak for all the Healing Hotchkiss petition signatories when we restate our complete support for all the survivors of abuse at Hotchkiss. We, like you, feel for them and agree that steps should continue to be taken and should have been taken over many years to address the causes and the results of their mistreatment. We agree that those who committed sexual abuse should be banned from the school and fully punished. We do appreciate the Board's ongoing position in trying to balance all of the constituents and pressures connected to these difficult issues. We also appreciate your invitation to think together about how Healing Hotchkiss and those who signed our petition might best participate in your planning for the upcoming 50th anniversary of coeducation at Hotchkiss. As you know, two of us were part of that first class of coeducation, and have many wonderful memories of that monumental change in the School.

While we understand that you do not represent them, we would also like to add that we are willing and eager to meet with any HAFRAH representatives to explore how we might find further common ground which would hopefully bring some closure on this matter. We would hope the School would support such an effort to find compromise and healing for all.

With this goal in mind, we are resolute in our determination that Mr. Olsen and Mr. White, who remain pillars of our School and the primary drivers of coeducation at Hotchkiss, be reinstated to their prior status. It is easy to second guess decisions made almost fifty years ago. Making judgements today about situations in a timeframe where social norms were quite different can be misleading without a thorough and proper investigation of all the facts. The Locke Lord report did not recommend sanctions against Bill Olsen and Art White, and their behaviors did not satisfy the attorneys' naming criteria. And yet, it appears that the Board has held Mr. Olsen and Mr. White to a different standard than that applied to other mandatory reporters of the time. By the 2018 Hotchkiss Board's standards, many others including trustees, teachers, and subsequent headmasters, who were spared similar fates, "did not prioritize the safety of students" and perhaps should have been treated exactly as were Messrs. Olsen

and White. While opening that can of worms may have proven too distasteful, compared to only sanctioning one who is deceased and another in his 90's, were these other individuals not possibly just as culpable?

Many great schools like Hotchkiss have addressed similar issues without destroying the legacy of highly successful and respected school leaders. Undeniably, as we have discussed, your predecessor's messaging around the Locke Lord Report and the sanctions of the former School Heads made our predicament worse, and seemingly now beyond remediation. We would hope that over time the genuine healing which can only come with forgiveness might come to pass. We and the supporters of Bill Olsen and Art White certainly hope so and stand ready to help in any way.

In the meantime, we will just have to agree to disagree. Thank you again for all your time. We will let our fellow alumni know that you will be happy to hear from them directly should they want to further express their concerns.

Sincerely,

The Healing Hotchkiss Petition Committee

Michael Gillis '75

Ned Brokaw '74

Larry Ross '75

Penn Hulburd '74