

https://buffalonews.com/news/local/case-by-case-child-victims-act-filings-detail-heart-wrenching-stories-of-abuse/article_33aa3359-cefc-5167-b77b-2132187d64a9.html

Case by case: Child Victims Act filings detail heart-wrenching stories of abuse

By Aaron Besecker, Mary B. Pasciak, Matthew Spina, Dan Herbeck, Maki Becker, Mike McAndrew
Aug 14, 2019

Support this work for \$1 a month



By Aaron Besecker, Mary B. Pasciak, Matthew Spina, Dan Herbeck, Maki Becker, Mike McAndrew

Below are summaries of Child Victims Act lawsuits filed in five Western New York counties over old allegations of sexual abuse.

Catholic priests have been accused of molesting children in about three-quarters of the suits filed.

The Buffalo Diocese is a defendant in 135 of the 182 suits filed from Aug. 14 through Sept. 13. The Ken-Ton and Buffalo public school districts, the Boy Scouts of America, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, religious orders such as the Jesuits, and other organizations are also named as defendants.

A one-year "look-back" window opened at 12:01 a.m. Aug. 14 under a new state law that gives abuse victims a year to file claims that previously were prohibited from moving forward in court. Below is a look at some of the lawsuits filed.

The News does not identify sexual abuse victims without their consent. The News attempted to reach people accused of abuse.

This story will be updated regularly. Check back for updates.

...

Lawsuits accuse priests at 2 high schools of abuse

Two men filed lawsuits accusing priests of sexually abusing them at two Catholic high schools in the Buffalo area.

A Port St. Lucie, Fla., man alleged that the Rev. Clement Jarrot, a Franciscan priest, sexually assaulted him on five occasions when he was 14 and 15, in 1972 and 1973, at St. Francis High in Athol Springs, where he was a student. Jarot was director of admissions and a guidance counselor at the school.

This is the first time that Jarrot, who died in 2008, has been publicly linked to child sexual abuse.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

A South Boston, Mass., man alleged that the Rev. Michael Kolodziej, a Franciscan priest, molested him on 12 occasions when he was 17, in 1982 and 1983, at Cardinal O'Hara High School in Tonawanda, where he was a student and Kolodziej was a principal and teacher there.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

This is the second Child Victims Act lawsuit that names Kolodziej, who now resides in Chicago. Another former Cardinal O'Hara student accused Kolodziej of abuse in 1982 to 1983.

The Buffalo Diocese said in 2018 that Kolodziej had been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor.

...

Lawsuit names 3 priests as abusers

Four men accused three priests of molesting them as children in a Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and several of its parishes.

The lawsuit alleges that the Rev. John Lewandowski sexually abused a Jamestown man when he was 13 to 14 years old, from 1962 to 1963, in Jamestown at St. Peter and Paul Parish, which is now called Holy Apostles Parish.

Lewandowski died in 1982. The diocese said in 2018 that he had been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor.

An Angola man and a Tonawanda man both alleged they were sexually abused by the Rev. Fred Fingerle 10 years apart and at different churches. The lawsuit says Fingerle abused the Angola man when the victim was 8 to 12 years old, from 1967 to 1971, at Most Precious Blood Parish in Angola. Fingerle was accused of abusing the Tonawanda man when he was a 10 to 13 years old altar boy, from 1981 to 1984, at St. Mary of the Lake Parish in Hamburg.

Fingerle died in 2002. The diocese said in 2018 that he had been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor. Fingerle has been named as a child molester in four other Child Victims Act lawsuits.

The oldest allegation in the lawsuit was against the Rev. John Adriani. He was accused of molesting a Youngstown man when the victim was 11 years old in 1953 in Niagara Falls at St. Joseph Parish, now called Most Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Adriani has never been publicly accused of abuse before.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit accuses 2 priests, Fred Ingalls, Joseph Schuster

A Child Victims Act lawsuit accuses two priests, the Rev. Fred D. Ingalls and the late Rev. Joseph A. Schuster, of sexually abusing a Niagara Falls child for about three years in the late 1970s.

The lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese, Ingalls and Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Parish, says the priests abused the child, who was about 7 to 10 years old, from 1976 to 1979 at St. Joseph Parish.

The plaintiff, who is identified only as LG 24 Doe, is now about 50 years old.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Ingalls was **sentenced to three years in prison** in 2005 for viewing child pornography on his church rectory computer. He was arrested while serving as administrator at St. Joseph Church in Varysburg.

Schuster, who founded the Catholic Worker Center in Niagara Falls to help the homeless and poor, took a leave of absence from the priesthood in 1991. He later married a Niagara Falls man. He **died in 2007**.

In 2018, Mark Lynch of Youngstown publicly **accused Schuster of molesting him** in a Niagara Falls rectory when he was 13.

The diocese last year identified Ingalls and Schuster as priests credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor.

This is at least the second Child Victims Act lawsuit naming Ingalls as a child molester. Ingalls, who lives in Buffalo, could not be reached for comment.

...

Lawsuits publicly accuse priest of abuse in Buffalo for first time

A priest who was previously accused of molesting a child in Boston and barred from functioning as an active priest by his religious order was accused Monday for the first time of sexually abusing Buffalo children.

Two Child Victims Act lawsuits accused the Rev. Donald J. Joyce of abusing a two students at Bishop Fallon High School in the 1960s.

One plaintiff was 11 to 13 years old during the period of abuse, from 1964 to 1966, according to a suit. The other child was 15 to 18 years old at the time, from 1962 to 1965.

The lawsuits filed by attorney Steve Boyd and Jeff Anderson & Associates name as defendants the Buffalo Diocese, Bishop Fallon High School and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the religious order to which Joyce belonged.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Joyce also worked in Buffalo at Nardin Academy, a private school, from 1985 to 1987, according to **bishopaccountability.com**, a website that tracks allegations against priests.

The Buffalo Diocese has not publicly identified Joyce as a priest who has been credibly accused of abuse.

In 2011, Boston attorney Mitchell Garabedian released a list of priests who had been accused of sexually abusing children in the Boston Archdiocese. Joyce was on the list.

The Oblates told news organizations at the time that Joyce was barred from active ministry because of abuse allegations. Joyce was working during that period as director of library services at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. The Oblates said that a claim against Joyce over allegations in the Boston Archdiocese had been settled without an admission of wrongdoing.

...

The Rev. William Lanphear accused in lawsuit

The late Rev. William W. Lanphear was accused of sexually abusing a teenager in a Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese filed Sept. 23.

The lawsuit alleges Lanphear molested a child aged 14 to 18 years old from 1971 to 1974 in Buffalo at St. Bernard Parish, which was also named as a defendant.

Lanphear died in 2008.

The diocese has never publicly identified Lanphear as a priest who was credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor. Lanphear's name was on **a leaked diocese document** that a diocese review board in 2018 was investigating an allegation of misconduct against him. The document, leaked to WKBW-TV, included the names of 100 priests.

The diocese has said it will not identify dead priests accused of abusing a minor unless it receives more than one allegation against the priest.

Lanphear was ordained by the Buffalo Diocese but later became a priest in a religious order, the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

...

Man says 2 priests abused him

The Rev. Norbert Orsolits, whose admission in 2018 that he had molested probably dozens of boys sparked the Buffalo Diocese clergy abuse scandal, was sued Sept. 20 by a former altar boy who says Orsolits and another priest sexually abused him as a teen.

The Laguna Niguel, Calif., man alleged in his Child Victims Act lawsuit that Orsolits gave alcohol when he was 13 and molested him during an outing in 1967.

He was an altar boy at the time at St. John the Evangelist Church in Buffalo, one of the first parishes where Orsolits served.

The following year, when he was 14, the Rev. William F.J. White, who was also assigned to St. John the Evangelist, molested him on at least two occasions in the parish rectory, the lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit also names as defendants the diocese, St. John the Evangelist Church, and its legal successor St. Theresa Church.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Orsolits has been accused of molesting children in at least four other Child Victims Act lawsuits. White has been accused in at least one other case.

The diocese said in 2018 that Orsolits and White, who died in 2016, had both been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with minors.

...

Lawsuit: Victim threw up, passed out

Most of the Child Victims Act lawsuits filed in the Buffalo area contain scant details about the alleged acts of sexual abuse of children.

But one filed Sept. 20 against the Buffalo Diocese provided more details about the victim's experience.

The plaintiff, identified as HW2 Doe, alleged that the Rev. Donald W. Becker began having sexual contact with him in 1971 when he was 11 years old and Becker visited his family at a cottage in Long Beach, Ont.

On one occasion, Becker forced the boy to engage in a sex act until he was at the point of vomiting, the lawsuit said. On another, the lawsuit said the boy passed out from pain while Becker raped him at Becker's cabin in Java Center.

Becker was a priest assigned to Bonaventure Parish in West Seneca at the time.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Becker has been accused of abuse in at least two other Child Victims Act lawsuits and in at least five claims for compensation filed last year with the diocese.

Becker **denied molesting** any children when contacted last year by The Buffalo News.

In 2018, the Buffalo Diocese said Becker had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a child. A diocese spokesman said then that Becker was removed from ministry in 2003 because of the allegations.

...

Monsignor who advised U.S. presidents accused

Monsignor Joseph E. Schieder, who **advised Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy** on youth issues, was accused in a Child Victims Act lawsuit of sexually assaulting a child in the St. Andrew's Parish garage in Kenmore.

The child, who is not identified, was about 12 years old at the time, according to the lawsuit.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Schieder, who was director of the youth department for the National Catholic Welfare Conference and national director of the Catholic Youth Organization, was arguably Buffalo's most renowned Catholic priest in the 1950s and '60s. He died in 1996.

Last year the Buffalo Diocese said Schieder had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with children.

This is at least the second Child Victims Act lawsuit against the diocese that accuses Schieder of molesting a child. An Erie County man sued in August, alleging Schieder abused him on a weekly basis at St. Andrew's from November 1968 through June 1970.

• • •

Sex abuse alleged at church in Elma

The Rev. Robert W. Wood was accused of molesting a 15-year-old child in a Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and the Church of the Annunciation in Elma.

The lawsuit filed Sept. 18 accuses Wood of engaging in sex with the plaintiff in 1988.

The diocese said in 2018 that Wood had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Wood was removed as pastor of St. Joseph in Varysburg in 2003 after being accused of sexually abusing a minor. At the time, the priest said it involved an alleged incident from 16 years prior.

Wood, 72, could not be reached for comment.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Rev. Mark M. Friel sued over allegation from 1970s

A Plainfield, N.J., resident has accused the Rev. Mark M. Friel of sexually abusing him or her from 1971 to 1973 while Friel was assigned to Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Lackawanna.

The Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and Friel indicates the plaintiff was about 9 to 11 years old at the time.

The Buffalo Diocese said in 2018 that Friel had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Friel, 84, did not respond to a message seeking his comment.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Suit filed against priest from North Tonawanda

A priest whom the Buffalo Diocese determined this month was credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor was named as a defendant in a Child Victims Act lawsuit filed Sept. 17.

The Rev. Louis S. Dolinic was accused in the lawsuit of molesting a child who was about 9 or 10 years old in 1977 and 1978 at St. Joseph Church in North Tonawanda.

The plaintiff sued the priest, the diocese and Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, which merged with St. Joseph parish.

The diocese announced Sept. 6 that **its investigation had substantiated allegations** that Dolinic had sexually abused a minor and that the priest would remain on leave.

Dolinic, 78, who retired in 2010, could not be reached at the Depew residence for retired priests where he lives.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former Bishop Turner vice principal accused of abuse

A former vice principal at Bishop Turner High School in Buffalo was accused of molesting a male student in a Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and the Barnabites religious order.

The Rev. Paul A. Keeling of Youngstown, a Barnabite priest, sexually abused the student from 1983 to 1985 when the boy was 15 to 17 years old, the lawsuit alleges.

The school's vice principal and dean of discipline abused the boy while taking him on overnight trips and also provided him with alcohol and cigarettes, according to the lawsuit.

The plaintiff, who now lives in Genesee County, alleged that Bishop Turner officials violated state law by failing to report suspected child abuse.

In 2018, the Buffalo Diocese identified Keeling as a priest who had been credibly accused of abuse. Keeling could not be reached by The Buffalo News.

Bishop Turner, an all-boys school, merged in 1984 with an all-girls Catholic school to become Turner-Carroll High School, which closed in 2003.

In addition to the diocese, Keeling, Bishop Turner High, Turner-Carroll High and the Order of the Barnabite Fathers are named as defendants in the suit filed by attorney Daniel Chiacchia.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit accuses 2 priests of abusing teen

The Rev. Michael Freeman and the Rev. Bernard Mach sexually abused a teenaged boy at Sacred Heart Church in Niagara Falls for two years, beginning when he was 15, according to a Child Victims Act lawsuit filed Sept. 9.

The plaintiff, identified only as an Oregon resident born in 1964, alleged that Freeman began abusing him in 1980 when he was in ninth or 10th grade. After Freeman was abruptly transferred in 1981 from the parish, Mach was assigned as pastor there, the suit alleges. Mach sexually abused the boy in 1981 and 1982 when he was in 11th and 12th grades, according to the suit.

The lawsuit alleges the diocese knew or should have known Freeman was a danger to children, citing a Pennsylvania grand jury report that said Freeman admitted molesting children in five of his first six parish assignments, beginning in 1972.

It also accuses the diocese of covering up child sexual abuse by priests.

Mach and Freeman, who are both dead, have been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with minors, the diocese said in 2018.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

The case is the second Child Victims Act lawsuit filed that accuses Freeman of molesting children.

The Buffalo Diocese last year offered a \$650,000 settlement to James Bottlinger, who said Freeman aimed a gun at his head while molesting him as a child in the mid-1980s at St. Mary parish in Lancaster. That was the largest offer the diocese made as part of its voluntary compensation program for clergy abuse victims. But Bottlinger rejected the offer and filed a Child Victims Act lawsuit.

[Click here to read Bottlinger's lawsuit]

...

Longtime Dunkirk monsignor accused of abuse for 1st time

Monsignor Valerio A. Bernardo, who was the pastor at Holy Trinity in Dunkirk for about three decades, was accused in a Child Victims Act lawsuit of molesting a girl at the parish school for about four years, beginning when she was 5.

Bernardo, who died in 1979, had not previously been publicly accused of molesting a child.

The plaintiff alleged in her Sept. 9 lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and Holy Trinity that Bernardo sexually abused her on the school grounds from 1964 to about 1968.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

...

Lawsuit: Priest arranged for 3 boys to have sex with girl

A priest accused in two other lawsuits of sexual abuse has been named in a third Child Victims Act claim that alleges he arranged for three teenage boys to have sex with an older girl in a church rectory in 1975.

The lawsuit alleges that the Rev. Richard Judd arranged the sexual encounter Feb. 23, 1975, in the rectory of St. Teresa of the Infant Jesus Church in Niagara Falls when the plaintiff, who was one of the boys, was 15.

This lawsuit is unusual in that there are potential witnesses to the priest's alleged misconduct, said Michael Dowd, the plaintiff's attorney from New York City.

Most of the more than 115 Child Victims Act lawsuits filed in five Western New York counties involve alleged conduct where there are no witnesses beside the accused and the accuser.

Judd died in 1988. The Buffalo Diocese said last year that he had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with minors.

The latest lawsuit alleges Judd invited the plaintiff and two other boys to his apartment, sent his housekeeper home early, provided the boys with beer, and then invited a girl who appeared a few years older than the boys. The lawsuit alleges that Judd provided instructions and involved himself in the sexual conduct.

The plaintiff alleges he went to church a few days later to confess the sins. The only priest available to hear his confession was Judd, who ordered him to say three “Hail Marys” and one “Our Father” as his penance.

The plaintiff stopped going to church after that.

• • •

3 priests accused of molesting child

The Rev. James Smyka and two deceased priests, Aurelian Brzezniak and Patrick Mendola, are accused in a lawsuit of molesting an 8-year-old child in a shower at St. Francis High School while 15 to 20 other priests watched and laughed.

The diocese said in 2018 that Smyka had been credibly accused of sexually abusing a child, but this is the first time that Brzezniak and Mendola have been publicly accused.

The Buffalo Diocese, St. Francis High School, the Franciscan order that the priests belonged to and Smyka were named as defendants.

The lawsuit alleges that the three priests began molesting the plaintiff in 1977 when the plaintiff’s family dropped off a relative who was a teacher at St. Francis and the child’s family spent the night there. While the child was sleeping in a room separate from the parents, the three priests took him to a shower and molested him about 15 times in one night, the lawsuit says.

Smyka was **working in the Syracuse Diocese** last year as a hospital chaplain until shortly before the Buffalo Diocese said he was credibly accused.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Second lawsuit accuses the Rev. Gerald Jasinski, who was convicted in sex abuse case

A second lawsuit has been filed against the Rev. Gerald Jasinski, the only Buffalo Diocese priest in the past 50 years convicted of molesting a child in Western New York.

In 1978 and 1979, the Rev. Gerald Jasinski befriended a homeless 15-year-old boy and then molested him in his apartment at the rectories at St. James and St. Mary's On the Hill, the lawsuit alleges. The plaintiff, who lives in Darien Center, alleges that Jasinski would give him alcohol or threaten him before engaging in oral sex with him. Jasinski sexually assaulted the plaintiff and other children in a cabin in Wyoming County, it alleges.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

Another lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese alleges Jasinski had sexual contact with a boy who was 11 to 14 years old at the time. The plaintiff was an altar boy at St. John Gualbert when Jasinski abused him between 1972 and 1975, that suit says.

Jasinski was a priest at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Lancaster when Wyoming County sheriff's deputies arrested him June 7, 1986, on felony charges of first-degree sodomy and first-degree sexual abuse and a charge of unlawfully dealing with a child. He was accused of having sexual contact with two boys, ages 15 and 18, at a cabin in the Town of Sheldon.

Jasinski pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of attempted sexual abuse and was sentenced to five years' probation.

• • •

Abuse allegations detailed for first time against the Rev. John Doyle

The founding pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Orchard Park has been accused of sexually abusing two children.

The allegations against the Rev. John S. Doyle in the lawsuits are the first publicly detailed against Doyle.

He is accused of abusing a 10-year-old child in 1967. A second plaintiff accuses Doyle of abusing him from 1970 through 1972, beginning when he was about 7.

Doyle was highly regarded in the parish.

“Parishioners were stunned to hear about the death of their beloved pastor,” according to **the church’s website**. “Through all the years, he had shared in their joys and sorrows while establishing a faith community called “Fr. Doyle’s.”

Doyle died in 1977. The diocese has not identified him as a priest credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

...

Former priest Ronald Silverio accused of abuse

Ronald Silverio, a former priest who went on to run the region’s largest AIDS prevention organization, has been accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing a boy repeatedly from 1973 to 1982, starting when the boy was 9.

Last year, three brothers from South Buffalo **accused Silverio of abusing them** in the 1970s, when he was a priest at Holy Family Church in South Buffalo and at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Niagara Falls, when he was working at each of the two. All three filed for compensation through a diocesan program to compensate victims of clergy sexual abuse.

The diocese in 2018 identified Silverio as a priest who had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

Silverio served as a parish priest from 1970 until 1980, when he took a leave of absence. When he took a job as executive director of Planned Parenthood of Niagara County in 1981, Bishop Edward D. Head withdrew Silverio's priestly faculties. He later became executive director of AIDS Community Services, and then president and CEO of Evergreen Association, its successor organization.

In addition to the Buffalo Diocese, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and its successor Our Lady of Charity Parish are named as defendants.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

...

Third case against Monsignor James P. Hayes

A third lawsuit involving the late Monsignor James P. Hayes, a priest at All Saints Parish in Riverside, accuses him of sexually abusing a 13-year-old.

The plaintiff, who participated in youth and church activities, alleged that the abuse began in 1976 and continued for two years, the suit says.

Hayes died in 1988. The diocese said last year that Hayes was credibly accused of sexual misconduct with minors.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

...

Two suits filed against the Rev. Richard Keppeler

Two lawsuits filed against the Rev. Richard J. Keppeler allege he abused a child at Notre Dame High School in Batavia and a child at All Saints Church in Buffalo.

The plaintiff in the Notre Dame High School case was a 16-year-old student in 1972. The lawsuit names the Buffalo Diocese and Notre Dame as defendants.

The plaintiff in the other lawsuit was a 14-year-old parishioner at All Saints around 1957.

Last year, the diocese said Keppeler was credibly accused of molesting children. Keppeler also served at SS. Peter & Paul, South Boston, Mass.; St. Brendan's, Almond; Annunciation, Buffalo; St. Brigid, Bergen; and St. Michael, South Byron.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Two priests accused of molesting one teen

The Rev. Basil Ormsby and the Rev. Richard Judd are both accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing the same teenager at St. Teresa Church in South Buffalo in the mid-1970s.

The plaintiff, who is not identified, was a 13-year-old parishioner in 1975 when molested by Ormsby, the pastor, and Judd, the lawsuit alleges. Judd continued abusing the teen until 1978, according to the lawsuit. During part of that time, Judd was working at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin on Buffalo's West Side.

Nick D'Amico told the Niagara Gazette in 2002 that **Judd abused him** when he was a student at St. Teresa's Elementary School in 1975.

Ormsby died in 1997, and Judd died in 1988. Both were identified by the diocese last year as having been credibly accused of sexual abuse.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Abuse at St. John Kanty alleged

The Rev. James Bartnik is accused of engaging in sexual contact with a 12- or 13-year-old around 1977 at St. John Kanty Church in Buffalo, according to a lawsuit filed Wednesday against the Buffalo Diocese and the church.

• • •

The Rev. David Roche publicly named as abuser for 1st time

The Rev. David Roche, a former pastor at St. Agatha Church in Buffalo, was publicly called a child molester for the first time on Tuesday by a law firm.

Roche was named in a Child Victims Act lawsuit filed this week by Jeff Anderson & Associates, a Minnesota-based law firm.

The suit alleges that the plaintiff, whose family attended church at St. Agatha, was about 10 or 11 in 1973 and 1974 when Roche engaged in sexual contact with the plaintiff. Named as defendants in the suit are the diocese, St. Agatha and Our Lady of Charity Parish, which absorbed St. Agatha.

Roche, who died in 2004, has not been identified as a credibly accused abuser by the diocese.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Five people accuse the Rev. Joseph Friel of abuse

The Rev. Joseph Friel preyed on a series of children at two churches in the mid- to late 1960s, according to lawsuits filed Wednesday by five different people.

Friel abused a 13-year-old parishioner at Our Lady of Victory National Shrine in 1966, one plaintiff alleges.

The same year and into 1967, Friel abused a child who was about 12 at Fourteen Holy Helpers in Cheektowaga, according to another lawsuit.

A third plaintiff, **Chris Szufli**, alleges that Friel abused him at Fourteen Holy Helpers from 1967 to 1969, starting when he was 14. Szufli in 1994 unsuccessfully sued the diocese, seeking \$2 million in damages for the harm caused by Friel. He dropped his case after diocese attorneys argued that it violated the state's statute of limitations. Szufli, who lives in Melbourne, Fla., said he applied to the diocese's compensation program for clergy abuse victims and was offered \$140,000, which he turned down.

Friel was accused in another lawsuit of sexually abusing a 12-year-old parishioner in 1968 at Fourteen Holy Helpers.

In a fifth case against Friel, a plaintiff accused the priest of engaging in "unpermitted sexual contact" when the plaintiff was 16 and 17 in 1966 and 1967 and attending Fourteen Holy Helpers.

The lawsuits allege that the diocese knew or should have known that Friel was a danger to children before he sexually abused the plaintiffs.

Attorney Steve Boyd said this week that at least seven people he represents are planning to sue the diocese over Friel's abuses.

Friel died in 1995. In 2018 the Buffalo Diocese identified him as a priest who had been credibly accused of abusing minors.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Suit: Priest watched boys take showers at high school

The **Rev. Loren Nys**, a teacher at St. Mary's High School in Lancaster from 1969 to 1987, frequently watched boys shower at the school, a former student there alleges in a lawsuit.

The plaintiff, now 67, alleges that when he was a teenager, Nys, as a friend of his family, used to take him to watch airplanes take off from Buffalo airport and rub his own privates while they sat in his car. Later he started grabbing the boy's butt, the suit alleges.

The suit says the plaintiff's parents complained to the Buffalo Diocese about Nys' behavior but that the diocese did not remove Nys from the school.

Nys was a member of the Milwaukee-based Society of the Divine Savior, the Salvatorians. In 2014, **the order removed him as pastor** of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Green Bay, Wis., after the discovery of two letters from parents accusing him of “inappropriate conduct with youth.”

In 2018, another man, Robert Swierat, told The News that **Nys sexually abused him** in the 1970s while he was showering at St. Mary's and that Nys abused him on other occasions as well.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Priest who admitted abusing boys named in lawsuit

In 1993, the **Rev. John Aurelio admitted to law enforcement officers** that he and another priest had sodomized three adolescent boys 15 to 20 years earlier in an East Aurora house that the two men shared.

Aurelio was not charged with crimes, as the alleged abuses occurred beyond New York's statute of limitations.

This week, Aurelio was accused in a Child Victims Act lawsuit of sexually abusing a child who was 9 or 10 in 1980 at St. Catherine of Siena in West Seneca.

Aurelio, a spiritual director at Christ the King Seminary and chaplain at the state's West Seneca Developmental Center for people with developmental disabilities for 17 years, also celebrated weekend Mass at the West Seneca church. Once a month, for decades, he delivered a Mass for children there that became known as **Story Sunday**.

He stopped functioning as a priest in 2002 and died in 2009. Last year, the diocese identified Aurelio as having been credibly accused of sexually abusing a minor.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit: The Rev. Leo F. Reddy accused

The Rev. Leo F. Reddy was accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing a child who was about 12 in 1960. At the time, he was working at St. Patrick's Church in Lockport, which has since been absorbed into All Saints Church. Reddy is deceased.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former St. Francis High principal accused of abuse

A priest who was a teacher and high school principal in Western New York has been accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing a student at Cardinal O'Hara High School in the early 1980s.

The Rev. Michael Kolodziej, a Conventual Franciscan friar **removed from active ministry in Baltimore** in 2013, abused the plaintiff, who was about 15 to 16, from about 1982 to 1983, according to the lawsuit. The suit names the Buffalo Diocese, the Conventual Franciscans and Cardinal O'Hara as defendants.

Kolodziej, 75, who was ordained as a Buffalo Diocese priest in 1970 before joining the Franciscan Order in 1974, was a teacher at Bishop Turner in Buffalo, vice principal at St. Francis High School in Athol Springs and later principal at Cardinal O'Hara in the Town of Tonawanda.

In 2013, the Baltimore Archdiocese and Order of Friars Minor Conventual announced Kolodziej was suspended from public ministry following allegations that he abused a boy at a high school there from 1975 to 1979.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former diocese youth director accused

A former director of the Buffalo Diocesan Youth Department is accused of molesting a teenager in a Child Victims Act lawsuit against the Diocese and St. Gregory the Great Church in Williamsville.

The Rev. Gary J. Bagley, who died in 2006, was publicly accused of abusing a child for the first time in the suit filed by attorney Steve Boyd and the Jeff Anderson Firm.

The suit alleges that from 1979 to 1981, Bagley "engaged in unpermitted sexual contact" with a St. Gregory the Great parishioner who was about 16 or 17 at the time.

According to an obituary published in the Amherst Bee, Bagley was a chaplain at Vincent de Paul camp in 1972; assistant at St. Christopher Church in Tonawanda from 1972 to 1976; worked at Bishop Turner High School in 1976; and was chaplain at Franciscan Missionary Sisters (1979-2001), Immaculata Academy (1999-2000) and Sacred Heart Academy (1977-2006).

The Bee said he was Diocesan coordinator of youth retreats from 1986 to 2001; associated director of the Diocesan Youth Department (1976-86) and director of the Diocesan Youth Department (1986-2001).

From 2001, he served as pastor at St. Benedict Church.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former Buffalo Public Schools teacher accused

A Buffalo Public Schools science teacher was accused of sexually abusing a student in the only Child Victims Act filed so far against the district.

A Hamburg man alleges he was abused as a teenager by teacher Robert Sewast from 1980 to 1982, according to the suit.

Sewast was accused of abusing the plaintiff about five times a week for about two years when the boy was 14 and 15. The court papers do not identify the school where the abuse allegedly occurred.

Sewast forcibly touched the teen and exposed himself to him, according to the lawsuit. The teenager was alone with Sewast during study hall, class, tutoring, after-school activities and summer school, according to the lawsuit filed by attorney Frank M. Bogulski.

The district has not yet been served with the lawsuit and has not been able to review the allegations, Buffalo Public Schools general counsel Nathaniel J. Kuzma said. Kuzma said he could not confirm if Sewast was employed by the district. Sewast could not be reached by The Buffalo News.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Episcopal priest in California named in suit

An Episcopal priest in California who formerly served as a Catholic priest in the Buffalo Diocese was accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing a 16-year-old parishioner of St. Amelia Church in the Town of Tonawanda starting in 1971.

The Rev. Paul J. Kowalewski, now 71, currently is listed as part of the assisting clergy in the Church of St. Paul in the Desert, a parish in Palm Springs in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego. He has been an Episcopal priest since 1990.

The lawsuit said the abuse continued until 1973. The victim's attorney, Steve Boyd, said the victim alleged Kowalewski sexually abused her at Beaver Island State Park, at a cottage in Canada and in his car.

Minnesota law firm Jeff Anderson & Associates **filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles** in July against the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, alleging that the diocese allowed Kowalewski to stay in active ministry despite being aware of accusations against him.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Deceased priest accused of abuse for 1st time

The Rev. John Kempczynski, who died in 2009, was publicly accused for the first time of sexually abusing a child in a Child Victims Act lawsuit.

The suit alleges Kempczynski molested a child who was about 6 years old in 1971, for about a year, while serving as the pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Forestville.

Kempczynski later became pastor of St. Joseph in North Tonawanda. He retired in 1995, then served as a senior priest at St. Timothy Parish in the Town of Tonawanda.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former St. Francis High principal accused of molesting student

A former student at St. Francis High School in Athol Springs alleges in a lawsuit he was molested over several years in the 1960s by the school's principal, the late Rev. Marion M. Tolczyk.

The former student, now living in Wayne County, Mich., says he was 16 when the abuse began and that it continued until he graduated in 1969.

Tolczyk, who also had been a pastor at St. Stanislaus, died in 2013 at age 86. The diocese has not identified him as credibly accused of molesting a child.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Allegations made for 1st time against monsignor

A monsignor who was the pastor of Holy Cross Church for more than 50 years and died in 1975 was publicly accused for the first time of being a child molester in a lawsuit filed Thursday.

The lawsuit alleges **Monsignor Joseph Gambino** sexually abused a 5-year-old student from 1948 to 1949. The Buffalo Diocese has not identified Gambino as a priest credibly accused of child sex abuse.

The suit against the Buffalo Diocese, Holy Cross Church and Holy Cross School identifies the plaintiff as an Erie County resident born in 1943. He was allegedly brought to Gambino one day by a nun "presumably for disciplinary reasons," the suit says. The lawsuit alleges that when the boy was alone with Gambino, the monsignor abused him in the rectory, sacristy and other secluded areas in the church and school.

Gambino "admonished" the plaintiff not to tell anyone about the abuse, saying it would be a "sin," and said his grades and records could be affected if he did, the suit said.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Man whose allegations launched scandal files lawsuit

The man whose **public accusations** against the Rev. Norbert Orsolits in February 2018 helped start a flood of clergy abuse allegations in the Buffalo area filed a lawsuit Wednesday against the diocese and St. John Vianney Church in Orchard Park.

Michael F. Whalen Jr. accused Orsolits of “unpermitted sexual contact” in 1979 or 1980, when Whalen was about 14.

Orsolits admitted to a News reporter that he had **abused “probably dozens” of teenage boys** in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Priest who advised U.S. presidents accused of abuse

A Buffalo priest who **advised U.S. presidents on youth issues** has been accused of molesting a boy in his rectory office at a Town of Tonawanda church and school 50 years ago, according to a lawsuit.

An Erie County man is accusing Monsignor Joseph E. Schieder of abusing him at St. Andrew’s Parish on a weekly basis while school was in session from November 1968 through June 1970, according to the suit filed against the diocese, the parish and St. Andrew's Country Day School.

Schieder used to have the boy regularly called to his office for a “checkup,” according to the suit. Schieder died in 1996. The diocese said in 2018 that he had been credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Jewish temple named as defendant in suit

An Angola woman alleges that she was molested “once a week” for nine months by a tutor while taking Hebrew lessons at Temple Beth Zion in Buffalo.

The woman's lawsuit said she was 12 when the alleged abuse began in 1970. Her attorney, Frank M. Bogulski, identified tutor Martin Rothchild as the alleged abuser who “forcibly touched” the child and “exposed himself” to her.

Jeff Clark, executive director of the temple, told The Buffalo News that temple officials take the allegation “very, very seriously” and are going through old records in an effort to determine what happened.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

The Rev. Joseph Rappl accused in lawsuit

When he was working at St. Peter Roman Catholic Church in Lewiston, the Rev. Joseph Rappl began sexually abusing a 12-year-old child in 1978, according to a lawsuit. The abuse continued for two years.

This is not the first time Rappl has been publicly accused of sexually abusing a child. A man **told diocesan officials last year** that Rappl had abused him at the Lewiston church in 1981, when he was 11. Attorney Mitchell Garabedian told The News that he has another client who accused Rappl of abuse and who received compensation from the diocese.

The diocese said in November that Rappl had been credibly accused of abusing children.

Rappl, who resigned from the priesthood in 1999, lives in North Carolina.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Suit: Priest abused boy sent to him for counseling

A Cheektowaga man said that he was 8 when he was sent to counseling with the Rev. David M. Bialkowski at St. John Gualbert Church in Cheektowaga. Over the course of next eight months, Bialkowski forcibly touched him and exposed himself to the boy, according to a lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese, St. John Gualbert and Kolbe Catholic School in Cheektowaga.

The alleged abuse took place between 1999 and 2000.

In 2011, a **former altar server accused Bialkowski** of inappropriate touching. Two more accusers came forward shortly after that, and Bialkowski was put on leave from St. John Gualbert and ordered not to perform any priestly duties.

Buffalo Bishop Richard J. Malone said in 2018 that Bialkowski was credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Convicted priest accused

The only Buffalo Diocese priest in the past 50 years convicted of molesting a child in Western New York is named in a Child Victims Act lawsuit that accuses him of abusing a different child a decade before his arrest.

The Rev. Gerald Jasinski engaged in "unpermitted sexual contact" with an altar boy in the 1970s while he was a priest at St. John Gualbert Church in Cheektowaga, according to the lawsuit.

Jasinski was a priest at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Lancaster when Wyoming County sheriff's deputies arrested him June 7, 1986, on felony charges of first-degree sodomy and first-degree sexual abuse and a charge of unlawfully dealing with a child. He was accused of having sexual contact with two boys, ages 15 and 18, at a cabin in the Town of Sheldon.

Jasinski pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of attempted sexual abuse and was sentenced to five years' probation.

The lawsuit alleges Jasinski had sexual contact with a boy who was 11 to 14 years old at the time. The plaintiff was an altar boy, parishioner and religious education student at St. John Gualbert when Jasinski abused him between 1972 and 1975, the suit says.

The diocese said in March 2018 that Jasinski had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Monsignor Basil Ormsby accused

A person in his or her 70s alleges being sexually abused by Monsignor Basil Ormsby from 1950 to 1953.

The plaintiff, whose gender is not specified, was between the ages of 9 and 12 and a member of a family active at Our Lady Help of Christians in Cheektowaga, the lawsuit says.

Ormsby died in 1997. He is accused of sexual wrongdoing in other recently filed lawsuits. The Diocese of Buffalo has his name on a list of its clergy who have been credibly accused.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Suit: Rev. Richard Judd molested teen

The Rev. Richard Judd sexually abused a 14-year-old parishioner of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin on Buffalo's West Side from 1977 to 1978, a lawsuit alleges. That parish has since been absorbed into Our Lady of Hope Church.

This is not the first time Judd has been publicly accused of sexually abusing a child. In 2002, a man **told Niagara Gazette reporters** that the priest had abused him when he was a student at St. Teresa Elementary School in Niagara Falls in 1975.

Last year, the diocese said Judd had more than one credible abuse allegation made against him. He died in 1988.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Nun accused of abuse in Lancaster

A nun identified only as Sister Anne is alleged in a lawsuit to have sexually abused a 7-year-old child from about 1973 to 1974 at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Lancaster. The church is now known as St. Mary of the Assumption.

In addition to naming the church and the Buffalo Diocese as defendants, the lawsuit also names the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

The Rev. James P. Hayes accused of molesting girl

A woman who says she worked in the All Saints Parish rectory when she was a young teenager alleges she was sexually abused there in the 1970s by the Rev. James P. Hayes.

The woman said she was attending Catholic school at the time and got the job as a way to help with the cost of tuition. The sexual abuse continued until she quit the job months later, the lawsuit says.

Hayes, who died in 1988, was a longtime pastor of All Saints Parish, in Riverside, serving there from around 1972 until his death. He was named in 2018 on the diocese's list of priests credibly accused of sexual misconduct.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Suit names Catholic school teacher in prison on child porn charge

A Niagara Falls woman has filed a new lawsuit under the Child Victims Act alleging a teacher at a Catholic middle school stalked and tried to seduce her when she was in eighth grade.

Vanessa DeRosa, 29, who **filed a similar lawsuit earlier this year**, accused Christian M. Butler of sexually targeting her during the 2002-03 school year, when she was 13, in a suit filed against the diocese, Saint Dominic Savio Middle School and the Niagara Falls Catholic School Network.

Butler was sentenced in 2017 to 25 years in federal prison for attempted production of child pornography in Florida.

William A. Lorenz Jr., DeRosa's attorney, explained that the earlier lawsuit was filed to avoid potential dismissal motions by the diocese but was voluntarily discontinued.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

23 plaintiffs sue diocese, bishops and 11 priests

Twenty-three plaintiffs have joined together in a lawsuit alleging abuse in Catholic churches and schools and asserting that the Buffalo Diocese is hiding assets.

It names as defendants the diocese, Bishops Richard J. Malone and Edward U. Kmiec, 11 other priests and related diocese entities that possess financial resources.

Further, the lawsuit filed by attorney Kevin T. Stocker accuses the diocese of conducting an organized criminal conspiracy to gain profits.

Among the priests accused of wrongdoing are **Ronald Silverio**, Basil Ormsby, Florion Jasinski, Joseph Persich, David Bialkowski, Frederick Fingerle, **Michael Harrington**, William Stanton, Theodore Podson, Nelson Kinmartin and Ronald Sadjack.

Sadjack was suspended from ministry last year but after he was cleared by the diocese of wrongdoing he was allowed to return in December as pastor of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Clarence. On Friday, he said he had "no comment because of the way it's come forward. It's a thing that the Diocese of Buffalo has to respond to."

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Three lawsuits against the Rev. Louis Hendricks

Three lawsuits accuse the Rev. Louis Hendricks of abusing three different children.

In one case, a plaintiff who participated in youth activities at St. Joseph Cathedral alleged the priest "engaged in unpermitted sexual contact" with the plaintiff in the 1960s and 1970s. The plaintiff said the abuse took place during 1964 and 1966, when the plaintiff was about 5 to 7, and also during 1972 to 1974, when the plaintiff was 13 to 16.

Hendricks is accused of sexually abusing a 10-year-old from 1968 to 1969 at St. Joseph Cathedral in another lawsuit against the Diocese of Buffalo and St. Joseph Cathedral.

A third plaintiff accuses Hendricks of molestation while the victim was 6 to 10 and involved in youth programs at St. Joseph Cathedral from 1967 to 1970.

Hendricks, who died in 1990, has been identified by the Diocese of Buffalo as a priest accused of child sexual abuse.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Monsignor abused child for a decade, lawsuit says

A former Fredonia man alleges that he was molested for a decade, beginning when he was 12, by the late **Monsignor Edward J. Walker** at St. Joseph Church in Fredonia.

Attorney Jordan K. Merson filed court papers alleging that Walker would insist that the plaintiff sit on his lap and then would touch his genitals. The incidents allegedly began in 1953.

Walker, who died in 2002, is on the Buffalo Diocese's list of credibly accused priests.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Suit: The Rev. Roy K. Ronald is accused

A plaintiff from Belmont accuses the Rev. Roy K. Ronald of “unpermitted sexual conduct” from 1982 to 1986, when the victim was 11 to 14.

The lawsuit says the plaintiff came into contact with Ronald while engaged in youth programs at St. Mary Parish, which was later absorbed into Holy Family Parish in Belmont.

Ronald died in 2013 and was placed on the diocese’s list of credibly accused child molesters in 2018.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit alleges abuse 71 years ago

An accusation against the Rev. Francis T. Hogan appears to be the oldest – dating back 71 years – of those in Child Victims Act lawsuits filed Wednesday.

In a lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese, a plaintiff who was not named alleges that Hogan abused him in 1948 to 1949 at St. John's Church in Jamestown. The victim, who had been an altar boy, was about 9 to 10 at the time, the suit said.

Hogan died in 2010. In 2018, the diocese identified Hogan as a priest who had been credibly accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Abuse in Niagara Falls alleged

A lawsuit alleges that the Rev. Florian A. Jasinski, a priest at St. Stanislaus Kostka in Niagara Falls, engaged in "unpermitted sexual contact" with a plaintiff who was 8 to 9 in 1982 to 1983. The plaintiff participated in church and youth activities at St. Stanislaus.

In 2018, the diocese said Jasinski was credibly accused of molesting minors. Jasinski died in 1983.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Rev. Gerald P. Sheehan accused in suit

The late Rev. Gerald P. Sheehan is accused of molesting a 7-year-old victim in 1973 while at St. Martin of Tours in South Buffalo, a lawsuit alleges.

Sheehan, whose name has surfaced before as a likely abuser, died in 2006. He had spent 42 years as a priest.

The diocese in 2018 said Sheehan had been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors. Sheehan died in 2006.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Another lawsuit targets the Rev. Norbert Orsolits

A lawsuit alleges the Rev. Norbert Orsolits sexually abused a plaintiff who was 13 or 14 in 1968 and attending St. John the Evangelist in Buffalo.

Orsolits in 2018 admitted to a Buffalo News reporter that he had sexual contact with minors over the years – **“probably dozens,” he said** – but said it was consensual.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

13 plaintiffs accuse priests, 1 nun in 1 lawsuit

Matthew Scott Heldwein and a dozen other defendants are suing the Diocese of Buffalo in a sweeping lawsuit that names schools and churches, and accuses a number of priests and a nun of abuse.

Heldwein accuses the Rev. Luke Rutter of abusing him at St. Francis High School. Rutter was a Franciscan order priest who taught at St. Francis High School in the 1980s and died in 2000 at age 51. The diocese has not identified Rutter as a priest credibly accused of molesting children.

The lawsuit also includes allegations from 12 other accusers against a dozen others. The accused include these priests: William Ward, Joseph Schieder, William Stanton, Norbert Orsolits, Donald Becker, James Spielman, James Hayes, Pascal Ipolito and Robert Moss. Also accused are a nun at Corpus Christi Parish, identified only as “Sister Julia” or “Sister Julieta;” an unnamed choir director at Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and Scott Mitchell, a teacher at the former Holy Angels Academy.

The suit does not include references to the time period when the alleged actions were said to have taken place. Attorneys told The Buffalo News the alleged abuse by Mitchell happened in about 1994 and 1995; by the choir director between 1965 and 1969; and by the nun about 1956 and 1957.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Nun accused of molesting child

A victim identified in court papers as AB 128 Doe claims that he or she was repeatedly molested by a North Tonawanda nun in the 1950s.

The lawsuit charged that a nun, identified in court papers only as Sister Claudia, SSJ, with the Sisters of St. Joseph, molested the child from 1956 through 1958, beginning when the child was 6. The nun served in programs working with youngsters at Ascension Church in North Tonawanda, the suit says.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former pastor at Most Precious Blood accused

A lawsuit alleges that Monsignor J. Grant Higgins, who served as pastor from 1983 until 1997 at Most Precious Blood Church in Angola, sexually abused a child.

The lawsuit alleges Higgins engaged in "unpermitted sexual contact" with the plaintiff in 1990 to 1991 when the plaintiff was 9 and 10 years old.

Higgins, who died in 2016, was identified by the diocese last year as being credibly accused of sexual misconduct with minors. He was one of **four former priests at Most Precious Blood** in that category.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Ex-Lockport school priest publicly accused for first time

A man from Santa Rosa, Calif., has alleged he was sexually abused in the early to mid-1970s by a priest and wrestling coach at what was then St. Francis DeSales Catholic High School in Lockport, according to a lawsuit.

The lawsuit against the diocese, DeSales Catholic School and the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales accuses the Rev. Lehr Barkenquest of abusing the teenager, including during wrestling practice. The man alleges that he told a school administrator about the abuse when it started, but nothing was done to stop it.

Barkenquest died in January, **according to an obituary on mlive.com**. He started teaching in Lockport in 1968, later becoming school principal. He also taught in Toledo, Ohio, and was a pastor in Clarklake, Mich., according to his obituary.



Former altar boy files lawsuit

A North Buffalo man who says he was sexually abused by a priest for about a year starting when he was 8 is suing the diocese, St. Edmund Church and St. Christopher Church.

David J. Harvey, who was an altar boy at the time, alleges that the Rev. David J. Peter molested and raped him from around 1978 through 1979 in the Town of Tonawanda church then known as St. Edmund, according to the lawsuit.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



The Rev. Edward L. Kazmierczak named in suit

Monsignor Edward L. Kazmierczak is accused of sexually abusing a 12-year-old parishioner of St. Casimir Church in Kaisertown for about a year, starting in 1975. A lawsuit names the Diocese of Buffalo and St. Casimir as defendants. Kazmierczak died in 2001.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Diocese sued over alleged abuse from 1955

The Rev. Francis X. Baumgarten is accused in a lawsuit of sexually abusing a 13-year-old child from 1955 to 1956. The lawsuit does not indicate where the alleged abuse took place, but says Baumgarten was employed by Nativity of Our Lord in Orchard Park and by the Diocesan Preparatory Seminary at the time.

Baumgarten died in 1989 after 53 years as a priest, much of it teaching at the seminary. The lawsuit names the Diocese of Buffalo, Nativity of Our Lord and the seminary as defendants.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Victim says he told bishop about abuse

Angelo J. Ervolina accused Monsignor Michael J. Harrington, the longtime priest at Immaculate Conception Church in Buffalo, of molesting him in 1965 when he was 10 and Harrington took him on a trip to New York City.

Ervolina alleges in his lawsuit he told Bishop James A. McNulty about the abuse shortly after it happened because he delivered newspapers to McNulty's house.

The diocese allowed Harrington to serve as pastor of Immaculate Conception Church for 25 years until he retired in 1985. It didn't identify Harrington as a child molester until March 2018. Harrington died in 1989.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Former East Aurora teacher accused of abusing student

A woman who was a student at East Aurora Middle School in the 1970s says in a lawsuit that her gym teacher molested her when she was about 13.

The plaintiff, now living in Hull, Mass., accuses Kathleen A. Kirk of having sexual contact with her, primarily in the teacher's home or in the victim's home, from 1973 to 1975.

"First I'm hearing of it," said Kirk, who is now 70 and no longer teaches for the district. "So no, I really don't have any comment."

According to the complaint, the victim was contacted by the East Aurora district in 1982 and told it was investigating Kirk, and the teacher later admitted sleeping with the student. But Kirk was not immediately removed from her position, the complaint said.

• • •

Former St. Francis High priest accused

A man who was a student at St. Francis High School in Hamburg is accusing the Rev. Michael Lewandowski, who was a teacher and wrestling coach, of repeatedly sexually abusing him, starting in 1971.

The lawsuit alleges that Lewandowski would fondle the student while the two were wrestling. "On multiple occasions, Lewandowski insisted Plaintiff drink wine prior to these acts of sexual abuse," the lawsuit stated. The suit alleged that the victim reported the abuse to the principal at St. Francis but the principal "ignored" his complaint and that the abuse continued.

Lewandowski was suspended from any public ministry in 2014 after he was accused of sexually abusing a minor. According to Buffalo Diocese records, Lewandowski taught at St. Francis from 1976 to 1982, taught at Cardinal O'Hara High School in Buffalo from 1982 to 1989, and then returned to St. Francis until 1991.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Priest that diocese returned to parish is accused

Before the Child Victims Act, Matthew Golden tried suing the Buffalo Diocese as a public nuisance. That case was dismissed. Now that the act has opened a window for lawsuits, Golden has filed a new complaint alleging that the Rev. Dennis Riter abused him while Riter served at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Buffalo.

Through an attorney, Riter has denied Golden's allegations. The priest was suspended in 2018 but **allowed to return as pastor** of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Dunkirk after a diocesan investigation did not substantiate allegations against him.

In his lawsuit, Golden says Riter engaged in "unpermitted sexual contact" with him for three years, beginning in 1996 when he was 10.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Priest who admitted molesting 'dozens' named in suit

The priest whose admissions to a Buffalo News reporter about **molesting "probably dozens" of boys** helped spark the recent surge in clergy abuse allegations is accused in a lawsuit of abusing a boy from about 1979 to 1981.

Jonpaul Okal alleges the Rev. Norbert F. Orsolits abused him when he was about 9 to 11 years old and participated in church and youth activities at St. John Vianney in Orchard Park, which is named in the lawsuit along with the diocese.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

[Sean Kirst: Forty years after a child's days of pain, the search for justice]

• • •

Lawsuit: Priest helped raise child, then abused him

A priest assigned to help a woman raise her four children in the 1970s allegedly sexually abused one of them for five years, beginning when the boy was 10. A lawsuit says the Rev. Linus Hennessy abused the boy in his home when his mother was at work and at Bishop Timon High School in South Buffalo, where Hennessy was assigned.

The priest told the boy after each incident not to tell anyone what happened and offered the boy money to keep quiet, the suit alleges.

Hennessy died in 1983. The diocese has been paying for the plaintiff's counseling since 2008, when he reported the abuse to the diocese. Bishop Timon, the diocese, and the Franciscan Friars are named as defendants.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit: Priest forced brothers to have sex with each other

Two brothers were raped by their priest and were forced to rape each other while the priest watched, the siblings allege in a lawsuit.

The Rev. William F. White III allegedly sexually abused the boys for nearly a decade at Annunciation Church, now known as Our Lady of Hope, in the Black Rock section of Buffalo, the suit says.

The brothers say White began grooming them in 1982, when they were younger than 11. Within two years, he was abusing them in the rectory as well as in his parents' house in South Buffalo and in a retreat in West Valley, they allege. He often gave them

drugs and alcohol before and after the abuse and paid them to keep quiet, the lawsuit alleges.

White was suspended from priestly duties in 1993, after the boys' mother reported the abuse to the diocese. He died in 2016. The diocese last year identified him as being credibly accused of molesting children.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

The Rev. Bernard M. Mach accused in suit

A lawsuit accuses the late Rev. Bernard M. Mach of molesting a 7-year-old child in 1974 at the old St. Gerard's Church in Buffalo.

Attorney Steven Boyd said the plaintiff came from a "devout Catholic family" that trusted Mach.

Mach, who died in 2004, is on the Buffalo Diocese list of priests credibly accused of molesting children. The diocese previously settled a \$2 million lawsuit filed in 1993 that accused Mach of sexually abusing a 12-year-old boy in the rectory of St. Mary's Church in Lockport.

• • •

Jesuit priest accused

The Rev. James Gould, a Jesuit priest, was accused in a lawsuit of molesting a 13-year-old child at St. Ann's Church in Buffalo in the mid-1970s. The Jesuit Northeast Province last year identified Gould as a priest who has been credibly accused of molesting a child.

• • •

Former Cardinal Dougherty High priest accused

When Gary Astridge was 8 in 1963, the abuse by the Rev. Edward Townsend began, and it continued until 1967, when the victim was 11, a lawsuit against the Buffalo Diocese and the former Cardinal Dougherty High School alleges.

Because of the “culture of the Catholic Church,” Astridge felt pressure not to report the abuse, the lawsuit says.

Townsend belonged to a religious order based in California, the Eudists, which has not responded to The News' requests for comment about Townsend. Townsend died in 1998.

• • •

The Rev. Donald W. Becker named in suit

Michael Patrick Eames of South Buffalo is suing the Buffalo Diocese, SS. Peter and Paul Parish Community, St. John XXIII Parish, also known as the St. Bonaventure Parish, and retired priest Donald W. Becker, who now lives in Fort Myers, Fla.

Becker, who the diocese has said has been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors, has previously told The Buffalo News that he never molested any children.

Eames alleges he was a victim of sexual harassment, abuse and violence by Becker around 1974, when Eames was around 15. Becker, the legal complaint says, forced Eames into sex after plying him with liquor at the priest's cabin in Java Center.

The lawsuit indicates Eames notified the diocese about what happened in September 2007, and the organization has paid for his counseling and medication since 2012.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit: Priest took boy to Beach Boys concert, abused him

A priest who remains **suspended from active ministry** due to what the diocese determined to be credible allegations took a teenager to a Beach Boys concert in Toronto in 1975 and abused him at a hotel, according to a lawsuit filed by an Elma man.

The Rev. Pascal D. Ipolito, who was **suspended by the diocese** in June, served at Annunciation Catholic Church in Elma at the time of the alleged abuse, according to the suit. Ipolito was accused of serving the teen large quantities of whiskey sours in a hotel room and abusing the teen.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Lawsuit names former Cardinal Dougherty High priest

Kevin Koscielniak alleges in a lawsuit he was molested by the Rev. James Burson at the former Cardinal Dougherty High School in Buffalo.

Koscielniak, who now lives in suburban Detroit, alleges the abuse occurred “in multiple locations” around school grounds and church facilities around 1979, when he was about 15 years old.

Burson is among the priests whom the Diocese of Buffalo identifies as being credibly accused of abuse. He was part of the Eudist Order and, now retired in California, has not returned telephone messages.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

4 priests, 2 teachers named in suit

An Erie County man now in his early 60s alleges he was raped and molested numerous times by four different priests, including two who are currently pastors at churches, beginning when he was 10 or 11 years old.

Court papers name Monsignor Peter Popadick, who is pastor of St. Aloysius Gonzaga Church and who was the secretary for former Buffalo Diocese Bishop Edward D. Head, as one of the priests who raped and molested a boy, beginning when he was 10 or 11.

The Rev. Joseph Frank Tuchols, the Rev. Paul Nogaro and a former wrestling coach only identified as “Father Mike” are also named as the alleged molesters.

Attorney Paul K. Barr alleges in court papers that the child was also molested by two lay teachers at St. Mary of Sorrows Church and School in Buffalo: Thomas Krachowiak and a teacher who was only partially identified.

The lawsuit says the plaintiff was molested at St. Mary of Sorrows and at the old Bishop Fallon High School in Buffalo.

Popadick, 74, who was Head’s secretary for more than 20 years until 1995, declined to comment through a church secretary.

Nogaro, 74, who is pastor at St. Stephen Church on Grand Island, denied the allegations, saying he has never molested anyone at any of the churches where he has worked.

“I don’t know who is accusing me, but I absolutely deny it because I have never done this to anyone in 48 years as a priest,” Nogaro told The Buffalo News. “Even though the truth is on my side, this destroys my life. ... I don’t think it is fair that someone can make an accusation like this against you without even using their name.”

Barr said he has no evidence that the priests were acting in collaboration when they abused the victim.

“This kid had a difficult childhood, and things were going on in his home that made him very accessible to predators,” Barr said.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Woman accuses Lutheran minister of abuse

A Western New York woman alleges Bruce A. Connolly, a youth pastor and director of Christian education at First Trinity Lutheran Church in the Town of Tonawanda, raped and sexually abused her from about 1978 to 1981 starting when she was about 13, according to a lawsuit.

The woman said the abuse ended when she stopped attending the church in 1981. The lawsuit, against the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the church's eastern district and Connolly, alleges he was employed at a church in Minnesota in 1989 when she informed the church about the abuse.

Connolly admitted his guilt and apologized to her for the abuse in a January 1990 letter, and his wife apologized in a letter in 1992, the victim alleges in the lawsuit. The woman received pastoral counseling and reimbursement from the church for additional counseling. Connolly continued to work for the church "and to be around children" as late as 2016, according to the suit. The suit was filed by attorney Will Lorenz of the HoganWillig law firm.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]

• • •

Sisters sue Buffalo Diocese, Jesuits

Two sisters allege that a Jesuit priest at St. Ann's Church in Buffalo abused them over a year in the 1970s when they were 7 and 8 years old. He always abused the two together, they allege, sometimes getting them drunk on communion wine; taking them into the back room at the church on Emslie Street; making them undress in front of him, then groping and fondling them in his lap.

The priest, whose identity is unknown, also would sometimes take the two girls to a nearby pool and watch while they changed their clothes in the back seat of his car, they allege, and then kiss and grope them in his car.

Last year, the women contacted the Buffalo Diocese, which then informed the Jesuits about the abuse, according to the lawsuit against the diocese, the Jesuits and St. Ann's Church. The sisters flew to New York City in December 2018 to meet with the Jesuits.

• • •

Five men sue Boy Scouts, Greater Niagara Frontier Council

In **one of the Erie County lawsuits**, five men sued the Boy Scouts of America and the Greater Niagara Frontier Council, alleging sexual abuse by four men who were scoutmasters or assistant scoutmasters in the '60s and '70s.

A Portland, Ore., man alleges Robert Eberhardt, a scoutmaster, sexually abused him in the late 1960s when he was 11 to 14 years old, according to the suit.

A Pittsford man alleges Robert Moll Jr., an assistant scoutmaster, sexually abused him on scout camping trips when he was 12 or 13, from about 1973 through 1976.

A man from North Tonawanda alleges Moll sexually abused him on camping trips when he was about 13 to 14.

A man from Hamlin alleges Norman Grimm, a scoutmaster, sexually abused him when he was around 11 to 12 years old from about 1974 to 1975. Grimm was **sentenced to 15 years in prison** in 2008 for molesting three young boys in his Ryan Street home.

Robert O'Donnell, of the Town of Boston, alleges he was sexually abused by Ronald Williams, a scoutmaster, when he was about 13 or 14 around 1977 to 1978. Williams was convicted in 2006 on an indecent assault charge and is serving a 15-year prison sentence. O'Donnell **told The News in May** that he planned to file a lawsuit.

The Greater Niagara Frontier Council on Wednesday directed requests for comment to the national organization, the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts did not respond to the specific allegations in the lawsuit Wednesday.

[Click here to read the lawsuit]



Cheryl Bentley v. Buffalo Diocese

Cheryl Bentley was 8 when, she said, the late Monsignor James P. Hayes, who was the priest at All Saints Church in Riverside, used to pull her aside in the hallways of All Saints School and kiss her. At first, it was on the cheek. Later, it was on her mouth.

“I was a kid,” Bentley said last week. “I was innocent.”

That was just the beginning, said Bentley, now 49, and living in Wyoming County.

By the time she was in the fifth grade, Bentley said, the priest would make her come to his office in the back of the church, where he would force her to sit on his lap and molest her with his hands. She also said he forced her to perform oral sex.

While her parents didn't attend church, she said, her mother often worked or volunteered at the church and school to offset the costs of tuition. Her mother would sell lottery tickets for the church, Bentley said, and hand the money to her to take to Hayes at his rectory. Bentley said he would molest her on those occasions.

The abuse went on until she graduated from the school in eighth grade.

Bentley filed a lawsuit against the Diocese of Buffalo on Wednesday.

Hayes died in 1988. Last year, the Buffalo Diocese named him among a list of 42 priests credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors.

Bentley said her brother texted her a link to the article with Hayes' name. “There's your proof,” he wrote.



James Bottlinger v. Buffalo Diocese, St. Mary of the Assumption

The diocese **offered James Bottlinger \$650,000** – the largest settlement award in its recently concluded \$17.5 million program compensating childhood victims of clergy sex abuse.

Bottlinger rejected the offer, calling it “insignificant” in the face of the abuse he endured and saying he preferred a full accounting of how and why the diocese allowed the Rev. Michael Freeman at St. Mary of the Assumption Church in Lancaster to continue in ministry for so long.

On Wednesday, Steve Boyd, his attorney, held up his iPhone so that Bottlinger could watch his case being filed via FaceTime from Japan.

*Contact the team of reporters covering the Child Victims Act lawsuits through Watchdog Editor Mike McAndrew at **mmcandrew@buffnews.com**.*