

Maret School

**REPORT OF INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION
OF CERTAIN MISCONDUCT BY FACULTY
WITH STUDENTS**

The content of this Report is sensitive and personal and is not intended for children. Reader discretion is advised.

**Laurel Pyke Malson, Esq.
Rebecca L. Springer, Esq.
Crowell & Moring LLP**

September 2019

Preface to Public Report

This Report is a modified version of a more detailed Report submitted to the Head of School and Board of Trustees President in August 2019 (“Report”). This version has been modified to further anonymize the identities of students who were victims of certain faculty misconduct so that the Report may be released to the Maret Community without disclosing the identities of individuals who came forward or compromising their desire that certain information provided to us that contributed to the findings reflected in this Report not be disclosed publicly.¹

The removal of such information from this public Report, however, does not alter the fact that in each case, the evidentiary standards set forth below for inclusion in the Report were met.² In short, we have endeavored to maintain the integrity of our findings and conclusions, despite the removal of some of the supporting evidence from the Report previously submitted to the Head and Board President, while balancing the strong interest in protecting the privacy of those students whose stories are told here.

¹ Although, as described below, we did not use students’ names or class years, or include other potentially identifying characteristics of individuals referenced in the Report, given the small size of the Maret Community, and the relative degree of familiarity within the Community with some of the accounts described in this Report, we believed that additional anonymization was warranted if the Report was to be more broadly disseminated. Thus, we have removed from this Report some details in our recounting of incidents, where we believed that retaining those details might allow for identification of specific students. We also have removed some personal or sensitive details from this Report, at the request of students who reported the information to us.

² This Report also modifies the standards used to identify faculty members who engaged in misconduct by name by incorporating the severity of the conduct into the standard.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
I. Nature and Scope of Investigation	7
A. Process	8
B. Methodology	10
II. Findings	12
A. Credible Accounts of Misconduct by Specific Faculty Members.	13
<u>Eugene Legg</u>	13
EL Victim 1.....	15
EL Victim 2.....	16
EL Victim 3.....	16
EL Victim 4.....	20
Other Reports	21
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Legg’s Misconduct	21
<u>Michael Oehmann</u>	28
MO Victim 1	28
MO Victim 2	29
MO Victim 3	29
Other Reports	30
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Oehmann’s Misconduct.....	30
<u>Vern Elder</u>	32
VE Victim 1	33
VE Victim 2	34
Other Reports	35
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Elder’s Misconduct.....	36
<u>Kevin Vereecke</u>	38
KV Victim 1.....	39
KV Victim 2.....	40
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Vereecke’s Misconduct	41
B. Other Credible Accounts of Faculty Misconduct.	42
Faculty Member 1	42
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 1’s Misconduct.....	42

Faculty Member 2.....	43
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 2’s Misconduct.....	43
Faculty Member 3.....	43
FM 3 Victim 1.....	44
FM 3 Victim 2.....	45
FM 3 Victim 3.....	46
Other Reports.....	46
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 3’s Misconduct.....	47
Faculty Member 4.....	49
Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 4’s Misconduct.....	51
C. School’s Response to Reports of Sexual Misconduct Elsewhere by Former Faculty Members.	51
D. Cultural Context/Background.	53
III. Maret Today	56
Conclusion	59

Executive Summary

This Report outlines the process and methodology we used to conduct this investigation, and sets forth our findings with respect to each of the faculty members identified in the Report as well as the School's culture. While we believe it is important and worthwhile to read the entire Report, we have provided this Executive Summary to briefly outline the key aspects of the Report:

- We interviewed 54 individuals (some, multiple times), including alumni, current and former administrators and other faculty, parents, and other members of the Maret School Community. We also reviewed available files from the School, yearbooks, and other documentary evidence provided by victims and other witnesses.
- The focus of the investigation was faculty misconduct of a sexual nature with students, and conduct by faculty with students that otherwise crossed appropriate emotional or physical boundaries (*e.g.*, grooming behaviors, touching that made a student uncomfortable, intimacy-seeking comments or behaviors).
- None of the faculty members whose conduct is described in this Report as misconduct with students is on Maret's faculty currently, and they have not been employed by Maret for the past decade.
- We received credible reports of misconduct involving eight faculty members. The conduct occurred between the mid-1970s and 2008. Reports involving four of those individuals met a sufficiently high standard of credibility and severity that the faculty members are identified in the Report by name. *See* p. 13. The reports of conduct involving the remaining four individuals were credible, but we have chosen to describe the conduct but not name the faculty members because the reports lacked additional substantiation or involved conduct that, while inappropriate and still quite concerning, was of a less severe nature. These determinations reflect a careful balancing of the benefits to the victims and the School Community of public accountability and the concern of publicly identifying an individual where the evidence is less strong, or the conduct less severe.
- The misconduct reported here includes sexual intercourse with students, grooming vulnerable students for future sexual engagement, inappropriate touching, inappropriate fraternization with students, and other "familiar" or intimate boundary-crossing interactions with students. That some conduct was described to us as being "consensual" at the time does not lessen its damaging effects on the student involved, or render the conduct less objectionable, given the inherent imbalance in the power relationship between students and faculty members.
- Some of the misconduct described in this Report was reported to the School leadership at the time it occurred. In many instances, no decisive action was taken at the time to address the conduct with the faculty member because Maret did not credit the report, or found the concerns raised to be too generalized, and did not probe further. In other cases, the School did address the conduct with the faculty member at the time it was reported.

In still other cases, misconduct with students was rumored among students, or some faculty, but was not known to the School leadership.

- Maret’s culture, in the 1970s and 1980s, was characterized by those with whom we spoke as “permissive,” and with “loose boundaries” between faculty and students. The School lacked clearly defined policies and expectations regarding faculty conduct with students and, as with many schools of that era, there was limited education or awareness regarding “boundaries” or “grooming behaviors,” and no formal mechanisms to report behaviors or incidents that made students uncomfortable. As a result, some of the misconduct described in this Report affected multiple students, over several years, continuing unchecked.
- Maret today is a very different school than it was in the 1970s, 1980s and even the 1990s, with policies and practices now in place that are intended to prevent misconduct through education of all stakeholders in the community, deter the boundary-crossing conduct described herein, identify it if it does occur, and take remedial steps as necessary. Maret reviews its policies with faculty and students each year, and conducts extensive training with both faculty and students to ensure they can recognize, and address, inappropriate behavior.

Introduction

On October 1, 2018, Marjo Talbott, Head of School, published a message to the Maret Community, noting “countless reports” in the news over the past several years of “people who exploit positions of power by abusing those around them,” and the “widespread coverage of these issues during the past week.”³ In that letter, Talbott recounted recent remarks by the Upper School Director to current students acknowledging that “the topics of sexual assault and consent can trigger many different emotions in people for a variety of reasons,” and noted that “some of our alumni, parents, and other community members [might] also find themselves struggling to deal with thoughts of past events and behavior.” Stressing the School’s commitment to “a culture that is healthy, open, responsive, and reflective” and the “high standard we apply to people who hold positions of power and trust,” Talbott noted that in her preceding 25 years as Head of School, “about a dozen individuals ha[d] come forward to report concerns about sexual misconduct or abuse, either in the home or at the School.” “Each report,” she wrote, “ha[d] been taken seriously, addressed immediately, and conveyed to the authorities as appropriate.” *See* October 1, 2018 “Important Maret Message.”⁴ After referencing “available support and counseling options,” and sharing “ongoing efforts to keep today’s students safe from abuse,” she encouraged “everyone in our Maret [C]ommunity, both past and present[,] . . . [who] has ever

³ This reference likely was to the extensive news coverage of the U.S. Senate confirmation hearings for now-Justice Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court of the United States, where multiple women came forward with allegations of having been sexually assaulted by Judge Kavanaugh in the 1980s when he was a student at Georgetown Preparatory School, a local independent school, or Yale University. Several months before the Kavanaugh hearings was the well-publicized trial of Bill Cosby, the entertainer accused of drugging and raping women with whom he had “mentoring” relationships. This, of course, followed the explosive allegations of sexual abuse involving Harvey Weinstein, and the growth of the #MeToo movement.

⁴ Available at [https://www.maret.org/about-us/leadership/messages-from-marjo/details-messages-
mt/~board/messages-from-marjo/post/important-maret-message](https://www.maret.org/about-us/leadership/messages-from-marjo/details-messages-mt/~board/messages-from-marjo/post/important-maret-message).

experienced abuse from any individual at Maret, . . . to share that history with [her], or with [DC law enforcement authorities].” *Id.*

On January 9, 2019, Talbott received an email from counsel for an alumna that referenced Talbott’s October Message and stated that his/her client wished to make a report to Maret about past faculty sexual misconduct, and requested information regarding the procedure for doing so. Counsel also inquired whether Maret had undertaken “an independent retrospective investigation of educator sexual misconduct,” and stated his/her belief that “Maret should do so.” Counsel referenced his/her client’s deep regard for the School and hope that “such a reckoning and reconciliation w[ould] strengthen the institution.” Finally, counsel conveyed his/her understanding that “the individual who is the subject of [his/her client’s] report is again teaching children at another institution,” and requested “Maret’s assistance in bringing the substance of her report to the attention of that institution.”

After receiving the January 2019 communication, Maret’s counsel contacted the alumna’s counsel, who identified former faculty member Eugene “Gene” Legg as the alleged abuser, and provided a brief description and timeframe of the alleged misconduct. In response, Maret’s counsel provided background information regarding actions the School has taken in the past in response to reports it had received of inappropriate relationships involving Legg—including the School’s reports to various law enforcement authorities in the 1990s when Talbott heard rumors of such relationships from alumni, in 2014 when a former student reported that Legg had had sexual relationships with students,⁵ and again in 2017, when an alumna informed

⁵ Talbott also received a report in 2014 from a student who alleged inappropriate boundary-crossing and grooming conduct by Legg.

Talbott that Legg was teaching in the Loudoun County Public Schools system.⁶ Maret's counsel informed the alumna's counsel that information that the School had gathered previously regarding Legg also had been provided to two outside investigators hired by the School.⁷ Finally, Maret's counsel expressed a willingness to update law enforcement authorities with the new information provided (by the alumna's counsel) about Legg, noting that the absence of an identified victim in the 1990s and 2014 had precluded investigation by DC law enforcement authorities following those reports.

The alumna's counsel conveyed his/her client's "willing[ness] to share information with law enforcement," but expressed the hope "that Maret's interest [wa]s broader than in determining whether there were any criminal violations." Counsel went on to assert that any efforts the School had made in the past to investigate Legg's "inappropriate behavior [—] an open matter of discussion amongst many Maret alums"— were insufficient, as they had not reached his/her client or other victims, and were "not transparent and not thorough." When Maret's counsel conveyed Talbott's desire "to communicate the School's interest in providing support to [the alumna]," the alumna's counsel expressed his/her client's preference for speaking with an "objective, trained investigator" with "an advocate present in the room[.]" and reiterated the importance of a "transparent, neutral and thorough investigation . . . regardless of what law enforcement chooses to pursue."

In mid-February, Maret retained Crowell & Moring LLP partners Laurel Pyke Malson and Rebecca Springer to investigate the recent Legg allegations referenced above, and to conduct

⁶ Talbott's notes reflect that she had heard in 2014 from a former Legg student and Board member that Legg was teaching in a public school in Virginia, but there was no further information regarding the school system.

⁷ The foci of the two investigations, however, were limited to specific allegations involving faculty members other than Legg.

an independent and comprehensive investigation of any other reports they received alleging Maret faculty misconduct with students. To that end, on February 19, 2019, Talbott and the President of Maret’s Board of Trustees wrote to members of the Maret Community that, following Talbott’s October 2018 Message, several people had contacted her regarding “past experiences and suspicions that involved [former] members of the Maret faculty,” including one individual with specific information about a former faculty member, prompting the School to engage outside independent investigators.⁸ The letter noted that the investigators would provide a “private, confidential, and independent channel for such reports,” so that “every voice—and every story—can be heard” and “anyone who courageously steps forward to report concerns about possible misconduct . . . feel[s] supported, respected, and valued.”⁹ The letter further encouraged anyone with “experience[] or [] any knowledge of abuse or misconduct by any member of the Maret faculty—former or current—[] to contact directly [the] independent investigators[,]” and provided contact information.¹⁰

The School issued a supplemental “update” letter on April 15, 2019, again encouraging individuals “who ha[ve] suffered distress over past experiences or who ha[ve] suspicions about any past or current Maret employee” to contact the investigators, so that “[t]his process of comprehensively examining our [S]chool’s history will help ensure that Maret is a safe and

⁸ In addition to the January 2019 communication from the alumna’s counsel, Talbott received in the Fall of 2018 a number of calls from other alumni raising various “ongoing concerns” about Legg’s conduct with students while he was at Maret.

⁹ The letter also noted that the School’s Director of Counseling was available to members of the Community, and provided her contact information.

¹⁰ In addition to the letter sent to the Community at large, the School contacted a number of the individuals who had made first-hand reports to the School in the past to inform them of the investigation and provide information on contacting the investigators.

healthy community for everyone – former students as well as students attending Maret today and in the future.”

I. Nature and Scope of Investigation

We understood our investigation to include the specific allegations of educator sexual misconduct received in January 2019, as well as any other allegations we received of faculty misconduct of a sexual nature, or physical or emotional boundary-crossing, with Maret students. Specifically, we defined “sexual misconduct” to include physical touching of a sexual or intimate nature, whether or not “consensual,”¹¹ as well as harassment or verbal commentary of a sexual or intimate nature. “Physical or emotional boundary-crossing” refers to relationships, conduct, or communications with a student by a teacher, which disregard the inherent power imbalance between them, exploit the trust placed in teachers and mentors by students, or otherwise breach professional teacher-student boundaries. Such conduct can cause serious harm to students, without regard to whether the teacher acted with harmful intent, or the student’s willingness to “go along” or otherwise participate. Examples of boundary-crossing conduct in this context include inappropriate familiarity or fraternization, and “grooming” behaviors.¹² We further understood our investigation to be “comprehensive” in scope, meaning that we could receive reports without regard to when the alleged misconduct occurred, and “independent,” meaning

¹¹ Some of the misconduct referenced in this Report was described to us as “consensual” on the part of the student, meaning that the student was a willing participant in the conduct. However, because of the inherent power differential in the relationship between a teacher, as a mentor or trusted adult, and a student—in addition, in many cases, to the student’s legal status as a “minor”—we believe that a student in such circumstances lacks the capacity to provide effective consent to the misconduct outlined in this Report.

¹² We distinguish such conduct—which often fulfills students’ and adults’ disparate emotional needs inappropriately, serves to isolate and tear down inhibitions or “groom” vulnerable students for a possible future sexual relationship, or otherwise normalizes potentially predatory behavior—from the many healthy teacher-student relationships characteristic of Maret that were described to us during the course of this investigation.

that the School would not dictate with whom we could speak, what information we could gather, or our findings.

Finally, we attempted to ascertain the School’s contemporaneous knowledge of, and response to, the incidents of faculty misconduct that were reported to us. As a part of this latter inquiry, we sought to gain insight into the School’s culture at the time of the reported conduct so as to better understand the context in which some of the abuse and other misconduct described in this Report occurred, and if not addressed for a period of time, the reasons for inaction by the School.

Before delving into the process and methodology used for this investigation, it is important at the outset to acknowledge the substantial support for this investigation that we received from the School leadership. While it is difficult for any school to hear that its students were hurt and their trust violated—and particularly so, when the offenders are adults from within the school’s own community—we commend Maret’s leadership for its unflinching presence and attentiveness throughout this process, acceptance of, and intention to publish, these findings, and its commitment to regaining the trust of those members of the Community who were affected over the years by faculty misconduct of the sort outlined here.

A. Process

The School’s February 19, 2019 letter announcing the investigation provided our contact information and requested that those “who have experienced or have any knowledge of abuse or misconduct by any member of the Maret faculty—former or current” contact us. The letter also informed the Community that “[a]s a part of that effort [to protect an individual’s privacy] and to respect the autonomy of individuals who have survived abuse, the investigators will not reach out to anyone who has not contacted them directly and expressed a willingness to discuss these issues.” We remained true to these principles and, though we did reach out to some current and

former faculty members (including administrators), we did not contact any students or alumni who did not contact us first. We did, however, urge everyone with whom we spoke to inform others in the Community of the investigation and to contact anyone they thought might have useful information, to the extent they felt comfortable doing so. A number of additional reporters came forward as a result of these efforts.

In the course of our investigation, we received written accounts of faculty misconduct, and interviewed 54 individuals, including current and former administrators, faculty, parents, and students.¹³ We also reviewed numerous personnel files, many yearbooks, documentation from the School regarding prior reports of misconduct, and documentation provided by victims and witnesses. In addition, at the outset of our investigation, the School provided notes reflecting its prior inquiries into allegations it had received in the past, and other communications from alumni regarding sexual misconduct by faculty members that they or a schoolmate had experienced while students at Maret. Several of these individuals who had reported previously to Maret did not contact us during our investigation, and we did not feel that we could contact them directly without violating the ground rules that we had set. To the extent these notes from the School described first-hand accounts from a victim, we treated these accounts as “first-hand,” but did not give them the same weight as those first-hand accounts received by us during this investigation where we were able to interview the reporter and personally assess their credibility.

We recognize that our investigation was somewhat limited by the fact that some individuals with relevant information may not have been aware of the investigation because they do not receive email communications from Maret, assumed the email from Maret was a solicitation and ignored it, or opened it but did not follow the link within the email to the letter

¹³ We interviewed a number of these individuals multiple times.

announcing the investigation. We also heard from some individuals that they believed that, because they had previously spoken with the School, they did not need to contact us, or expected us to contact them. Some individuals told us that others were choosing not to participate because they did not trust the School's "healing intentions," or purpose, after such a "lengthy silence" regarding the abuse. Still others, who eventually did speak with us, expressed some concern at the outset that their accounts would not be credited by Maret, if doing so would risk reputational damage to the School. We also understand that some victims did not contact us because they did not want to relive the trauma they had experienced as students; and, by contrast, one student chose not to call us because she had "no conflict" regarding her "affair" with a teacher and had nearly forgotten about it until hearing of this investigation.

We also recognize that the facts (and witnesses) available to us, in some cases, were limited due to the passage of time. Memories have faded, records are lost or incomplete, key individuals have passed away or, as is the case with Peter Sturtevant, Sr., Headmaster at Maret during much of the time referenced in this Report, are too ill to participate in the investigation. Though we believe the School has made efforts to conduct as thorough a review as possible, as a result of the limitations we experienced, we believe it is likely that there are individuals who experienced faculty misconduct whose accounts are not detailed in this Report. Our hope is that, through this process, individuals who experienced or are aware of faculty misconduct with students who were unaware of this investigation or have been reluctant heretofore to participate, might be encouraged to share their stories now, if some good might come of it.

B. Methodology

We have tremendous respect for the individuals who came forward to tell their stories, either of what happened to them or what happened to others, during these formative—and vulnerable—years of their childhoods and adolescence. In an effort to ensure their anonymity to

the greatest extent possible, we have not named in this Report any victim or witness with whom we spoke, nor have we revealed their gender unless it was relevant to the conduct (*e.g.*, we have identified the victims as male or female). We have instead identified the victims by using a numbering system (*e.g.*, EL Victim 1), and have identified reporters (whether students or faculty) simply as “reporters,” in most instances. We also have not referenced students’ class years. To further protect the identities of faculty/administrator reporters, we refer to both current and former faculty and administrators as simply “faculty” or “administrator.”¹⁴

We also gave considerable thought to whether to name each of the faculty members that we concluded engaged in inappropriate conduct with a student at Maret. We believe that each account we have included in this Report is based upon one or more credible reports of misconduct, and that the teachers discussed in this Report, whether named or unnamed, violated their duty to Maret and to the students, and caused harm as a result of their actions. But we also are aware of the need to balance the benefits to the victims and to the School Community of holding wrongdoers publicly accountable, against the interests of individuals in not being publicly identified as a wrongdoer where we have less supporting evidence, or the conduct, though still inappropriate and quite concerning, is less severe, than that attributed to the teachers whom we do name.

In Section II.A., we have named teachers and attributed specific conduct to each based on our conclusion that we have a credible first-hand account of misconduct, supported by other extrinsic evidence, *or* a credible second-hand account supported by other factors, such as a first-hand report of similar behavior (*i.e.*, “pattern evidence”). *See* II.A., below.

¹⁴ No current Maret students contacted us during the investigation. As such, all references to “students” refer to former Maret students.

In Section II.B., we have described reports of misconduct we received regarding four additional faculty members, but have not identified these individuals by name because, while we believe the reports to be credible, the reported conduct was not as severe as that in Section II.A., and/or we did not receive sufficient corroborating evidence regarding the alleged misconduct. *See* II.B., below. In Section II.C., we discuss reports of misconduct by former Maret faculty that Maret received from other schools or through publicly available information, and the School's response to those reports.

Finally, in Section II.D., we include, as part of our findings, our understanding of the cultural context in which some of the misconduct described in this Report occurred, and went unaddressed for a period of time. We believe that this background is particularly important with respect to the instances of serial misconduct reported here, given the ongoing rumors, questions raised, and other indications of possible misconduct by some faculty members, which were not investigated. Our hope is that by beginning to acknowledge this past, students who were victimized will feel that their accounts have been validated, the School will be able to address some of the lingering pain and distrust that we encountered among some alumni, and, with transparency, honesty, and accountability, the School can begin a process of healing for those individuals who have been affected by the actions detailed in this Report, and any other similar abuse.

II. Findings

We received credible reports of sexual misconduct or inappropriate physical or emotional boundary-crossing with respect to eight Maret faculty members, over a period ranging from 1975 to 2008. We found that the evidence of misconduct was sufficiently strong, and the conduct sufficiently severe, with respect to four of the teachers, that we have named each in Section II.A.

and have described the conduct attributed to each. With respect to the four remaining teachers, we believe the accounts we received to be credible, but either did not have sufficient corroborating evidence to meet our standard for attributing conduct to a faculty member by name, or the conduct, though inappropriate, was not sufficiently severe to warrant identification by name in a document that could be made public. As such, we have included these accounts in Section II.B. For each account of misconduct, we also address the School's level of awareness of the cited conduct and its response.

A. Credible Accounts of Misconduct by Specific Faculty Members.

We received credible first and second-hand reports, along with corroborating evidence, of misconduct by the following former Maret faculty:

Eugene Legg
Michael Oehmann
Vern Elder
Kevin Vereecke

Eugene Legg

Eugene (“Gene”) Legg was an English teacher and an administrator at Maret from 1974 to 1989.¹⁵ He served as the Chair of the Humanities Department and, during his later years at the School, as the Head of the Upper School, in addition to coaching and various other additional duties typically assumed by Maret faculty. After Peter Sturtevant, Sr., Headmaster, and other administrators learned in the Fall of 1988 of inappropriate conduct by Legg with a student, Legg left Maret briefly to go to rehabilitation for alcohol abuse. He returned to the School in January

¹⁵ Legg was away for one year, 1980-1981, when he left Maret to earn a graduate degree.

1989 as a teacher, but was relieved of his duties as the Head of the Upper School. He was terminated from Maret at the end of that school year. Legg returned to teaching in 1995 in Loudoun County, VA. He currently teaches at Rock Ridge High School in the Loudoun County Public Schools system.

We received two credible first-hand reports of sexual relationships between Legg and students while they were in high school. We received a credible first-hand report of an extensive emotional boundary-crossing relationship that lasted for many years throughout high school and into subsequent years, and became physical shortly after the student graduated from Maret. We received a credible second-hand report that Legg had a sexual relationship with another student that began while she was at Maret and continued after the student graduated. We received numerous second and third-hand reports of a boundary-crossing physical relationship between Legg and a student, which led ultimately to his dismissal from Maret. Finally, we received many second and third-hand reports that Legg formed inappropriate emotional or sexual relationships with students during his tenure at Maret. A number of reporters noted that he chose a “favorite” female student each year and developed an inappropriately close relationship with her.¹⁶

We contacted Legg to give him an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Legg informed us that he was an alcoholic while at Maret, and left Maret due to his alcoholism. He reported that he went into treatment while at Maret and has been sober for 31 years. With respect to the particular allegations, he acknowledged engaging in some misconduct with EL Victim 4, but did “not recall” or did “not remember” having a physical relationship, or any

¹⁶ Legg was married during much of his time at Maret. He married a former student from a prior school in the late 1970s. Legg’s wife was known to many students with whom we spoke because, during Legg’s tenure at Maret, his wife also worked at the School in various capacities.

inappropriate emotional relationship, with any other Maret student. He asserted that he voluntarily resigned from Maret, and had not been dismissed by the School.

EL Victim 1

We received a credible first-hand report from a student who graduated in the mid-1970s (EL Victim 1) that she had a sexual relationship with Legg during her junior year of high school. Legg taught EL Victim 1 in two classes, and she got to know him through School plays for which he was a drama coach. Legg began giving EL Victim 1 rides home, and then subsequently invited her to his apartment and their relationship became a sexual one. During the time that they were sexually involved, EL Victim 1 went to Legg's apartment at least a dozen times, and went out with him to various places in Washington, DC. EL Victim 1 and Legg attempted to keep their relationship a secret at school (though several reporters identified EL Victim 1 as someone they believed had a relationship with Legg). EL Victim 1's sexual relationship with Legg ended after he got married.

EL Victim 1's account was corroborated by EL Victim 2. They were friends in high school, but did not know of each other's involvement with Legg at the time. Shortly after they graduated, they each told the other of the sexual relationships they had with Legg while at Maret. EL Victim 2's account to us of what EL Victim 1 told her at that time was consistent with what we heard from EL Victim 1 about her relationship with Legg.

We asked Legg specifically about whether he had a physical relationship with EL Victim 1. Though he recalled a number of details about EL Victim 1, he told us he did not remember having a physical relationship with her.

EL Victim 2

We received a credible first-hand report from a student who graduated in the mid-1970s (EL Victim 2) that she engaged in a year-long sexual relationship with Legg that began in the summer before her senior year of high school. EL Victim 2 has requested that we not share the details that she provided to us regarding the relationship.

EL Victim 2's account of what occurred between her and Legg was corroborated by EL Victim 1, who reported that the two of them had confided in each other during college that each had had a sexual relationship with Legg in high school. Her account was also somewhat corroborated by another student reporter who had some knowledge of Legg and EL Victim 2's involvement.

EL Victim 3

The initial impetus for this investigation was a report that Maret received in early 2019 from a student who graduated in the late-1980s (EL Victim 3), who reported that Legg had "groomed" her throughout her high school years at Maret, developed an emotional relationship with her, and entered into a physical relationship with her shortly after she graduated from Maret. We subsequently spoke with EL Victim 3 on multiple occasions to gather her full account of what had occurred between her and Legg.

EL Victim 3 reported that Legg had developed an intensely intimate, emotional inappropriate relationship with her that lasted throughout high school and beyond. She reported that Legg began paying particular attention to her during her sophomore year of high school. By the middle of the year, she and Legg were meeting alone in his office during and after school a

few times a week to talk about her writing and other topics.¹⁷ Legg confided in EL Victim 3 about his personal life, his parents, his youth, and his marriage. According to EL Victim 3, a common motif in these conversations was how difficult it was for Legg to share his feelings, how difficult emotional intimacy was for him, and therefore how special their relationship was. EL Victim 3 would often stay at school talking to him as late as 7 pm, and Legg started giving EL Victim 3 rides home occasionally, though they did not live near each other.

At some point during the year, EL Victim 3 showed Legg a piece of her writing about someone who had feelings for someone else but couldn't tell that person, and, after he questioned her extensively, she confessed that it was about her feelings for him. According to EL Victim 3, their conversations then shifted to often talking about "our relationship—what it was, what it could be, what boundaries were." Though Legg talked to EL Victim 3 about maintaining "safeguards" between them, he also continued to pay her special attention and flatter her by telling her how special she was and how pretty she was.

EL Victim 3's involvement with Legg became so consuming, that EL Victim 3's parent went to talk to Legg because s/he was concerned that Legg was paying EL Victim 3 an excessive amount of attention and behaving inappropriately.¹⁸ According to EL Victim 3, Legg reported this conversation to EL Victim 3 and said that her parent's concerns "were legitimate," but he continued to spend extended amounts of time with her.¹⁹ At the end of her sophomore year, EL

¹⁷ In speaking with EL Victim 3, it became clear that Legg was a compelling figure to her at the time not only because he was a charismatic teacher, but also because of his mastery of English and writing, subjects in which she, by all accounts, excelled. She told us that Legg "was a hugely influential person to me intellectually" and noted that he "played many roles" for her, including "academic mentor," "romantic interest," and "replacement parent."

¹⁸ EL Victim 3's parent also expressed concern to Legg that his interactions with his/her daughter would interfere with his/her daughter's ability to form appropriate relationships with her peers.

¹⁹ EL Victim 3 also reported that, at some point during the year when just the two of them were in his office, Legg undressed in front of her to change from work clothes into a softball uniform.

Victim 3 wrote a letter to Legg and Legg told her that “he didn’t understand what love meant until he read her letter.” He also said that he would like to respond by giving her a hug but he was not allowed to do so. The emotional involvement continued to grow, and Legg and EL Victim 3 talked on the phone during the summer.

Legg’s conduct toward EL Victim 3 continued through her junior and senior years. EL Victim 3 reported that, at some point during this time, EL Victim 3’s parent went to speak with the Headmaster about his/her concerns regarding Legg’s inappropriate attention to his/her daughter. According to EL Victim 3, Legg told her afterwards that Sturtevant had asked him if he was “sleeping with” EL Victim 3 and, when Legg responded that he was not, the conversation ended. EL Victim 3 reported that, throughout this time, she and Legg continued to have numerous conversations about their “special” relationship, and about how they had to maintain boundaries, but they continued to be emotionally intimate and spend substantial time together. About one month before EL Victim 3 graduated, Legg told her that he loved her. EL Victim 3 reported that this was not “the first time he told me that or told me that our relationship was reciprocal. But it must have been in some more direct way at that time because it stood out to me.”

One week after her graduation, EL Victim 3 called Legg because she was upset about the way some of her friends were treating her. He told her he was going to take her out to cheer her up. This was the first time they had gone out in the evening. They went to several bars and, though she was underage, Legg bought drinks for her at each location. When he dropped her off back at her car at the end of the evening, he began “trying to seduce” her by touching her and encouraging her to kiss him, but she was reluctant to do so. They went out again a week later to several bars and, at some point during the night, Legg told her “I’ve woken up every morning for

the last week kissing you [in my dreams].” They eventually ended up “making out” and fondling each other in his car for an extended period of time that evening.²⁰

When EL Victim 3 went to college, she and Legg wrote numerous letters to each other. She also talked to Legg on the phone at least once a week. He would call her at various times, including when he was intoxicated and emotional—calls which EL Victim 3 described as “sort of confessional.” It was the first time that she took notice of him drinking excessively. When EL Victim 3 came home over Thanksgiving break, she and Legg went out dancing. They ended up making out in a hallway and he declared his love for her again and questioned whether he should leave his wife. When she returned home again for a visit in late winter, she went to visit him at his home and found that he was “sloppy drunk,” and he began “sloppily groping” her. She declined his advances and identified this as “a key moment of realizing he had drinking issues.”

After her visit home during the late winter of her freshman year in college, EL Victim 3 and Legg did not have any further sexual contact, but their emotional involvement continued via letters and phone calls. Legg continued to confide in her, flatter her (and her writing and literary analyses they shared with each other), and rely on her for emotional support. EL Victim 3 noted that they never had a “break up” conversation, but rather, “it just faded.” However, they continued to correspond periodically even well after she graduated from college.

EL Victim 3’s account of Legg’s conduct toward her was corroborated by numerous sources. We reviewed many pages of hand-written letters that he sent to her, both during and after high school, that illustrated the intensely emotional relationship they shared. A schoolmate

²⁰ Over the summer, Legg took EL Victim 3 out to lunch for her birthday and she saw him one or more other time(s), but nothing sexual occurred.

also reported to us that EL Victim 3 had confided in him/her about her involvement with Legg while it was ongoing, and that EL Victim 3 told him/her at the time that she and Legg had kissed. Another student reporter told us that EL Victim 3 told him/her during high school that she was at Legg's house a lot and then, a number of years later, told him/her that Legg had cultivated an emotional relationship with her during high school that became physically intimate right after she graduated. Numerous other reporters identified EL Victim 3 as someone to whom Legg was particularly close and with whom he spent a significant amount of time.²¹ When we asked Legg specifically about EL Victim 3, he said "I love [EL Victim 3]. She was a great student, a great kid," "an amazingly good writer," but he did "not recall having a physical relationship with her."²²

EL Victim 4

We received multiple second and third-hand reports about a boundary-crossing physical relationship between Legg and a student who graduated in the late 1980s (EL Victim 4).²³ We have not included in this public Report the details of what was reported to us by these second and third-hand reporters. Several of EL Victim 4's friends eventually reported their concerns about Legg's conduct to trusted faculty and/or an administrator, after which Legg was sent away to an alcohol rehabilitation facility. He returned to Maret several weeks later to resume teaching, before being dismissed at the end of the school year.

²¹ Several others told us that, based on EL Victim 3's and Legg's interactions with each other during high school, they suspected that he was having a sexual relationship with her.

²² Legg went on to say, "If I did [*i.e.*, have a physical relationship with her], it was part and parcel of [my alcoholism] . . . when you bring it up now, I'm thinking, God, I hope that didn't happen."

²³ EL Victim 4 did not contact us, but we received sufficient second and third-hand reports of the conduct to make a finding that it occurred, particularly since Legg acknowledged at least some of the reported conduct.

When we spoke to Legg, he reported to us that he had once engaged in misconduct with EL Victim 4. He attributed the conduct to his alcoholism.

Other Reports

We received several other first and second-hand reports of sexual or other boundary-crossing behavior by Legg. One student reporter who graduated in the late 1970s reported to us that one of his/her classmates had an emotional and sexual relationship with Legg that began when she was in high school and continued into her college years. S/he learned of this relationship while in high school from some of his/her classmates. The student confirmed the relationship to this reporter some years later when s/he developed a close relationship with the student. S/he also saw “hundreds” of letters that Legg had written to the student. Another student reporter who graduated in the late 1980s reported that Legg had tried to “groom” her, wrote her letters, and made a mixed tape of romantic songs for her.

We also received a second-hand report that another student from the late 1980s was “harassed by” Legg during high school, and that he would call her and tell her to meet him somewhere at night. This student told the reporter about the behavior at the time it was occurring because she felt that she had to acquiesce to Legg’s demands in order to get a positive recommendation for college, and she was distressed about how to handle the situation. Several other reporters also mentioned this student as someone who was singled out by Legg as one of his favorite students, and to whom he paid a lot more attention than to other students.

Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Legg’s Misconduct

Legg was, by all accounts, a “brilliant” and “charismatic” teacher, described by several alumni as “the best teacher” they had during their time at Maret. He coached several different

sports teams over the years, was involved in numerous theater productions, and provided thoughtful and extensive written feedback on students' work, in addition to his challenging classroom teaching. He was described by students, variously, as “dapper,” “athletic,” “handsome,” “witty,” and, to some, almost a peer.²⁴ One student reported that Legg was the object of “crushes” by female students, while some male students wanted to be like him. At least one faculty member described him as having a “cult following” among some students.

Legg's former colleagues nearly uniformly acknowledged his excellent teaching, “brilliance,” and “charisma,” and one described him as “magical.” In a school noted for fostering close relationships between faculty members and students, Legg stood out to both students and other faculty as enjoying closer relationships with students than any other teacher enjoyed. One former colleague recalled, however, that “there was something about the relationships that [Legg] had that [was] really about him,” in contrast to other faculty who had close relationships with students but who “were in it for the kids.”²⁵

Former colleagues and students alike reported that Legg used his quick wit and charm to manipulate both colleagues and students, by “talk[ing] about other people [and] skewer[ing] them” and dividing “the in crowd” from the “not in crowd.” “He was pretty manipulative psychologically . . . very powerful. Everyone was a little scared of him,” a former colleague reported. Part of his power to manipulate others derived from his perceived closeness to Sturtevant, who had taught Legg at Landon School, brought him to Maret as a teacher, and also was viewed as a “father figure” to Legg, who lost both of his parents under tragic circumstances.

²⁴ Legg “would talk trash about other students and other faculty” to some students.

²⁵ One teacher noted that Legg “was a terrific teacher [but that] in retrospect, . . . there was this other side to him that was not healthy or helpful to the kids.”

Legg was seen by many as a “golden boy,” in the inner circle at Maret, and by some as an “heir apparent” to Sturtevant, and virtually untouchable at the School.

It is not surprising, against this backdrop, that some rumors or comments that Legg seemed “too close” to some students were shared among faculty but did not reach the School leadership—or, when they did, did not result in any action against Legg—until 1989 when his conduct with EL Victim 4 came to light.²⁶ Some faculty members reported observing conduct by Legg with female students that they believe was inappropriate or made them “uncomfortable.” However, at the time, they thought it was not “[their] business,” or didn’t believe anything inappropriate really could be going on. One reported that s/he had asked Legg about the rumors, but accepted Legg’s denial that “there was nothing to them.” Additionally, some faculty members did not understand “grooming” as a potentially harmful or predatory approach to vulnerable children, and so may not have recognized the full significance of their observations and concerns.

One faculty member who felt that Legg’s “closeness” with female students “seemed to cross a line,” told us that s/he had raised with Sturtevant “informally” and “casually” the rumors going around about Legg’s “closeness” with female students, and that Sturtevant had responded that he was aware of the rumors “but couldn’t go any further . . . unless someone stepped forward and wanted to pursue it.”

²⁶ A number of students reported that “everyone knew” (and they believed that the faculty also “knew”) that Legg would select a “special [female] student” each year, “serially grooming multiple students” for inappropriate sexual encounters. While some faculty members and administrators from the 1980s were aware of such rumors, none reported believing them to be true, or having actual knowledge of inappropriate conduct.

For both students and faculty, Maret, in the 1970s and 1980s, did not have a culture of “reporting” misconduct—either formally or informally.²⁷ However, concerns about Legg were communicated directly to Sturtevant by two parents, a student, and eventually a friend group of one of the victims. As noted above, we believe that EL Victim 3’s parent raised concerns regarding his/her daughter’s close relationship with Legg, and, satisfied with Legg’s disavowal that he was “sleeping with” the daughter, Sturtevant seems to have forgone any further inquiry or action.²⁸ A different parent reported to us that s/he had made an appointment with Sturtevant during roughly the same period, to speak with him about stories s/he had heard about another female student being harassed by Legg in person and over the phone at night.²⁹ When the parent arrived for the meeting with Sturtevant, he had gathered a large group of “15 to 20 people”—all “in full glory saying how great the [S]chool was and [Sturtevant] was,” and that they had never heard any concerns about inappropriate behavior by Legg. The parent reported that Sturtevant was dismissive of his/her concerns, ended the meeting quickly, and neither he, nor any other administrator at the School, ever followed up with him/her.

We also were told by a student that s/he had approached Sturtevant directly in the late 1970s, and told him that Legg was “going out” with a student who was a classmate. That student reported to us that Sturtevant dismissed his/her comment by suggesting that the classmate was imagining such involvement and therefore was not to be believed. As we were unable to

²⁷ Nor, as discussed below in Section II.D., were boundaries between faculty and students clearly articulated or consistently adhered to at the School during the 1970s and 1980s. We could not find any written policies or procedures for this period that set out standards for faculty conduct or a process for reporting suspected violations.

²⁸ We heard third-hand that EL Victim 3’s parents had expressed similar concerns to another administrator, who raised the concerns with Sturtevant, but they were dismissed as un-concerning since the parents had enrolled EL Victim 3’s sibling at Maret.

²⁹ The parent told us that s/he had sought, unsuccessfully, to enlist other parents to go with him/her to meet with Sturtevant, but that the parents did not want to “get involved.”

interview Sturtevant, and Legg did not admit to any inappropriate conduct other than with EL Victim 4, we could not corroborate any of the reports to Sturtevant; nevertheless we credit all three, as Sturtevant's reported response in each case is consistent with a view from those who worked closely with him that he would not take action unless a victim came forward to him.³⁰

Sturtevant eventually did act, in the Fall of 1988, when he learned of concerns raised by a group of EL Victim 4's friends that "something was going on" between their friend and Legg.³¹ Although the precise details and sequence of events is uncertain, shortly after concerns were raised, Legg entered a rehabilitation program for alcohol abuse.³²

Whatever the sequence of events, Legg was away for several weeks, in part over winter break. When Legg returned to Maret in early 1989, he was removed from the Head of Upper School position, his presence on campus was limited to the regular school day and teaching his courses, and his desk was removed to a large public space.³³ Legg's return to the School was met with substantial outrage among the faculty, and questioning of the School leadership's decision to allow him to return given the nature of the misconduct. Several faculty members recounted to us a tense meeting at an off-campus retreat site at which the School's values, the

³⁰ We also heard several stories of a "chalking" incident at the School, in the early to mid-1980s where Legg and another teacher were identified on a public placard or speed bump at the School as "sleeping with [their] students." Although we heard from one teacher of his/her belief that Sturtevant was aware of the "chalking," we did not speak to anyone who recalled talking to him about it.

³¹ We received two different accounts of how the concerns were raised with Sturtevant ultimately. One was that the friend group told an administrator who then relayed their concerns to Sturtevant; the other is that the friend group told a faculty member, who then brought the friend group to Sturtevant's office and had them speak directly to Sturtevant about their concerns.

³² We heard various accounts of Legg's rumored conduct with EL Victim 4 that led to his being sent to a rehabilitation program. The School was unable to locate any personnel or other records that might have documented the conduct at issue and the basis for the decision to require Legg to undergo an alcohol rehabilitation process. No faculty or administrators with whom we spoke reported awareness of alcohol abuse by Legg, although many reported that he drank alcohol with other faculty members regularly—several of whom, including the Headmaster, were treated for alcoholism at some point.

³³ As with most teachers without a senior administrative position, Legg no longer had an office when he returned to Maret after rehabilitation. "Office hours" or other meetings took place in the teacher's classroom.

message being communicated by allowing Legg to return, and similar soul-searching issues were explored.

Although we were not able to speak with Sturtevant directly, we understand from individuals who worked closely with him during this period that Sturtevant's thinking, simplistically restated, was that the offending conduct was caused by alcohol abuse and that by addressing the alcohol problem first, the misconduct with EL Victim 4 could be addressed when he returned and was sober. We also heard that the School leadership concluded that EL Victim 4's "best interests" would be served by allowing Legg to return to Maret, in the normal course (and with the noted restrictions), after his rehabilitation. However, increasing pressure from the Board, faculty, and parents regarding Legg's continued presence on the faculty resulted in Sturtevant ultimately terminating Legg at the end of the 1988–1989 school year.

As noted above, the School has no records of these decisions, or related actions regarding Legg arising from his conduct with EL Victim 4. Two administrators told us that, at some point, they wrote letters of recommendation for Legg that praised his teaching but also noted that anyone considering hiring him either "must talk to him about his leaving Maret," or "would have to contact [Maret] about the reasons that he left." Neither thought Legg could effectively use his/her letter to get another teaching job given that language.³⁴ Legg did not recall either letter having been written.

Talbott arrived at Maret in 1994, and during her first few years as Head of School, she heard rumors at alumni gatherings of Legg's multiple "relationships" with students and his dismissal. In response to these concerns, after speaking with Sturtevant about what had occurred, Talbott removed Legg from all of Maret's mailing lists, and noted in her records that

³⁴ One letter reportedly was given to Legg; the other sent directly to a school in Virginia.

he “[was] not to be invited onto campus [or given] any reference or recommendation” from the School. She also reported to the DC Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA”) that Legg had been terminated in the late 1980s because of specific “allegations [that] he had had a sexual relationship with a student,” but was told that they would not investigate unless a victim came forward. Talbott reported Legg to the DC CFSA again in 2014,³⁵ and in 2017, when she heard from several alumni and former faculty members that Legg had had sexual relationships with several of his students.³⁶ In 2017, the School reported to DC CFSA that Legg was working at a high school in Loudoun County, Virginia, but was told that Loudoun County Child Protective Services would not open an investigation regarding abuse that occurred outside of Loudoun County. The School then reported to the Loudoun County Attorney’s Office and asked that they contact the high school where Legg was teaching, to notify them directly of the reports received by Maret.³⁷

Upon receiving the August 2019 Report of this investigation to the Head of School and Board President, the School notified the Loudoun County Public Schools system that Maret had received reports of inappropriate sexual contact and grooming of students by Legg, when he was a faculty member at the School. The School further reported that it had conducted an independent investigation and that the investigators had received credible reports of Legg’s misconduct involving four Maret students, and provided the timeframe for the conduct.

³⁵ As noted above, a former student reported to Talbott in 2014 that Legg had had several “affairs” with students at the School.

³⁶ Some of these conversations resulted from the invitations to share stories of past abuse in the “Messages from Marjo” periodically published to the Maret Community, *see below*, at Section III, in addition to Talbott’s informal inquiries of individuals who had been on campus during Legg’s tenure at Maret.

³⁷ An Assistant County Attorney for Loudoun County had suggested to the School that the victims themselves be encouraged to contact Rock Ridge High School, where Legg was teaching.

Michael Oehmann

Michael Oehmann was a teacher in the Humanities Department at Maret from 1980 to 1994. He resigned in 1994 and went to teach at Hampton Roads Academy in Newport News, VA. To the best of our knowledge, he is no longer teaching.

During the course of our investigation, we received one credible first-hand report of a sexual relationship that Oehmann had with a student, and one credible first-hand report of inappropriate emotional boundary-crossing with a student. Prior to our investigation, Maret also received a credible first-hand report of another sexual encounter that Oehmann had with a student. We contacted Oehmann to give him an opportunity to respond to the allegations. He responded with a letter that stated that it was his understanding that “in the course of your investigation other persons had conveyed to you rumors of improper conduct on my part at Maret. I choose to make no comment about these rumors.”

MO Victim 1

We received a credible first-hand report that Oehmann had a sexual relationship with a student in the early 1980s (MO Victim 1) when she was in her junior year at Maret.³⁸ The conduct began after Oehmann was drinking with MO Victim 1 and several other students, and lasted for several months. During this time they had sex on multiple occasions. She recalled that Oehmann told her he was ending the relationship when they were “standing outside on the back porch maybe during recess.”

MO Victim 1’s account of her sexual encounters with Oehmann was corroborated by several sources. One student reporter told us that MO Victim 1 told him/her about the sexual

³⁸ MO Victim 1 also provided information to Maret investigators in 2014, as part of its review of allegations received regarding sexual misconduct by Oehmann with female students. We were provided with notes from that interview, but because we were able to speak with her directly, relied on our own assessments of her account. However, her account to Maret’s investigators in 2014 is consistent with what she told us.

relationship at the time it was occurring. Another student reporter told us that s/he also knew that MO Victim 1 was having a sexual relationship with Oehmann at the time it was occurring, but could not recall how s/he had learned that information.

MO Victim 2

MO Victim 2 reported to Talbott in 2014 that she had had a sexual encounter with Oehmann in the 1980s while she was in high school. MO Victim 2 reported that she had told a school administrator about this at the time it occurred, but that the administrator had not taken any action. She also reported that she made a public statement about the sexual abuse at a School event, and that no one took any actions in response to her statement. MO Victim 2 did not contact us during the course of our investigation, so we have only Maret's notes of what she reported to the School in 2014. As such, we have credited this as a first-hand report, but have given it less weight than a report made directly to us.

Though we did not speak with MO Victim 2, we did receive information that we believe corroborates her prior report. Three students with whom we spoke provided us information about a sexual encounter between Oehmann and someone who, based upon the details they provided, we believe to be MO Victim 2. We have not included the details of what these reporters conveyed to us in this public Report.

MO Victim 3

We received a credible first-hand report of emotional boundary-crossing behavior by Oehmann with a student who graduated in the early 1980s. MO Victim 3 reported to us that Oehmann would go to bars with her and other students. She reported that, while there, he "made passes" at her, and once told her that they were "soulmates."

Other Reports

We also received several second or third-hand reports of sexual or other inappropriate conduct by Oehmann with other students. One reporter told us that, while s/he was in high school, a student (not one of the Victims identified above) said to him/her “I slept with Oehmann the other night.” At least one other reporter also identified this student as spending a lot of time hanging out and smoking with Oehmann.

Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Oehmann’s Misconduct

MO Victim 2 reported to Talbott that she had told an administrator about Oehmann’s misconduct, and that nothing was done in response. One of the students with whom we spoke said that MO Victim 2 had told him/her this as well. Beyond this one report, we found no other evidence that the School had actual knowledge—as opposed to having heard rumors—of Oehmann’s misconduct with students while he was at Maret.³⁹ The administrator to whom MO Victim 2 allegedly reported Oehmann’s misconduct has since passed away so we were unable to speak with him/her, but the School’s notes from a prior interview with this administrator, conducted by an investigator that Maret hired in 2014, reflect that the administrator had heard “general rumors” of Oehmann’s misconduct, but nothing specific. This administrator also referenced Oehmann’s “loose boundaries” with students, noting that there was something about Oehmann’s “charismatic . . . clubbiness” and “devote[d]” following among certain students, that

³⁹ We understand from notes of prior interviews regarding Oehmann’s misconduct that, consistent with our observations regarding the cultural context of Legg’s misconduct, one administrator distinguished the 1980s as “much [less] codified and . . . boundaries-based” than Maret’s climate a decade later, and found no evidence that the rumors or concerns were the subject of further inquiry, or otherwise acted on, by the School. We are aware from several reporters that it was known around the School that Oehmann was treated for mental health difficulties at some point during his time at Maret, and it is possible that the rumors were conflated with those difficulties.

made him/her “uncomfortable.” This description of Oehmann was similar to that reported by others.

MO Victim 2 also reported to Talbott that she had alluded to what had happened with Oehmann in a paper she had written for a particular class. Notes from the 2014 investigation reflect that this faculty member did not recall reading something that would have suggested Oehmann’s sexual involvement with a student. However, this faculty member acknowledged having heard “vague rumors” of Oehmann’s misconduct with students, and that it was possible that such an allusion had been made and that s/he failed to pick up on it.

Regarding the public comment by MO Victim 2 at the particular School event, two students with whom we spoke recalled hearing MO Victim 2 say something at the event about “hypocrisy” at Maret, or allude to sexual misconduct by faculty. None of the faculty with whom we spoke recall hearing, or hearing about, any such comments made at that event.

Finally, a number of students reported to us that at graduation one year someone had written a message in chalk on a speedbump or public placard on campus accusing Oehmann of sleeping with his students.⁴⁰ We did hear from one faculty member that the “chalking” was known to the Headmaster and other senior administrators, and s/he believes that Oehmann was asked about it. All accounts noted the hasty removal of the “chalked” message, once discovered. And students who reported seeing the chalked message uniformly told us that the School did not discuss the message with the students. Several alumni reported that the School leadership’s failure to publicly acknowledge the chalking, or discuss it with the School Community, had a “silencing effect” on them—suggesting “an ugly truth but nobody did anything,” or willful ignorance, on the part of the School.

⁴⁰ As discussed above, some accounts indicated that Legg also was referenced in the “chalked” message.

We found no evidence of contemporaneous action taken by the School to address Oehmann’s misconduct.⁴¹ When MO Victim 2 reported the misconduct in 2014, Talbott reported the allegations to DC CFSA,⁴² and informally inquired of trusted faculty and Board member(s) as to what they might know about the allegations. The School also hired an outside investigator to investigate the allegations and complete “a preliminary evaluation of the school’s legal and moral obligations” in light of MO Victim 2’s allegations. Although no formal findings appear to have been reported by the investigator,⁴³ Maret issued a “Message From Marjo” in December 2014 reminding the Community of the School’s “unwavering principles around creating a safe environment” and reiterating expectations of all adults in the Community regarding “respecting our students.” Talbott also noted that “a small number of individuals ha[d] come forward to report concerns about sexual misconduct or abuse, either in the home or at the School” and encouraged members of the School Community to report any experience of abuse to the School or to the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department (“MPD”)/ DC CFSA.

Vern Elder

Vern Elder was a Lower School physical education teacher, and then a maintenance worker, at Maret from 1973 to 1994. He also used Maret’s facilities to operate an external gymnastics program that he owned, called “Triangle Gym,” where he trained children from Maret and other schools. Although some have speculated that Elder worked in other settings

⁴¹ Records indicate that Oehmann resigned from Maret of his own accord in 1994 to pursue other job opportunities.

⁴² A further report was made later in 2014, regarding MO Victim 1’s allegations of Oehmann’s misconduct.

⁴³ We understand that they were able to speak only with MO Victim 1, and two faculty members; as MO Victim 2, and Oehmann, both declined to speak with them.

with children after leaving Maret, we have little information regarding his whereabouts or activities after leaving the School in 1994.⁴⁴ Elder passed away in 2009, so we were unable to speak with him during our investigation.

Prior to this investigation, Maret received two first-hand reports of sexual touching and inappropriate physical boundary-crossing by Elder in the 1980s. We spoke with one of these victims in 2018, prior to this current investigation, in the context of investigating those specific reports, and spoke to that victim again briefly in the context of this investigation to confirm that the account she previously provided was accurate. We spoke to the second victim during our investigation as well, and confirmed that the information that she had provided to Maret in 2017 was accurate. Notes obtained from Maret indicate that the School also received a second-hand report in the late 1980s or early 1990s of inappropriate physical boundary-crossing by Elder. During the course of our investigation, we also received several other second or third-hand reports, as well as numerous reports of rumors regarding Elder's conduct with young female students.

VE Victim 1

VE Victim 1 did not attend Maret, but participated in Elder's after-school gymnastics program on the Maret campus. In November 2017, Maret became aware of a tweet from VE Victim 1's Twitter account that stated, in part, "Vern Elder is a child molester. . . . Funny thing: I didn't realize I could have come forward, bc 'all that happened to me' was that he pressed his erection against my hip as he was spotting me in gym, when I was 11 or 12. I knew many girls who had suffered much worse." According to notes from Maret, the School reached out to VE Victim 1 after seeing her tweet and Talbott spoke to her regarding her experiences. She reported

⁴⁴ One reporter told us that s/he believes that Elder taught at a children's camp when he left Maret in 1994.

that “one day he put his erected penis up against her leg.” She further reported that Elder “would groom 7 to 13 year[-]old girls and molest them.” VE Victim 1 did not provide any information regarding the other girls who allegedly were molested by Elder. We spoke with VE Victim 1 and confirmed the account she had previously reported to Maret, and also were able to review Maret’s notes of conversations School administrators had with her. VE Victim 1 told us that she was aware of other girls who were similarly molested by Elder and that she had spoken with one of them years ago about coming forward, but that the victim was unwilling to do so at that time.

VE Victim 2

Shortly after Maret spoke with VE Victim 1, a student (VE Victim 2) contacted Talbott to report that she also had been touched inappropriately by Elder in the early 1980s. VE Victim 2 was a Maret student from seventh to ninth grades in the 1980s. VE Victim 2 told Talbott that she “first started gym with Vern Elder when [she] was in the fourth grade and went four times per week for three years.” She did not explain what conduct she had experienced, but stated that “[m]any adults failed me during those three years. What Vern was doing to me and to many other girls was no secret.”

In response to this report, Maret engaged Crowell & Moring LLP to obtain further information regarding any sexual abuse or inappropriate touching by Elder of VE Victim 2, or any other student. The only potential victim with whom we were able to speak at that time was VE Victim 2. VE Victim 2 reported to us that Elder did “a lot of touching . . . of [her] genitalia” and “making [her] touch him.” She reported possible other conduct but struggled to speak about it, saying that she “could not put it all together right now.” She reported that this conduct

occurred in the Maret gym when she was there alone with Elder, and once in Elder’s car when he drove her home after Triangle Gym practice.⁴⁵

Other Reports

We reviewed notes from Maret that reflect that the School received a second-hand report of inappropriate touching by Elder in the late 1980s or early 1990s. As discussed further below, one of VE Victim 2’s parents contacted Maret in 1990 to report that VE Victim 2 “had been sexually molested by Vern Elder . . . when she was attending Triangle Gym at the Maret School.”⁴⁶ Sturtevant responded with a hand-written note to VE Victim 2’s parent stating, in part, that another student’s parents had “told [him] of a similar past experience with Vern Elder that [VE Victim 2] has undergone, also at his Triangle gym sessions.” Neither the parents nor the student referenced in Sturtevant’s note has ever contacted us, so our only information regarding this report is that reflected in Sturtevant’s note.

During our investigation, we also received several second-hand reports regarding inappropriate touching by Elder. One student who graduated in the late 1980s reported that, when s/he was in eighth or ninth grade, several of his/her female classmates talked “about inappropriate touching by [Elder] when we were in fourth grade.” This reporter did not provide any specific detail as to what the inappropriate touching entailed. Another reporter who graduated in the early 1990s reported that, while she was at a School retreat for girls during her junior or senior year, she heard from several classmates that Elder “molested a lot of people.” She further reported that one student “started breaking down about how she was molested by

⁴⁵ VE Victim 2 also reported her belief that at least four other girls, in addition to herself and VE Victim 1, had been abused by Elder in the Gym program while students at Maret. She did not reveal their identities when she was interviewed in 2018, and none contacted us in response to the February 2019 letter to the Community regarding this investigation.

⁴⁶ The parent reported that the information had been reported to law enforcement authorities.

him.” This reporter did not provide any details regarding the alleged abuse. We heard from numerous other student and faculty reporters that Elder was “creepy,” and “gropey,” that he was “a little touchy feely with students,” that students warned other students to stay away from him, and that girls were uncomfortable around him. One faculty reporter told us that Elder actually brought up the rumors about him touching girls inappropriately during a faculty meeting, and “said it was not true.”

Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Elder’s Misconduct

We have no indication that Maret was aware of Elder’s inappropriate touching prior to it having been brought to Sturtevant’s attention in 1990 by the parents of the student referenced in Sturtevant’s correspondence with VE Victim 2’s parent. As noted, VE Victim 2’s parent also reported VE Victim 2’s abuse to Sturtevant, and then expressed “great concern . . . that [Elder] is still teaching at Maret, and may be continuing to conduct evening gym classes for girls. We have reason to believe that at least one other family has had a similar experience.” And, as reported above, Sturtevant confirmed back to VE Victim 2’s parent that another family had reported “a similar past experience,” and that he had offered those parents “an opportunity to confront [] Elder in my office, which they declined.” Sturtevant went on to say that he had “t[aken] that on [him]self” to confront Elder, and then extended the same offer to confront Elder to VE Victim 2’s parent(s). Sturtevant assured VE Victim 2’s parent that he “appreciate[d] [the] warning,” and that “Elder’s Triangle program was terminated and he is assigned no gym classes by the [S]chool.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Although removed from teaching gym classes, Elder remained in Maret’s employ, doing maintenance work around the gym and other parts of the campus.

Maret's Board Minutes reflect that several years later, in 1993, graffiti was painted on the New Gym walls (twice), and flyers were posted in the neighborhood urging people to "break the silence," alleging that Elder was a "child molester," and condemning the School for "ignor[ing] the problem for the sake of a man's reputation or a school's pristine image."⁴⁸ VE Victim 2's parent wrote to the School again, this time to the Board of Trustees, noting "the recent controversy over [] Elder," and referencing the 1990 correspondence with Sturtevant. The parent questioned whether Elder should continue to be permitted "to work in an environment where he might prey on young girls" and urged the School to "inform any other educational institution or summer camp of the accusations against" Elder.⁴⁹ The parent also asked whether the School had required Elder "to seek treatment for pedophilia as a condition of his continued employment," and whether other incidents involving Elder had been reported to the School.

Board Minutes reference this 1993 correspondence with VE Victim 2's parent and note that "[n]o formal charges [had been] brought [against Elder],"⁵⁰ that the Triangle Gym program had been terminated "because of corporate liability issues," and that Sturtevant had reported that Elder was relieved of his Lower School gym duties "because of [his] volatile temper." Elder continued to work in the maintenance department, helping to build sets for theatrical performances, and other similar duties, until his retirement at the end of the 1993–1994 academic year.

⁴⁸ VE Victim 1 reported that she was responsible for the graffiti and posted flyers, and that she had resorted to these actions only after telling Sturtevant directly that Elder was a pedophile and questioning his continued status as a School employee after several reports had been made about his misconduct.

⁴⁹ Board Minutes from 1993 reflect that Sturtevant reported a meeting with VE Victim 2's parent and the School's attorney in which the parent was told that without formal charges Maret was "not [] in a position to" inform potential employers of the allegations against Elder.

⁵⁰ VE Victim 2's parent wrote to the Board that "[d]ue to the traumatic and far reaching effects of the abuse, my daughter is still not able to confront the pain involved in coming forward to bring civil or criminal charges."

Shortly after arriving at Maret in 1994, Talbott heard about Elder’s conduct. She reviewed existing files and called DC CFSA to confirm that Elder was in their system, removed him from Maret’s mailing lists and took steps to ensure that he would not be invited back to campus. In 2017, the School saw the tweet by VE Victim 1 about Elder’s molestation of students and Maret’s failure to take action at the time. After reaching out to VE Victim 1 and listening, Talbott addressed the Maret Community with a November 16, 2017 Message regarding “Our Continued Vigilance around Safe Boundaries.”⁵¹ The School also confirmed again with DC CFSA that Elder was in their system. In December 2017, after a communication with VE Victim 2, Maret hired Crowell & Moring LLP to investigate the allegations, who found VE Victim 2’s report of abuse to be credible.

Kevin Vereecke

Kevin Vereecke was a photography teacher and advisor for the literary magazine at Maret from July 2005 through October 2008. Vereecke had mental health and alcoholism issues while at Maret, and left the school briefly during the 2007–2008 school year to seek treatment before returning to finish out the school year. He continued to have difficulties at the beginning of the 2008–2009 school year, and left Maret shortly after the school year began.⁵²

⁵¹ Available at [https://www.maret.org/about-us/leadership/messages-from-marjo/details-messages-
mt/~board/messages-from-marjo/post/our-continued-vigilance-around-safe-boundaries](https://www.maret.org/about-us/leadership/messages-from-marjo/details-messages-mt/~board/messages-from-marjo/post/our-continued-vigilance-around-safe-boundaries). Although this Message was previously planned, its publication was timely under the circumstances.

⁵² We received conflicting information regarding whether Vereecke resigned or was terminated. Talbott reported that she fired him after learning that he was still drinking, and there are some notes from the School that support this. However, his personnel file also contains a memo that indicates that he resigned after the School was not able to provide him additional paid leave, and includes a resignation letter from him.

We received a credible first-hand report that, during his time at Maret, Vereecke engaged in a sexual relationship with a student. We also received a credible second-hand report that Vereecke engaged in inappropriate boundary-crossing conduct with another Maret student. We contacted Vereecke and asked to speak with him regarding any information he may have concerning faculty misconduct with students at Maret. We received a response from his attorney, interested in knowing the specifics of our inquiry. We explained that we had reports that Vereecke had engaged in inappropriate sexual and emotional boundary-crossing conduct with Maret students. Though his attorney told us that s/he would speak with Vereecke and get back to us, we did not hear anything further from Vereecke or his counsel.

KV Victim 1

KV Victim 1 had an emotional and sexual relationship with Vereecke while she was in high school. Their interaction began during a school trip with multiple students.⁵³ On this trip, Vereecke spent a considerable amount of time hanging out with the students in their hotel rooms and bought the students alcoholic drinks when they were out at restaurants.⁵⁴ According to KV Victim 1, after the school trip, Vereecke began texting KV Victim 1⁵⁵ and “it got more and more explicit.” Their physical involvement began one day when KV Victim 1 “went to the dark room and [Vereecke] grabbed [KV Victim 1]” and kissed her. KV Victim 1 reported that this began a

⁵³ KV Victim 1 explained that she had sought out Vereecke for help and advice in stopping peer harassment that she was experiencing at Maret, after getting no effective assistance from the senior administrator to whom she had gone for help. According to KV Victim 1, Vereecke was successful in stopping the harassment of her (by calling the harassers and threatening them), “but there was a big price for that,” she observed, in recounting her experiences with Vereecke.

⁵⁴ KV Victim 1 also reported that another student told her that s/he got high with Vereecke on another occasion.

⁵⁵ Vereecke had KV Victim 1’s cell phone number due to the School trip.

sexual relationship that lasted for more than one year. She reported that they engaged in sexual activity in multiple locations including the School and his car. It ended when he left Maret.

KV Victim 1's account of what happened between her and Vereecke was corroborated through multiple sources. We reviewed communications between Vereecke and KV Victim 1, as well as a communication that KV Victim 1 sent to a friend shortly after she graduated that detailed the relationship. We also spoke to two student reporters who were friends with KV Victim 1 during high school. One student reported that s/he knew during high school that Vereecke and KV Victim 1 were having a physical relationship, and said that KV Victim 1 told him/her at the time that she and Vereecke would "make out" in the dark room. The student also reported that KV Victim 1 would tell people that she was with the student when she was actually at Vereecke's house, and then ask her friend to "cover for her."⁵⁶ The other student reporter told us that KV Victim 1 told him/her that she had a sexual relationship with Vereecke a few years after it happened. The account that s/he reported to us was consistent with what we heard from KV Victim 1.

KV Victim 2

We received a credible second-hand report from the parent of a student who reported that s/he once discovered his/her daughter sneaking out of the house late in the evening around the time that Vereecke left Maret to meet him and give him a gift. The parent believes that Vereecke and KV Victim 2 had made a plan to meet at night. The parent reported this incident to Maret the next day. This account is supported by notes from Maret that indicate that the parent contacted Maret about this incident around the time of Vereecke's departure and reported that his/her daughter "was in contact with [Vereecke]."

⁵⁶ This student also reported that s/he heard from other students that Vereecke had gotten drunk with them.

Maret's Knowledge of, and Response to, Vereecke's Misconduct

School records indicate that Maret administrators were aware of some “boundary issues” with Vereecke during his employment, and counseled him regarding “the need to have the students call him ‘Mr. Vereecke’ [and not by his first name . . . and that] [h]e also has to be careful that some of his students are not too familiar with him.” However, there is no indication that Maret was aware of the sexual relationship between Vereecke and KV Victim 1 at the time that it was occurring, or that the School had any awareness of any contact between Vereecke and KV Victim 2 outside of school until the parent reported the conduct.⁵⁷ When Maret learned of the contact between Vereecke and KV Victim 2, an administrator called Vereecke (who had left Maret’s employ shortly before) and told him that he should not have any contact with Maret students.

In 2011, KV Victim 1 contacted Maret and reported the conduct she experienced with Vereecke. Maret’s notes from those conversations indicate that the information they received from KV Victim 1 at that time is consistent with what she subsequently reported to us. When Maret learned of the conduct, the School reported it to the DC CFSA. A detective came to the School and also spoke with KV Victim 1. KV Victim 1 chose not to press charges and the case was closed. Maret inquired about Vereecke’s whereabouts and determined that he was no longer in the DC area and was no longer working with children. Talbott also sent her first Letter to the Maret Community in 2011, encouraging individuals who had experienced misconduct to come forward.

⁵⁷ KV Victim 1 reported to us that she believed the School was concerned about Vereecke’s conduct while he was at the School because an administrator had put a post-it note over the light switch in his classroom that stated “do not turn the light off when alone here with a student.” However, we spoke to the administrator and s/he reported that there was a sign but it said “lights need to stay on,” and it was intended to keep *students* from turning off the lights because they liked to turn off the overhead lights and have only ambient light in the room and it often got more dark in the room than the administrator thought appropriate.

B. Other Credible Accounts of Faculty Misconduct.

Faculty Member 1

Faculty Member 1 was an Upper School science teacher in the 1970s. We received a credible first-hand report of inappropriate boundary-crossing behavior with a student. This student reported to us that Faculty Member 1 offered to take students to the Chesapeake Bay for the weekend on a science-related field trip. The student and a classmate signed up to go. Faculty Member 1 picked them up in his car, and as they were heading out of town, they learned for the first time that they were the only students going on the trip. The student reported that she, her friend, and Faculty Member 1 stayed by themselves in a cabin in a relatively remote area near the Chesapeake Bay for two nights.⁵⁸ They spent the daytime hours together and ate meals together, but slept in separate rooms. The student reported that it made her very uncomfortable to be on a trip with just Faculty Member 1 and her friend. She further reported that, when they were sitting around in the cabin at some point during the weekend, Faculty Member 1 offered to give her and her friend massages. They declined and he did not pursue it further.

Maret's Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 1's Misconduct

The student reported that when she returned from the field trip, she told one of her parents what had occurred and s/he was “mortified and pissed” and “called Peter Sturtevant and reported it.” She does not know if Sturtevant took any action in response to her parent’s complaint. She does not recall having further interactions with Faculty Member 1, and said she “thinks [she] tried to steer clear” of him.⁵⁹ Maret was unable to provide us any personnel file for

⁵⁸ The student reported that Faculty Member 1’s girlfriend may have joined them for the second night.

⁵⁹ The student also reported this incident to the School in November 2017 in response to Talbott’s “Message from Marjo” regarding “our continued vigilance around safe boundaries.” (see footnote 51 for link)

Faculty Member 1 so we were unable to ascertain exactly when he left Maret, but based upon yearbooks, we believe he had left by 1980. Faculty Member 1 has passed away so we were unable to interview him.

Faculty Member 2

Faculty Member 2 was a teacher and coach, among other positions that he held at Maret, over a period of many years. We received a first-hand report of boundary-crossing behavior from a student who reported that Faculty Member 2 showered after sports activities with Maret students in the communal showers on a regular basis. According to the reporter, Faculty Member 2 would “drop his towel and walk into the middle of the guys” in the shower, and he would also “berate [them]” while he was showering with them. The student reported that he found the conduct to be “creepy” and “weird,” that it made him very uncomfortable, and that no other faculty member showered with students after sports activities. We spoke with Faculty Member 2 and he acknowledged that he had showered with students “a couple times.”

Maret’s Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 2’s Misconduct

There is no indication that the School was aware of Faculty Member 2’s conduct. The student who reported the conduct did not report it to any administrators at the time, and could not recall whether any other faculty members were in the shower area or locker room while Faculty Member 2 was showering with the students.

Faculty Member 3

Faculty Member 3 was a Lower School teacher at Maret from the late 1970s to the late 2000s. He left Maret after the School rescinded his contract for the following school year. He

went on to work as a bus driver for another school district, and a lunchroom aide at an elementary School.⁶⁰ To the best of our knowledge, he is no longer working in a school.

We received three credible first-hand reports of inappropriate touching and physical boundary-crossing by Faculty Member 3 with students. We also received several second and third-hand accounts of physical and emotional boundary-crossing by Faculty Member 3. We contacted Faculty Member 3 to give him an opportunity to respond to the allegations, and were called back by his counsel. His counsel advised us, after speaking with Faculty Member 3 about the allegations, that he denied any inappropriate contact with his students at Maret.

FM 3 Victim 1

FM 3 Victim 1 was a student of Faculty Member 3's in fourth grade in the mid-1980s. She reported to us that Faculty Member 3 was "creepy touchy," that he often had children sitting on his lap, that he was often holding hands with children, and was "very huggy." FM 3 Victim 1 also reported a specific incident that occurred when she was not feeling well during school one day. According to FM 3 Victim 1, Faculty Member 3 kept her in the classroom by herself with him during recess and put his hand up her shirt on her bare skin, ostensibly to "check if [she] had a fever." FM 3 Victim 1 told him to stop touching her and he removed his hand. According to FM 3 Victim 1, she reported Faculty Member 3's conduct to her parents who then reported it to the Head of the Lower School at the time. FM 3 Victim 1 reported to us that the Head of the Lower School then spoke with Faculty Member 3, who denied the allegation, and the School did not take any further action.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Faculty Member 3's LinkedIn page also indicates that he has been "staff" at another elementary school from 2010 to "present." However, that school's website does not list him as a staff member.

⁶¹ FM 3 Victim 1 reported to us that the Head of the Lower School did not believe her account of the incident.

FM 3 Victim 1 also reported that Faculty Member 3 repeatedly touched other children in a manner that made her and others uncomfortable. She reported that she overheard another parent tell one of her parents that Faculty Member 3 would massage the other parent's daughter's neck and that the daughter thought it was "creepy."

FM 3 Victim 2

FM 3 Victim 2 also was a fourth grade student of Faculty Member 3's in the mid-1980s. FM 3 Victim 2 reported that Faculty Member 3 required her to sit right next to him while she was reading aloud to him one-on-one, which she thought was unnecessary given her reading ability and made her uncomfortable. She reported that he put his arm around her in an uncomfortably close "cuddle," like "when a parent reads their child a bedtime story" and that he left his hand on her while she read. She described in some detail the dread she felt when she had to be with him.

FM 3 Victim 2 also reported an incident that she witnessed happen to a friend and classmate. She reported that approximately five children were given pins or badges to wear for a school event. Faculty Member 3 "insisted on helping [FM 3 Victim 2's friend] put her pin on. To do this he knelt down on both knees and then put one hand under her shirt . . . and used his other hand to guide the pin." FM 3 Victim 2 reported that her friend gave her a "look of resignation," which she interpreted as "here we go again." She noted that Faculty Member 3 put the pin only on her friend who, she said, was one of the more developed girls in the class, and not on the other students. FM 3 Victim 2 and her friend talked shortly thereafter about how "gross" it was that Faculty Member 3 "had helped [FM 3 Victim 2's friend] even though we could easily put badges on without his help."

FM 3 Victim 3

In December 2017, a student (FM 3 Victim 3) contacted Maret to report conduct that occurred when she was a fourth grade student of Faculty Member 3's in the mid-1980s. She also reported to Maret at the time that, several months prior, she had contacted the police in the county where Faculty Member 3 was working to report Faculty Member 3's conduct. This student contacted us and affirmed the account that she had provided previously to the School.

FM 3 Victim 3 reported to Maret that Faculty Member 3 was a chaperone for her fourth grade class camping trip. According to Maret's notes, FM 3 Victim 3 reported that during the camping trip she was sitting on Faculty Member 3's lap and he put his hand up her shirt and touched her inappropriately. When she tried to stand up, and he pulled her back down and continued to touch her.

Other Reports

In addition to the first-hand reports described above, we received several other second and third-hand reports of physical or emotional boundary-crossing by Faculty Member 3. One reporter (who did not attend Maret but had spoken with Maret students and parents), reported that a Maret student told him/her that in fourth grade it was "well-known that you didn't leave girls alone with [Faculty Member 3]" and that "every time a girl didn't feel well, he would put his hands up her shirt" and would "take their temperature in their arm pit under their shirt." School documentation (discussed further below) also notes that the School received several reports in the 2000s from individuals who felt "somewhat uncomfortable with [Faculty Member 3's] physical contact" with students.

Maret's Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 3's Misconduct

FM 3 Victim 1 contacted Maret in 1996 (while Faculty Member 3 was still an employee) to report what had happened to her in fourth grade. Talbott spoke with FM 3 Victim 1 about the incident. She also spoke with one of FM 3 Victim 1's parents, who reported that s/he did not believe, either at the time it occurred or at the present, that Faculty Member 3 was, or had been, a threat to his/her daughter, but had informed the Head of the Lower School of the conduct back when it occurred. Maret's notes indicate that the parent told Talbott that, when s/he reported it, "Faculty Member 3 was made aware . . . and promised to give [FM 3 Victim 1] more distance."

Talbott followed up with FM 3 Victim 1 in writing to let her know that she

met with [Faculty Member 3] to discuss with him your perspective on what went on in his classroom. He heard very clearly from me that teachers must respect the feelings of their students and not infringe on their space in any uncomfortable way. I will continue to be vigilant in monitoring his actions and actions of all teachers at this [S]chool.

Documentation indicates that Maret received several other complaints about Faculty Member 3 during his tenure. A May 1, 2000 memorandum to Faculty Member 3 from Talbott states:

During the last few months, three different adults in separate conversations have stated that there are times when they see you with individual children in your class and that they feel somewhat uncomfortable with the physical contact. There have been no accusations that you have actually done anything inappropriate, but a sense of whether or not the children may feel that you are close to crossing a boundary. . . . As we discussed, in my first year I heard both directly from a former student and her [parent] that when she was in your fourth grade (approximately a decade ago) you requested and then instigated more touching than she was comfortable with. During the same first year of my tenure, I also learned that a couple of girls wrote in their creative writing course their memories of similar feelings of discomfort with you eight years earlier. My responsibility as Head of School is to ensure that all of our children feel safe at Maret. I think that you need to take particular precautions and not instigate any unnecessary physical contact with your students, even in the most casual or affectionate way. I will try to find an appropriate counselor who can work with you through some of these issues. We will continue to bring in experts to speak to the entire faculty about boundaries between teachers and students.

In the late 2000s, Maret initially offered Faculty Member 3 a contract for the following school year, but he was subsequently placed on probation due to other performance issues as well as “too much physical contact with students.” The letter notifying him of the probation stated:

In the spring of 2000 and again in 2001, I explicitly stated that you needed to work on your sense of boundaries. This is not to say that you must ensure that students have absolutely no physical contact with you; it is to say that your actions must allow for appropriate distance from students and that you must not be the one who initiates such actions. In addition, you need to be very careful not to make any student feel uncomfortable in any way by your verbal or physical cues.

Talbott reported to us that, shortly after placing Faculty Member 3 on probation, she received a report from a student that Faculty Member 3 “put his arm around her shoulders” and she found him “creepy.” Talbott decided to rescind his contract for the coming school year.

Talbott told us that she instructed others at the School not to provide a letter of recommendation for Faculty Member 3, and we found a notation at the bottom of what appeared to be a draft letter to Faculty Member 3 around the time of his departure that said “**Note to file:** We will NOT give any recommendation for [Faculty Member 3] to teach or work in schools – everyone has been informed at Maret that if [Faculty Member 3] (or anyone else) asks for a recommendation, doing so has to be approved by me.” However, documentation shows that, when Faculty Member 3 applied to be a bus driver for another school district, a Maret administrator submitted a reference form (provided by the school district) on Faculty Member 3’s behalf that rated him as “Exceeds Standards” in several categories, including “interpersonal skills.”⁶²

⁶² When we asked Talbott about this reference, she said that she did not see it before it was sent, and speculated that the administrator who completed it may have thought it was acceptable to do so because it was for a bus driver position, rather than a teaching position.

In December 2016, Talbott received a call from a parent of a student in the school district where Faculty Member 3 was working, expressing concern about Faculty Member 3's behavior with children. Talbott encouraged the parent to speak with his/her school about his/her concerns, offered to speak with school officials about Faculty Member 3's time at Maret if they wished to contact her, and encouraged him/her to contact the county's social services agencies if s/he was not satisfied with the school's response. Talbott then contacted Child Protective Services in the county where Faculty Member 3 worked to inform them of the report she had received. Shortly thereafter, Talbott received a call from the school district where Faculty Member 3 worked. She informed them that she had counseled Faculty Member 3 on a number of occasions not to have physical contact with students and that he was too affectionate with students. She further told them that in 2008 another student had reported that Faculty Member 3 made her feel uncomfortable and Maret subsequently put him on probation for the rest of the year and told him that he would not be returning to the School in the Fall. Talbott received another call from a different person from the school district in May 2017 and she provided similar information.

In December 2017, Talbott received the report from FM 3 Victim 3 detailed above. Talbott reported the information to Child Protective Services in the county where Faculty Member 3 worked. She also reached out to one of the school district personnel who previously had contacted her. This person informed her that Faculty Member 3 no longer worked at any school in the district and that there was a "No Hire" tag on his file, which meant that he had been fired and they would not provide him a reference.

Faculty Member 4

Faculty Member 4 was a teacher in the Humanities Department and administrator at Maret from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. We received one credible first-hand report that,

during his time at Maret, Faculty Member 4 engaged in inappropriate boundary-crossing physical behavior with a student in the late 1980s. This student (FM 4 Victim 1) reported that she had gone to Faculty Member 4's office, at his request, to discuss a term paper. When she was there, Faculty Member 4 told her that there was an attraction between them and that he did not think he was going to be able to control himself around her. He then sat down next to her and put his hand on her thigh. FM 4 Victim 1 reported that she froze at first and then quickly left the room and did not attend his class for the rest of the semester. FM 4 Victim 1's report was corroborated by both the student's parent and a student reporter, both of whom reported to us that she had informed them of the conduct at the time that it occurred.

Faculty Member 4 resigned from Maret in the mid 1990s and went to another school. In 1996, Faculty Member 4 was charged with multiple counts of sexual abuse and taking indecent liberties with a minor arising from conduct that occurred after his employment at Maret and did not involve any Maret students. Faculty Member 4 pled guilty to these charges and received a suspended five-year sentence and probation. We contacted Faculty Member 4 and asked to speak with him regarding any information he might have concerning faculty misconduct with students at Maret. He responded with a statement that he had "no knowledge or information whatsoever of faculty misconduct with students during my time at Maret School." We followed up with him to let him know that we had received reports of specific conduct attributed to him, and again invited him to speak with us.

Several weeks later, a lawyer contacted us on Faculty Member 4's behalf and asked for information regarding the nature of the conduct about which we had received reports. We informed him/her of the alleged conduct and s/he said s/he would speak with his/her client and get back to us. We did not hear anything further from Faculty Member 4's attorney.

Maret's Knowledge of, and Response to, Faculty Member 4's Misconduct

FM 4 Victim 1 reported that she did not inform any Maret teacher or administrator about the conduct that she experienced until many years later.⁶³ There is no indication that the School had any knowledge of this incident, or of any other inappropriate conduct by Faculty Member 4 while he was at Maret. After Faculty Member 4's 1996 guilty plea, which was publicized in DC area news media, FM 4 Victim 1's parent told Talbott about what had happened to his/her daughter. Talbott did not take any other action, such as initiating an investigation of Faculty Member 4's conduct while at Maret, likely because his plea was widely reported in local media and she believed that he was already prohibited from working with children, given his adjudicated status for sexual offenses with a minor. Further, retrospective investigations following notice of misconduct at other schools were less common in 1996 than they are today.

C. School's Response to Reports of Sexual Misconduct Elsewhere by Former Faculty Members.

On several occasions, the School has received reports from other schools or information of public findings of misconduct by former Maret faculty that occurred at other schools. At the time of these reports, Maret had not received any complaints regarding these faculty members' conduct while at Maret. With the exception of the complaint about Faculty Member 4 referenced in this Report, we did not receive any reports of misconduct in the course of our investigation regarding these individuals either.

⁶³ FM 4 Victim 1 reported that she may have told one teacher at the time and "sworn [him/her] to secrecy," but she was unsure.

As noted above, after Faculty Member 4 left Maret, the School learned in 1996 that he had been arrested and then pled guilty to sexual abuse and taking indecent liberties with a minor as a result of conduct unrelated to Maret. Talbott subsequently learned of the incident described above in Section II.B., but did not hear of any other misconduct by Faculty Member 4 during his time at the School.

In 2014, Talbott received a call from another independent school about a former faculty member from the 1980s and 1990s who had been accused of misconduct that occurred while teaching at that school.⁶⁴ Maret had never received any reports of misconduct by this teacher during his tenure at Maret. Talbott reported as such, and confirmed with the other school that it had contacted the relevant authorities regarding the allegation they had received.

In February 2018, Maret was contacted by a New Jersey newspaper that was doing a story about a former Maret teacher, Michael Reddy,⁶⁵ who recently had been dismissed from the McDonogh School in Baltimore County, MD after being accused of sexual misconduct unrelated to his time at Maret. Maret had never received any complaints about Reddy during his short tenure at Maret, and did not feel the need to take any action after receiving the report. We did not receive any reports about Reddy during our investigation.

In June 2018, the School received information from the Nishimachi International School (NIS) in Japan, that the school had hired an independent investigator to investigate misconduct allegations regarding James Hawkins, a former Maret Lower School teacher from 1983 to 1985, who taught at NIS from 1967 to 1980. Talbott spoke to the investigator and reported that Maret had not received any reports of misconduct regarding Hawkins from his time at Maret. In April

⁶⁴ As we are unaware of any public finding that this teacher engaged in misconduct, we have chosen not to name him.

⁶⁵ Reddy taught at Maret from 2004–2005.

2019, NIS released a report containing findings by its investigator that Hawkins had engaged in sexual misconduct with multiple students while at NIS. Because Maret had not received any reports of misconduct from Hawkins' time at Maret, and because this investigation was already underway when they received the NIS report, the School has relied upon this investigation to uncover any potential misconduct by Hawkins. We did not receive any reports about Hawkins during our investigation.

D. Cultural Context/Background.

As part of this investigation, we also tried to understand the context in which the misconduct, and the School's responses, described above, occurred. Maret, in the 1970s, 1980s, and into the early 1990s, was described, variously, as "a magic mountain," or a "loose, alternative universe," in which students (and teachers) lived "outside the regular rules of society." There was a sense that, having survived a serious financial threat in the 1970s, the School was poised to grow in both size and stature. Building on a faculty of "smart, interesting people," the goal was to create a community where students would be academically challenged but also exposed to non-academic learning through sports and the arts, while enjoying exceptionally close relationships with faculty. One administrator described "the relationship piece [as] a huge part of the School." Others often referred to Maret's "familial" atmosphere during that period.

Part of the "magic" at Maret, according to both students and faculty from that era, was an environment free of "rules," including with very loose boundaries between faculty and students. Some described the culture as one of "intense leniency" and "sexually permissive"—for both faculty and students—and referenced a number of sexual relationships between faculty members (and marriages that occurred), as well as between faculty and students. We also heard multiple

accounts of students and faculty members drinking together at parties or celebrations of School events and taking “smoking breaks” together on campus. Some students reported that loose boundaries, abuse of power, and sexual improprieties were not just common and tolerated, but “celebrated,” as part of the “macho culture” at Maret.

Two faculty members recalled that Maret had few female teachers or administrators during this period, and that the School “was not particularly geared to taking care of girls,” noting “that certain teachers talked about girl students in objectifying ways,” and describing “an atmosphere [where] there was a lot of joking around among the faculty [in ways that were] not always appropriate . . . [or] respectful . . . [particularly] of the female students.” Some students referenced a culture of “predatory male teachers” during the 1970s and 1980s at Maret, where “inappropriate relationships” between male faculty members and female students were carried on, hidden “in plain sight.”⁶⁶ A number of students and faculty from this era reported that “everyone knew” or had “heard rumors” of “affairs” and other inappropriate behavior between faculty and students, but that absent encountering something “explicit,” School leadership was “willfully silent” about such conduct.

While some of the conduct with loose boundaries may reflect the close “familial” ethos of Maret during this period, we believe the abuses that occurred were attributable, in part, to the absence of policies—or clearly articulated rules—regarding appropriate faculty and student conduct, as well as to what we understand to have been the Headmaster’s reluctance to take any action regarding suspected abuse unless the conduct was reported directly by the victim. We heard again and again that Peter Sturtevant, Sr., Headmaster during this period, was a “brilliant”

⁶⁶ We also received reports of female faculty engaging in inappropriate relationships with male students. These reports were second or third-hand, and we did not receive sufficient credible information about these incidents to corroborate them.

and innovative educator, “compassionate,” “loyal” to his faculty, and knew and cared for every student. But we also heard that, while a “good old boy[,] beloved by everyone,” prior to going to rehabilitation, he was often drunk and that he “looked the other way.” One student described his/her perception of the administration’s view of faculty discipline in the 1980s as “don’t ask, don’t tell.” We believe that Sturtevant’s inattention to the potentially harmful aspects of the School’s culture caused significant damage to a number of students affected by it. While we heard nothing to suggest that Sturtevant’s failure to take decisive action reflected an intent to harm students, it seems clear that in some cases there were sufficient reports of concerning conduct such that more decisive action by the School would have exposed some of the misconduct sooner, and prevented further harm to some students.

In addition, some alumni reported that they did not know how—or even whether—to report suspected abuse, or faculty conduct that made them feel uncomfortable, to School administrators. Apart from the student who told Sturtevant that Legg was “going out with” his/her classmate, and the group of students who went to a trusted faculty member to raise their concerns about their friend’s (EL Victim 4) relationship with Legg, we heard of no students raising such concerns directly to the School in “real time,” either on their own behalf or that of a fellow student.⁶⁷ When asked to explain, some reported a reluctance to “tell” on, or expose, a friend. Several victims expressed fear that reporting their involvement in an inappropriate relationship with a faculty member would expose them to fault and discipline by School administrators; or that they would not be believed, their concerns not taken seriously, and

⁶⁷ One student thought she may have told a teacher about a different teacher’s action toward her that made her uncomfortable—but, if so, she swore that teacher to secrecy because “it wouldn’t have worked out for me if [that teacher] had said something. . . . People weren’t talking about this stuff back then. You didn’t really know what was right or wrong. Part of me was questioning whether I [had done] something wrong. I knew that what [the abusing teacher] did violated a trust that I needed. A place that felt safe suddenly didn’t feel safe.”

“nothing” would happen. More recent alumni expressed reluctance to share with the School their stories of inappropriate faculty conduct due to a belief that their accounts would not be accepted as credible, and that the School, fearing reputational damage, would not apologize or publicly acknowledge the misconduct by holding the perpetrator accountable.⁶⁸ Others simply did not trust the School to respond meaningfully, and, absent a confidential channel, independent of the School’s institutional self-preserving interests, would not come forward.

III. Maret Today

We think it is important to note that we believe Maret is a very different school today than it was in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. We were told repeatedly, and our findings reflect, that Maret’s culture changed markedly in the late-1990s with respect to the standards of conduct to which both faculty and students were held. None of the faculty named, or described, in this Report who engaged in misconduct are currently employed by the School, and have not been for the past decade.

Since the mid-1990s, Maret has reported promptly to the DC MPD, DC CFSA, and/or law enforcement in other jurisdictions each time it received a report of alleged historical misconduct, and has facilitated authorities’ interviews of alumni and faculty/administrators who may have relevant knowledge. Maret met its legal obligations by promptly reporting to law enforcement when it suspected abuse, but the high bar for probable cause for criminal liability meant that no law enforcement action could be taken in most cases. As a result, beyond the School’s individual interactions with the victims who came to them, the reported conduct largely

⁶⁸ For example, despite the invitation in “Messages from Marjo” to contact her if aware of instances of abuse, several individuals who received the Messages expressed concern that the only option to raise such a concern was to report to people whose role it is “to protect Maret.”

went unaddressed within the broader School Community, and with future employers of the faculty members. We commend Maret for now undertaking this investigation, for its intent to publish the findings to the School Community, and for its ongoing commitment to ensuring a safe environment for its students.

In recent years, Maret has taken steps, many of which are outlined below, to make Maret a safer community for students now than it was during the years reflected in this Report. To make clear the School's expectation of adults in the Community, Maret has implemented a Code of Conduct, as well as an Abuse and Neglect Policy, and harassment policies and procedures, which are posted on the School's website, outlined in the School's Faculty Resource Guide, and included in the School's annual employment "letter" to all faculty, who are asked to read it before they sign their letters.⁶⁹ These policies and procedures require all employees to report to the Head of School any actual knowledge or reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is in immediate danger of being the victim of sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse—and note that the School reports any possible abuse to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. The policies are reviewed by the School annually to ensure that they comply with applicable law and professional standards.

As part of its continuing education program for faculty, Maret brings in outside experts each year to conduct training for faculty and students on appropriate faculty-student boundaries, how to develop healthy behaviors, and how to recognize and stop inappropriate conduct, as well as training on reporting obligations, and the proper handling of abuse or neglect situations.

⁶⁹ Importantly, the School's Code of Conduct emphasizes that: "[a]dults should set appropriate limits and maintain healthy boundaries in their relationships with both students and co-workers"; "Maret employees may never have sexual or romantic relationships with students, use alcohol or drugs of any kind with students, or partake in any illegal conduct"; and "Maret employees should promptly communicate any concerns about misconduct." See Maret Code of Conduct, available at <https://www.maret.org/about-us/code-of-conduct>.

Further, the Head of School reviews Maret's policies and procedures each year at the August workshop for new faculty and in her Opening Talk to the Faculty. The School also commissions background checks on all employees upon hire, and periodically after the employees are hired.

Maret also has enhanced its educational resources for students, to increase their awareness of, and empowerment to address, inappropriate conduct—whether by faculty or by peers. In addition to the counseling resources available to students, including both individual and group counseling on a short-term basis, Maret regularly conducts age-appropriate training on the topics of bullying, consent, and appropriate boundaries, including how to be an “ally” or “upstander.” The School's counselors are highly visible to students, and students are encouraged to seek their help.⁷⁰ Both students and faculty are taught how to identify and interrupt abusive situations, what predatory behavior looks like, and how to help when aware that a student is subject to unsafe conduct. The School continues to introduce new curricula about ethics and respect and healthy and unhealthy relationships, including Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills for difficult conversations and self-protection/self-defense.

In addition to policies and trainings, periodically Talbott issues “Messages from Marjo” and other communications to the Community, which address issues of abuse, neglect, and boundaries, and encourage reporting of any such violations. These missives are posted on the School's website and emailed to the entire Maret Community.

⁷⁰ In 2018, the School also implemented a Therapy Support Program to assist Maret students who come forward with “credible stories of abuse or misconduct committed against them by a Maret faculty member.” Working with independent consulting child psychiatrists, the Program is intended to assist affected students in identifying and paying for appropriate therapeutic care for up to one year. Since its establishment, the Program has provided such assistance.

Conclusion

We heard from several students and faculty of their hope that this investigation would provide “finally” an opportunity for healing and reconciliation, through a “transparent” and honest reckoning of what happened and public acknowledgement by the School of what went wrong, in addition to an apology by the School for both the abuse and its “lengthy silence” about it over the years. Amidst the deep affection and gratitude expressed by many students for their years spent, friendships gained, and all that they learned at Maret, one remarked that the School had “cost a lot of [students] their innocence and formative sense of themselves” and that the damage is ongoing and permanent. Referencing a “deep and lasting sadness about this history,” one wrote that the “faculty members who crossed appropriate boundaries to behave in ways that hurt children in their care . . . [are] at the forefront of our memories of the [S]chool[,] and part of what we contend with when we intersect with the [S]chool [C]ommunity now.” Still another, describing the lingering effects of Legg’s misconduct, said that it “remain[s] an open wound[,] for those affected directly[,] and for those standing collaterally by their sides.” Several expressed a need for public discussion, not so much of particular incidents but of the culture that allowed faculty abuse to occur, and, with no inquiry, response or other acknowledgement from, or remediation efforts by, the School. Others, similarly, seek validation of their accounts of what happened to them, and of the suffering that they experienced as a result.

Maret has taken significant steps in the last decade to address faculty misconduct and to protect its students. This investigation is another step in confronting these issues by taking an independent and far-reaching look at the School’s past, through reports made to the School or to us by affected students who volunteered their stories and perspectives. Through such a process, although painful for both victims and the School Community at large, Maret has created an

opportunity for facing the damaging experiences of its past and beginning a healing process for all those whose lives have been impacted by the stories reflected in this Report.

We commend the courageous individuals who trusted us with their stories. We hope that this accounting will empower others to come forward, if doing so would be helpful to them. We also commend the courage of Maret's leadership—the Head of School and Board of Trustees—in moving forward with this investigation, committing to publish its findings, and their unflagging support and assistance throughout. We are grateful for their trust in allowing us to complete our work independently, and as fully as possible.