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**THREE MEN TO NAME MORMON CHURCH, BOY SCOUTS,
IN CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE LAWSUIT**

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***Press Conference with attorneys and the three plaintiffs, at 11 am
Monday, Civic Center Plaza across from City Hall on Goodlett Place in
downtown San Francisco.***

San Francisco, Cal—Three men on Monday in San Francisco named the Mormon Church and the Boy Scouts of America in a lawsuit for childhood sexual abuse in the late 1970's and 1980's by a Mormon Church leader who was also a Boy Scout leader in Sunnyvale, CA.

Amendments to a lawsuit filed several weeks ago for the first time on Monday publicly identified the defendants. Under California law, a childhood abuse lawsuit cannot name party defendants until a judge has reviewed corroborating evidence and given permission to file amendments naming the defendants. Attorneys Kelly Clark of Portland and Lisa Sapcoe of Oakland are representing the men.

The lawsuit, filed in San Francisco County Superior Court, contends that William Eugene "Bill" Knox, now 65, used his leadership positions in the Mormon Church and of the Boy Scouts to entice and molest children while living in Sunnyvale CA. The victims, now men, who were not identified, were abused from 1978 to 1987. It was during those years Knox served in a position of prominent leadership in the Sunnyvale III Ward congregation of the Mormon Church, as well as Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 466, which was chartered by the Sunnyvale III Ward. Knox became the boys' stepfather several years after the abuse began, but years before it ended.

The suit alleges that the Mormon Church leadership had reason to know that Knox was dangerous to children before he ever came to Sunnyvale. Moreover, the suit alleges, the local Church leadership was informed about the abuse in 1983, but failed to report it to law enforcement or otherwise protect the boys from further abuse.

“This is a sad case. All three of these men were completely devoted to the LDS Church and the Scouts,” said attorney Kelly Clark. “They all served their missions, all were Eagle Scouts, all went to BYU, and all raised their own families in the LDS Church. But the impact of the abuse on them continued to eat away at their insides, and in the last year or two, each has decided he can no longer remain silent.” Clark, who has handled over 150 cases of abuse against the Catholic Church, the Mormon Church, the Boy Scouts and other youth organizations, said the goal of this lawsuit is to prevent future child abuse, as well as for these men to obtain justice. “We believe civil lawsuits—and constant public education—help prevent child abuse.”

One of the men, all of whom appeared at a news conference near the Courthouse on Monday morning, echoed those sentiments: “I stand here today for children who will lay their head on their pillows tonight, shedding tears, knowing they will wake up to face their abusers again and again, and yet their pleas for help are silenced by the very institutions and individuals they trust. I understand their plight and from now on I am their advocate.”

The victims report that Knox molested other boys of the same Mormon congregation and BSA Scout Troop 466. Knox has successfully evaded criminal prosecution because the molestations, though known by Mormon and Boy Scout leadership by the early 1980’s, were never reported to local law enforcement, and by the time the boys were men, the criminal statutes of limitations had passed. The abuse included fondling, child masturbation, and oral sex, with incidents occurring on church property, in its chapel sanctuary, and on scout camping trips, as well as in the boys’ home. The suit filed Monday claims Knox committed hundreds of offenses against each boy over numerous years.

The suit also contends that Knox and his wife during the time of the abuse and with knowledge of the Church leaders owned and operated an in-home day care business in Sunnyvale, CA, known as Little Angel Day Care and Creative Play. Knox cared for as many as 12 children at any given time while operating the day care center for nearly 15 years.

The lawsuit spells out that the three victims did not connect their psychological and emotional struggles to the sexual abuse until the last year or two. This is quite common with child abuse survivors, said attorney Lisa Sapcoe. But she also noted that, “An appropriate, quick and forthright response from the Mormon Church and Boy Scouts at the time, including reporting to law enforcement, could have saved these men 30 years of psychological suffering.”

The Mormon Church charters the largest number of Boy Scout troops of any organization in the US—over 50% in the Western United States, and Scouting is the official youth program of the Mormon Church. Under the structure of the Scouts and the Church, a Scoutmaster is a “inspired calling” of the local LDS congregation, meaning it is considered a religious assignment and duty.

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