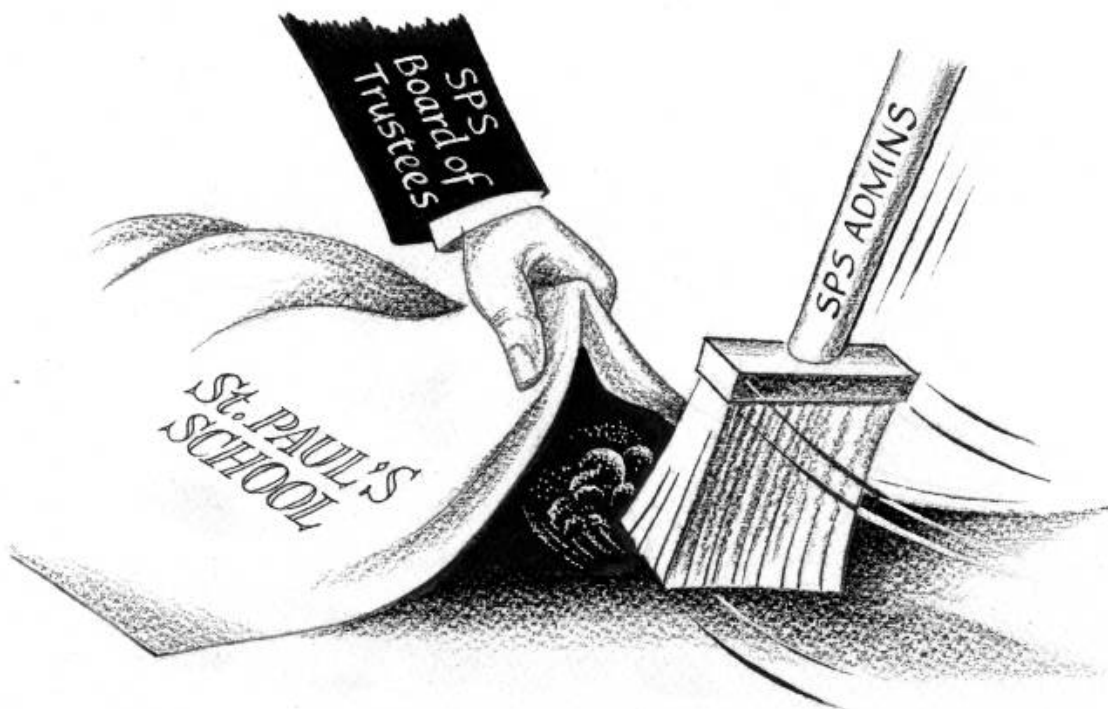


# My Turn: St. Paul's is still pretending all is well



IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY

HALE  
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By R.P. HALE

For the Monitor

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In complete arrogance, based on its pervasive sense of “entitlement,” St. Paul’s School yet again obfuscates, patronizes, denies, and dismisses anyone who dares to criticize it. This time, it was [expressed by Archibald Cox Jr.](#) (*Monitor* Opinion, Nov. 19), president of its board of trustees, in his insultingly callous – and patronizing – “response” to Alexander Prout’s [“My Turn”](#) article of Sunday, Nov. 15.

Yet again, the school tries to hide its history of abuse, again sweeping it under the rug, pretending that “all is well; there’s nothing wrong; nothing to see here; move on, there,” as so vividly illustrated in Cox’s self-exculpating letter.

He claims that “first and foremost, St. Paul’s School respects the Office of the Attorney General and our obligations under the Settlement Agreement.” If that were actually so, then why did Jeff Maher, who certainly isn’t one to abandon a post, feel the abrupt need to resign his position as overseer for the N.H. Attorney General’s Office, in frustration and anger over “the intolerable workplace environment” that the school inflicted upon him? And might Cox care to explain the school’s long history of not cooperating with law enforcement or the judicial system? And what has his mention of the COVID-19 pandemic have to do with adhering to the clearly stated agreement with the Attorney General’s Office?

He also makes the claim that the school “work[s] very hard to ensure the safety and well-being of all students at St. Paul’s School and to document that work for the state and this community. We object strongly to any assertions to the contrary, as they are unsupported by any facts.” Where is the documentation to be found for “community examination”? Once again, he produces the usual corporate-speak emptiness, coupled with pearl-clutching “outrage.” And, what explanation has he for the school’s own

myriad “objections,” in the form of outright denial and cover-up, when Chessie Prout made her abuse known and reported it, back in 2014?

Cox also claims that “what is important is that the oversight work continues uninterrupted. This is what our parents, our students, our alumni, our faculty and staff, and our board all want.” But, Mr. Cox, in the current absence of the *overseer*, doesn’t that also mean that the oversight work *has in fact been interrupted* by the school’s lack of cooperation and lack of respect for that overseer? And, when will that interruption end?

Cox makes much of the school’s payment of property taxes, without clarification as to whether that tax bill is at the proper proportional assessment to the property value itself; and made the claim about “misinformation” regarding taxes and interest-free loans. He then deflects the argument, again, in his mention of the school’s summer program, which again had nothing to do with the arguments raised by Prout.

Then, Cox, in deliberate, belittling dismissal, states that “Sunday’s article makes some outrageous claims, which come from an author whose family has had a deeply painful experience at St. Paul’s School.” It was *not* one single “deeply painful experience,” Mr. Cox, but rather an entire litany, lasting for years, of such painful experiences for the victim and her entire family.

Why didn’t Cox include Chessie Prout literally being bullied out of the school when she decided to return there for her second year? What about the attempted cover-up and total denial of what happened to her? How about the attempted intimidation of filing a court motion to force her and her family to reveal their names to the public after they filed suit – which backfired big-time when the Prout family appeared on national TV to tell the nation about the assault and subsequent intimidation? Can Cox explain the ring of school alumni and some faculty who joined in their financial support *of the perpetrator*, whilst offering no support of any kind to Chessie Prout? Might he bother to explain the *continued near-complete silence* from school administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumni – and even retired/former faculty and staff as well – regarding the school’s history of abuse? Are they all afraid of something?

In his belittling dismissal of what happened to Chessie Prout and her family, Cox also belittled and dismissed what happened to all the other abuse victims at St. Paul’s School – and their families.

And Cox concludes, in the same obfuscating but empty patronizing tone, “We hope the above (article) offers better information about realities of St. Paul’s School.” Of course he hopes so! He’s offering the same old excuses, the same old cover-up, the same old deflections, the same old falsehoods, and sweeping it all under the carpet. The school’s headmaster may be new to the position, but the board of trustees and school administration remain the same old faces as before, whose aim is to protect the school’s reputation at all costs.

I also raise this question. St. Paul’s School claims an affiliation with the Episcopal Church, and many of its past headmasters (“rectors”) were clergy in the church, including a bishop. However, the school has the status of “peculiar institution” regarding the church, meaning that whilst it can claim such affiliation, the church has no say in the school’s internal affairs. In light of St. Paul’s School’s increasingly shameful history, in addition to its “entitled” disregard of church canon laws – including that former bishop who as headmaster engaged in a cover-up of abusive history – how can the Episcopal Church tolerate the school riding its coattails whilst remaining unaccountable to it?

(R.P. Hale lives in Concord.)