



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: LAWRENCE ROBERT
323-236-9992

MANLY, STEWART & FINALDI AND THE SENATORS (RET.) FIRM SETTLE SEX ABUSE LAWSUITS FOR \$6,200,000 AGAINST RIVERSIDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Irvine, California – Attorneys representing three alleged victims of child sexual abuse by former Liberty Elementary School teachers aid Fernando Figueroa announced settlements against Riverside School District totaling \$6,200,000.

The lawsuit alleges that Fernando Figueroa, a technology aide at Liberty Elementary School; a school within the Riverside Unified School District, molested the three girls when they were nine and ten years old. According to the suit Figueroa engaged in sexual misconduct with the children which included fondling them, rubbing their genitals and ultimately digitally penetrating one of the girls with his fingers.

Figueroa was arrested and is being held on \$3,000,000 bail on suspicion of lewd and lascivious act with a child under 14 and oral copulation with a child under 10. On November 30, 2018, Figueroa was arraigned, after being indicted by a Riverside County Grand Jury, on felony charges for the sexual abuse of 11 minors at Liberty Elementary School. Figueroa is currently in jail awaiting trial.

The lawsuit also alleged that Riverside Unified School District failed to conduct an adequate background check of Figueroa which would have revealed prior sexual misconduct charges against Figueroa. The suit further alleged that Riverside Unified School District ignored and failed to investigate multiple prior complaints from parents and students about Figueroa's inappropriate behavior.

“This settlement reflects the severe harm done to our clients and the gross misconduct of the Riverside Unified School District and their employees. The District engaged in a corrupt scheme to hide the fact from sexual abuse and the public. This must never be allowed to happen again,” said Saul Wolf, Senior Attorney with Manly, Stewart & Finaldi.

According to allegations in the lawsuit and information learned during litigation, evidence was destroyed, records of misconduct by Riverside Unified School District employees were falsified and other records were wrongfully withheld from plaintiffs' counsel. All of this was allegedly done to coverup the sexual abuse of children as young as eight years old.

In a sworn deposition, school psychologist Sheila Eiden-Assumma testified that she had destroyed all of her notes containing statements of children alleging abuse by Figueroa despite an ongoing police investigation and civil litigation.

In another deposition, RUSD employee Tuesday Rammuni disclosed a scheme by herself and Liberty Elementary Principal Esther Garcia to create records reflecting that Fernando Figueroa was supervised as required. In truth, despite being a non-credentialed staff member, Figueroa was illegally left alone with students for at least two hours a day.

RUSD and several of its employees have been reported to the State Attorney General, the California Department of Education, the Riverside Police Department and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing for falsifying records and child endangerment related to this case and investigations are said to be ongoing.

More civil claims will soon be brought against RUSD by other victims according to attorneys. "This settlement is an important first step, and we sincerely hope the school district intends to expeditiously resolve the claims of additional victims without resorting to costly and unnecessary litigation," said co-counsel Thomas Moore, Partner in The Senators Firm, LLP.

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[Manly, Stewart & Finaldi](#) is California's leading law firm representing child victims of sexual abuse. The firm has represented more than 150 victims of clergy sexual abuse in California and hundreds of others throughout the United States. The firm also represented plaintiffs in the \$140,000,000 settlement against LAUSD in the Miramonte case, the largest sex abuse settlement against a School District in the US. The firm currently represents more than 180 alleged victims of former Michigan State University and U.S. Women's Gymnastics Olympic Team doctor Larry Nassar. Michigan State University has settled this case for \$500,000,000, the largest settlement of any personal injury case against a University. In 2018 the firm settled cases against the Torrance Unified School District for \$31 million on behalf of alleged victims of former wrestling coach and convicted child molester Thomas Snider, against Los Angeles Unified School district for \$8 million in cases involving former football coach and convicted child molester Jaime Jimenez and for \$14 million in cases involving former Los Angeles Unified District employee Ronnie Lee Roman.