

New list of abusive priests identifies seven former McQuaid staffers

Sean Lahman and Steve Orr, Democrat and Chronicle Published 9:23 a.m. ET Jan. 15, 2019 | Updated 7:06 p.m. ET Jan. 15, 2019

Seven former McQuaid Jesuit High School teachers were identified Tuesday as having been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors during their careers. At least two of the priests engaged in sexual misconduct while on faculty at the Brighton secondary school in the mid-1960s.

The revelation came in [a list of accused priests released Tuesday morning \(https://www.jesuitseast.org/news\)](https://www.jesuitseast.org/news) by the Jesuit province that covers the northeastern United States.

A list of the accused abusers and their tenure at McQuaid:

- Cornelius Carr, 1960-64.
- Thomas Denny, 1978-79.
- Roy Drake, 1957-60.
- John Farrand, 1955-57.
- Leonard Riforgiato, 1964-66.
- William Scanlon, 1964-67.
- Robert Voelke, 1962-69.

Two of the priests, Carr and Drake, had been previously identified as having been accused of abuse at other schools. Carr was principal of McQuaid. Drake was a math and science teacher.



From left: Cornelius Carr, William Scanlon, Leonard Riforgiato, Robert Voelke, Thomas Denny and Roy Drake. These six are among former McQuaid Jesuit teachers identified as having been credibly accused of sexually abusing minors. (Photo: File)

But the Jesuit list released Tuesday included five more names of priests who spent time at McQuaid. None of the five appear to have been publicly identified before Tuesday.

One of them, Leonard Riforgiato, admitted to abusing minors between 1964 and 1966 while he taught history and religion at McQuaid. The Jesuit list identifies him as a former priest, suggesting he quit or was expelled from the order.



A *Democrat and Chronicle* story published in November 1967 notes that Riforgiato was leaving the McQuaid faculty for an unspecified new assignment. The Rev. William Scanlon, also named by the Jesuits on Tuesday, left McQuaid at the same time, according to the 1967 news story.

Brighton Police Chief Mark Henderson said the department received a report in 2003 about Riforgiato's misconduct with a McQuaid student, but did not look into the matter further because Riforgiato was deceased. The chief said the department can find no reports pertaining to the other six priests named Tuesday.

Former priest in training Leonard Riforgiato, who was at McQuaid in the mid-1960s, admitted to abusing minors between 1964 and 1966 while he taught history and religion at McQuaid. (Photo: Staff image)

A spokesman for the Jesuit provinces confirmed that one or more of the allegations against Voelke related to his conduct while he was on the faculty at McQuaid in the 1960s. The spokesman, Michael Gabriele, said he did not know whether the conduct took place on school grounds or involved a student.

Voelke taught biology and social studies at McQuaid off and on between 1962 and 1969.

The Jesuit list, which is not specific about the dates and locations of abuse allegations, leaves open the possibility that at least one other priest, Denny, was at McQuaid when he is accused of engaging in misconduct.

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Allegations against Denny were found to be credible after an investigation, but the Jesuits would only say the incidents took place in the "1960s and 1970s." He taught at McQuaid from 1978 to 1979.



Robert Voelke (Photo: Sean Lahman)

A McQuaid spokesperson said school officials were made aware of the allegations against Riforgiato in 2003, but had no record of allegations against the other priests named Tuesday.

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Scanlon admitted to abusing minors between 1985 and 1994, years after he left McQuaid. Farrand admitted to abuse that occurred in 1961 while he was serving at a school in New York City.



William Scanlon (Photo: Sean Lahman)

In a statement released Tuesday, McQuaid's president, the Rev. Robert Reiser, called it "a very difficult day for the victims of sexual abuse and their families."

"We pray that some healing will come from sharing these names," Reiser said.

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ists previously. The southern province list, disseminated last month, cited Carr. would be on the northeast Jesuit list.



It's unclear if some of the sexual abuse attributed Rev. Thomas Denny ever occurred at McQuaid Jesuit High School. (Photo: Staff image)

Of the seven priests who worked at McQuaid, Scanlon and Denny are still alive, according to the Jesuit list.

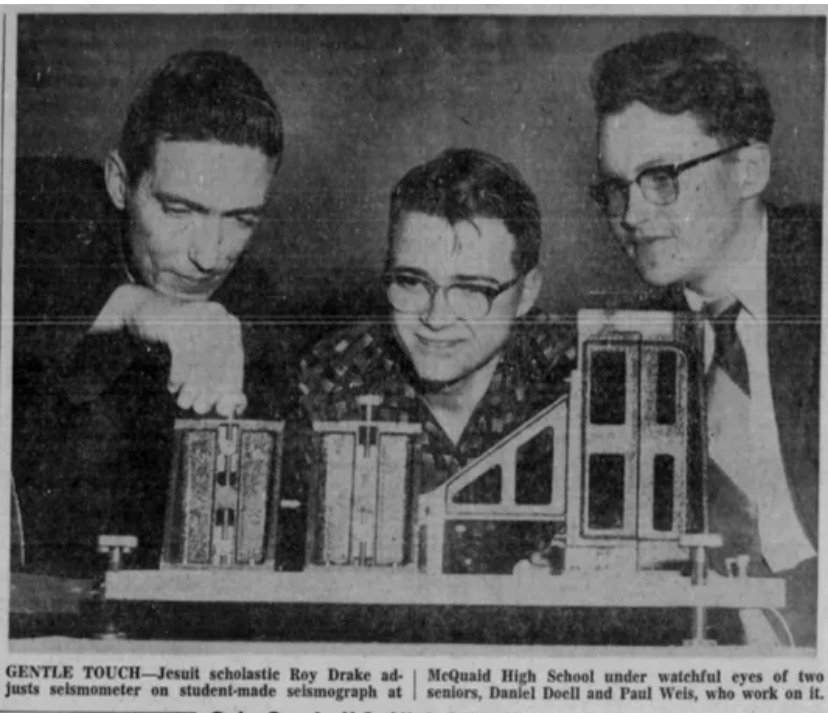
The list names a total of 50 Jesuit priests who worked in the northeastern United States and were credibly accused of abuse at some point.

Eight of them spent time in Buffalo, six at Canisius High School there. Among the eight priests were Carr, Denny, Farrand and Scanlon, who also worked at McQuaid.

Three of the Jesuit priests identified Tuesday spent time in Syracuse, including Drake, who also worked at McQuaid.

The public undertaking by the Jesuits is the latest attempt to identifying possible abusers in the ranks of American Catholic clergy and lay workers.

American bishops and local dioceses have released the names of accused priests and other church officials in fits and started over the last several decades. Locally, the Diocese of Rochester currently lists 23 local priests (<https://www.dor.org/protecting-our-children/dispositions-2002-present/>) against whom credible allegations have been made.



Father Roy Drake, a McQuaid teacher, in a file photo from 1959 (Photo: Sean Lahman)

The Society of Jesus, whose members are known as Jesuits, is an order focused on education and missionary work that functions independently of local Catholic dioceses.

The process of acknowledging abuse by clerics has accelerated, with a number of Catholic institutions, including the Jesuits, divulging more names in the wake of an August report by a Pennsylvania grand jury.

That report, which captured international headlines, identified more than 300 abusive priests believed to have molested at least 1,000 children and prompted at least a dozen criminal investigations of church activities across the country. New York's attorney general's office is among many across the country that have begun inquiries.

Much of the anger generated by the Pennsylvania grand jury report and other abuse revelations focuses on the church leaders who protected clerics accused of sexual misconduct.

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ier Catholic officials to transfer accused priests or teachers rather than remove them
arge to resume their work.

The priest-abuse archives are littered with cases, including some locally, where accused priests who were sheltered by higher-ups later engaged in the very same sexually abusive behavior again.

The release of lists by the Jesuits and the dioceses has the effect of informing parishioners, students and others of past misconduct, perhaps prompting them to report incidents never before brought to light.

This works both ways, of course. Another former McQuaid teacher, the Rev. John M. Costello, was accused in 2003 of sexually abusing a 15-year-old male student in 1980 at Regis High School in Manhattan, where Costello worked before ordination.

He was suspended from his job at McQuaid in November 2003 but reinstated in January 2004 after the accuser recanted. Costello left McQuaid in 2005.

Carr was principal from 1960-1964



Photo of Cornelius Carr from McQuaid Jesuit yearbook (Photo: Sean Lahman)

The Rev. Cornelius J. "Neil" Carr was appointed principal at McQuaid in 1960, just two years after the school on South Clinton Avenue graduated its first class. A Buffalo native, he was ordained in 1951 and served as principal of a Jesuit school in New Jersey before arriving in Rochester.

It was a position of some prominence and Carr was quoted a number of times in the local papers, on subjects such as the rigors of a McQuaid education and the school's new use of data processing.

He departed McQuaid in July 1964 for Buffalo, where he worked for the regional Jesuit organization there. In late 1966, he was named provincial superior of the Jesuits in the Buffalo region.

Carr spent time as a teacher and chaplain at Canisius High School in Buffalo, and then served as a religion teacher, chairman of religious affairs and associate chaplain at Jesuit High School in New Orleans from 1976-1980.

That was the setting of the first abuse allegation against him.

A former student at Jesuit High School alleged he was repeatedly assaulted by a janitor at the school in the late 1970s, and that on at least one occasion, Carr was a participant.

The victim said that Carr walked into a room where he was being sexually assaulted. Rather than stopping the attack, the victim told [the New Orleans Advocate](https://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_c8ca6de6-bc67-11e8-bd07-1fd9c572aac8.html) (https://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_c8ca6de6-bc67-11e8-bd07-1fd9c572aac8.html) that Carr joined in.

"I thought, 'a priest is here' and 'wow, it's over,' and then he put his hand on my back and began masturbating," the victim [said in an interview](https://fordhamram.com/65307/news/priest-accused-abuse-new-orleans-housed-fordham/) (<https://fordhamram.com/65307/news/priest-accused-abuse-new-orleans-housed-fordham/>) last year with the student newspaper at Fordham University in the Bronx.

The victim disclosed that he had received a \$450,000 settlement from the church. Carr's name appeared on a list of accused priests released by the Archdiocese of New Orleans last year.

From 1981 to 2005, Carr worked off and on at churches in Jacksonville and St. Augustine, Florida.

In 2005, diocesan officials said they had received two credible allegations of sexual abuse involving minors there during the late 1980s and early 1990s. The incidents occurred while Carr was serving as a summer priest at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine.

According to the Fordham student newspaper, Carr spent the last years of his life at Murray-Weigel Hall, a residence on the university's Rose Hill campus.

He died in 2013.

Drake taught from 1957-1960

The Rev. Roy A. Drake was a popular science and math teacher at McQuaid from 1957 to 1960. It was Drake, then a young priest, who established the school's science club and led a much-publicized effort to obtain an earthquake-sensing seismograph at McQuaid, which was a novelty for a secondary school.



Roy Drake (Photo: Sean Lahman)

But nine years after he left McQuaid, when Drake was teaching at Fordham Preparatory School in the Bronx, he allegedly raped a 13-year-old boy who was visiting a student at the school. The incident took place in Drake's apartment, the night before the teacher was to take several boys on a ski trip.

The boy did not report the abuse at the time, according to news reports.

A half dozen years later, in 1974, Drake was teaching science at the Maine Maritime Academy, a public institution in the coastal town of Castine that is not affiliated with the Jesuits. The order later said Drake was on a leave of absence.

A 16-year-old boy visiting students at that school said he was sexually assaulted by Drake.

He said that Drake provided alcohol and marijuana to a group of young men during a gathering at his apartment. After the crowd thinned out, the teen said Drake showed him a pornographic movie and tried to initiate sex.

The victim told the *Portland Press Herald* (<https://www.pressherald.com/2016/03/06/man-reliving-hell-to-tell-story-of-boyhood-abuse-by-priest-in-maine/>) that he tried to resist the priest's advances, but the encounter turned violent. Drake forcibly sodomized him and choked him until he passed out.

"I was fighting him with everything I had, but he was as strong as an ox," the victim said. "I never really believed in angels or demons or ghosts until that night. Because when he turned me around and looked at me, his eyes were black. I'm talking scary, horror film black."

Drake was later assigned to numerous other institutions, according to the Jesuit list released Tuesday. Among them was LeMoyne College in Syracuse, where he taught in 1978-79 and then from 1985 to 1993.

No abuse allegations have come to light from his time at LeMoyne or other locations, according to the Jesuit list.

The Fordham allegation surfaced in 2005 when the victim, then a lawyer in his 40s, learned that Drake was living on the Fordham campus — and in the same Murray-Weigel Hall where Carr would spend his last years.

The man objected to Drake's presence in the facility, and the priest was moved to a treatment center. He died in 2008. The claim was resolved with a public apology and financial settlement in 2013.

In that same year, the 1974 Maine allegation surfaced. The victim in that case said his life had been devastated by the aftershocks of his encounter with the priest.

In 2016, when the Maine victim first told his story publicly, the Jesuit northeast province offered an apology for what the man had suffered. But they disavowed any responsibility for Drake's actions, noting he had been on leave from his Jesuit duties when the incident occurred.

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