

DORA E. MCQUAID

ONE WOMAN'S VOICE

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STATEMENT TO PRESS REGARDING MY IMAGE REPLACING SANDUSKY'S IN THE INSPIRATION MURAL NEAR PENN STATE UNIVERSITY

JUNE 25, 2013

I am deeply honored by Michael Pilato's choice to acknowledge my efforts as an activist and poet to address the issues of both sexual and domestic violence for the past 15 years.

I was faculty at Penn State for seven years, from 1999-2006, during which some of Sandusky's crimes were committed. During that period, I worked across the state and the country using my own personal experiences of violence and healing to raise awareness and improve educational programs, to help improve the quality of services available to victims, survivors and offenders and to help facilitate efforts by many people and programs to break the silence in which so many victims suffer by fostering a larger and deeper public conversation about and address of the issues and their effects. I worked with programs as varied as the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Subcommittee Investigation of Judge Bias, The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, The Pennsylvania Governor's Office, The Impact of Violence Program in Pennsylvania Maximum and Medium-Security prisons, as well as resource centers, shelters, community programs, churches and universities.

My efforts led to a number of awards based on both my service and poetry, specifically my first book (***the scorched earth***) about coming through my own experience of violence, including the Pennsylvania Governor's Pathfinder Award (2003), recognition by the Pennsylvania Senate (2003) and a Vagina Warrior Award (2005) from the Penn State cast of Eve Ensler's play ***The Vagina Monologues*** while serving as faculty at the university. I was also awarded the 2011 New Mexico Woman Writer's Fellowship by A Room of Her Own Foundation and honored as one of the Remarkable Women of Taos, New Mexico during the 2012 yearlong celebration of women whose lives and creative spirits have influenced the Northern New Mexico community.

As a survivor myself, Michael's choice to include my image in the mural as acknowledgement of my efforts, through poetry, activism, speaking and teaching, and my commitment to healing and empowerment for victims of such crimes leaves me feeling deeply honored and humbled.

I am saddened that a scandal of such proportions, and its ensuing wreckage, is fueling this current public conversation about sexual violence. There is an epidemic of sexual (and domestic) violence in this country as the statistics illustrate, and yet often those topics are

shrouded in secrecy and isolation, as the Sandusky scandal exemplifies. My only hope in the wreckage of this case is that all of the people effected by sexual violence have a greater chance for healing, and that the issues, experiences and effects of sexual violence and abuse be addressed on a much deeper and broader scope in our communities and across our country than they have in the past. Perhaps this scandal will bring to bear a greater public and private willingness to address the issue, to raise awareness, to educate our children and each other to protect ourselves from the predators in our midst, to improve the services available to victims, to better the laws designed to address these crimes, to hold each other in compassion and support through the long process of healing and to hopefully end the isolation in which so many survivors suffer alone. Perhaps less people will suffer alone in that killing silence, as I once did, and be held in grace and community as they learn that their voices and their stories are not only heard but do, in fact, contribute to the deeper healing that is not only possible but also necessary.

Michael's mural and his efforts are centered in celebrating community, and a community response is necessary to address the issue of sexual violence and uplift all of the people impacted by its presence.

If you need further information, please see my website at www.doramcquaid.com.

Dora E. McQuaid
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Taos, New Mexico