

# Woman sues Southwestern Seminary and Paige Patterson

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A woman who says she was stalked and repeatedly raped at gunpoint by a male student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2014 and 2015 has filed suit in a Texas federal court against the seminary and its former president, Paige Patterson.

The school's current president, Adam Greenway, insists the seminary is committed to protecting survivors of abuse and being a safe place for the vulnerable.

"While we cannot address issues in ongoing litigation, it is important that the Southwestern Seminary community know that we take these matters seriously and are committed to our campus being a safe place for the vulnerable and for survivors of abuse," Greenway told Baptist Press on June 24.



Adam Greenway (Southwestern Seminary Photo)

"As I said in my report at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, I realize in a Genesis 3 world that there may be times when our seminary

may fall short of expectations,” Greenway continued. “In any and every area where this has been the case, I am sorry. It is my resolve for our seminary to do better.”

Greenway responded to a [personal injury lawsuit](#) that alleges the woman—identified only as “Jane Roe”—forcibly was raped at gunpoint on at least three occasions from October 2014 through April 2015 by a fellow student with an extensive criminal history who also was employed as a plumber at the seminary.

## **Alleged intimidation and disparagement**

Roe alleges neither Patterson nor the seminary sought to protect her when she reported her abuse. Instead, the suit claims, Patterson in particular intimidated Roe, disparaged her and told her “it was ‘a good thing’ that she had been raped, because the right man would not care if she was a virgin or not.”

Also, the lawsuit claims, Southwestern Seminary had no system in place to prevent and address the sexual assault of students.

The lawsuit was unsealed June 6 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in Sherman.

Roe’s attorney Sheila P. Haddock of San Diego, Calif., told Baptist Press the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct constrain all parties involved from commenting on the case. Her client hopes to avoid further traumatization and to maintain privacy by pursuing the case under a pseudonym, Haddock said.

“What I can say is this: Jane Roe is an extremely courageous young woman who is still struggling to put the pieces of her life together, to build a future

for herself and to find her voice,” Haddock said. “This case is a step forward for her on this journey.”

The plaintiff is seeking a jury trial and monetary damages currently unspecified.

The case originally was filed March 11 under the plaintiff’s name, but it was refiled May 22 after the court granted use of the pseudonym Jane Roe, according to court documents available online. Summonses to the seminary and Patterson to inform them of the lawsuit are dated June 18 and allow 21 days from the date of service for replies.



Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustee chairman Kevin Ueckert (left) addresses trustees at a special called meeting at the Fort Worth campus May 22. The board met to discuss the controversy surrounding Paige Patterson (right), then president of the seminary. (Photo by Adam Covington/SWBTS via BP)

Baptist Press was unable to reach Patterson for comment. Attorney Shelby Sharpe, who has represented Patterson in the past, said Patterson has been out of the country and likely has not been served the summons. In previous

statements, Patterson has denied accusations related to mishandling reports of abuse.

Patterson was president of Southwestern Seminary from 2003 until May 2018. After a 13-hour closed-door session, the seminary's trustees initially [removed Patterson as president](#) in response to his comments about spousal abuse and women but named him president emeritus.

The board's executive committee subsequently [stripped Patterson of all titles and benefits](#) after new information emerged about how he handled rape allegations at a seminary where he served previously.

*With additional reporting by Managing Editor Ken Camp.*