

FAMILY STATEMENT ON BARBARA BLAINE

September 25, 2017

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Barbara Blaine.

Barbara died peacefully on Sunday, September 24, 2017, with her family around her. She passed away while on vacation in Utah with her husband Howard. Only a few days earlier, she had suffered from a heart episode called SCAD (spontaneous coronary artery dissection), a rare emergency condition that occurs without warning. Barbara had been in the best of health, and had just gone hiking the day before the SCAD event without any issues. Barbara loved hiking those rocky Utah climbs with Howard, and her indomitable spirit was in harmony with the unshakable vistas. Her death comes as an incredible shock to us all.

Barbara was a fierce and tireless warrior on behalf of social justice. She was the founder and former president of SNAP (Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests), which she first established in 1988. She was that proverbial voice in the wilderness for decades, standing up for those sexually abused who might otherwise have been silenced. Prior to SNAP, Barbara helped found and ran a homeless shelter on Chicago's south side, represented abused and neglected children in juvenile court, worked in Jamaica as a volunteer high school teacher, and assisted street children to locate family members. She held graduate degrees in Law, Social Work, and Theology.

Barbara began her transition from SNAP in 2016, and recently founded The Accountability Project (TAP), an organization designed to pressure Vatican officials to stop priest sex crimes internationally and to be held accountable for the crimes and cover-up. It was her passion and calling to create worldwide solutions to abuse. TAP dovetailed with the work she had done in the last few years with the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child, to help report Vatican officials' dangerous practices that continue to harm children and the vulnerable.

Thank you all for your outpouring of kind words since her passing. We know we are not alone in our grief. Yes, Barbara could lead thousands. But she also was a dedicated friend. She truly listened, one on one, to the pain and heartbreak of others. Your stories and experiences made her even more determined to effect justice on behalf of others.

There is no other Barbara Blaine. But we each can strive, in our own ways, to carry on Barbara's spirit for justice, and her lifelong conviction that one more step may make the needed difference.

Details about a public memorial will follow.

The family of Barbara Blaine has requested that donations in her honor and memory be made to www.bishopaccountability.org

For follow-up work-related questions, please contact Beth Bollinger at bethatlaw@gmail.com. Barbara's husband also is available if needed.