

Alexander v. Yale

The legal system and the legal language have constrained the larger issues raised by Alexander v. Yale. Instead of focusing on the humiliation and anguish women suffer in their experiences of sexual harassment, it has focused on legal technicalities and has become an individual damage issue. The case at this point has been effectively reduced to one Yale woman's experience of sexual harassment by one Yale professor. This is testimony to the inadequacy of the law in addressing the real issues and problems in people's lives. In this instance, it has both trivialized and made abstract the very real pain of sexually harassed women.

The case raises issues relevant to all women. It is one more instance of women fighting to free themselves from the vulnerability that results from their social and political powerlessness. We are refusing to submit to the threats and manipulations of men in positions of power. We are refusing to allow those men to control our lives and tell us what to do. For black women, this struggle is compounded by the realities of racism in America today.

Therefore, we demand the right of women at Yale in particular to an education free from the degradation of sexual harassment, but in so doing we demand the right of all women to a life free from sexist oppression.

Ronni Alexander
Pamela Price
Linda Hoaglund, YUWC

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