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Moving Mountains on Behalf of Abused Clients: Kyle Gilrain's Story

The course of a social work career does not always run smooth, as CSSW alumnus Kyle Gilrain (MS'96) discovered when he took a job as staff therapist at the National Deaf Academy in Mount Dora, Florida. Noticing the abuse and neglect of patients, he tried reporting it but then was fired from his position. His successor, Carol Savage, likewise blew the whistle and was fired.

Even after he left, Gilrain could not stop thinking about the children and disabled adults who were stuck in that facility and how much they deserved to have a safe, healthy environment to live in.

In April 2013 he and Savage **filed a lawsuit** against the National Deaf Academy, documenting its many abuses, some of which had not been reported to authorities. The academy's owner is Universal Health Services Inc., a publicly traded \$7 billion+ Fortune 500 company. Although UHS Inc. immediately issued a statement defending the academy's practices, in its 2014 Q2 SEC filings, UHS Inc. said it had been made aware that the academy is under criminal fraud investigation by the FBI/DOJ.

Gilrain told us he had provided 1,000+ pages of supporting documentation to the FBI/DOJ. He has also assisted several lawyers who are suing the facility on behalf of patients and families. (Three more suits are about to be filed.)

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Interested in hearing Gilrain tell his story? He will be on **NBC Nightly News** on Sunday night, September 14th. “Stephanie Gosk came to Florida to interview me and the woman who replaced me, Carol Savage,” Gilrain said. **UPDATE: Here is the link to the CBS story.**

He added that he credits the Columbia School of Social Work for teaching him how to be an effective advocate for his National Deaf Academy clients.

In particular, the course “Practice 5: Influencing Organizations, Communities, and Social Policy” provided him with the framework he needed for the pursuit of social justice.

