

National Network of Abortion Funds Addresses 'Recent Allegations of Improper Sexual Conduct' Against Dr. Willie Parker



Lauren Evans

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Image: Getty

The National Network of Abortion Funds is distancing itself from Dr. Willie Parker—a prominent abortion provider who until recently was the namesake of one of its internal funds—following allegations of sexual misconduct.

On Monday night, the network's board of directors released a statement saying that it "is in solidarity with those who have come forward" with allegations of improper sexual conduct against Parker, who in addition to other posts currently serves as the chair of the board of Physicians for Reproductive Health.

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“Every person in the abortion access movement holds responsibility for fostering an ethical environment, free from harassment, violence, and improper or unprofessional conduct, sexual and otherwise, the letter read. “We all hold this responsibility, whether we are an abortion funder, provider, volunteer, employee, or supporter. When one of us is accused of failing to live up to these standards, it is all of our responsibility to make space for victims to speak or be silent as they choose, and with values of autonomy, compassion, intersectionality, and collective power, move through accountability and restorative justice towards healing.”

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While the precise nature of the allegations against Parker are unclear, [a post](#) on Medium by Candice Russell refers to stories about his “inappropriate and predatory behavior which,” she alleges, “had become increasingly prevalent.” She wrote:

My memories of the night I spent with Willie are as out of focus and frayed around the edges as you would expect them to be after four martinis and an entire bottle of wine, gaps and spaces in time where things get too blurry to be able to make out. Holes that now I am almost grateful for, though I had spent an entire year obsessively trying to fill them. My mind was constantly churning, a strain I could almost feel as my brain searched for all those missing moments as if they were hidden in the corners of shelves I’d never quite be able to reach. Which of us had suggested we have one last night cap afterwards? Why would either of us have thought another drink was a good idea in the first place?

[...]

There is no way for me to know how many of us are out there, how many of the dozens and dozens of stories being whispered about by friends of friends overlap and repeat. How many still stay shrouded in silence brought on by undue pressure and misplaced shame? Should it even matter really? If this only happened to two women and not twenty does that make Dr. Parker somehow less of an abuser?

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Parker was previously an OB/GYN who opposed abortion on moral grounds before changing his mind, later becoming one of the few doctors in the country to perform

[National Network of Abortion Funds](#)

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The network noted in its statement that it will continue with its mission to support direct abortion funds, and that it has been making shifts to launch a consolidated fund under a new name.

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My heart just crashed. We will need brave providers to step up and fill the void. Disappointment is not a word that does adequate justice to what I am feeling right now. My heart goes out to Ms. Russell and his other victims.

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