

HAUNTED BY PAST

By Dan Mangan November 19, 2007 10:00pm

A Roman Catholic brother credited with turning around an all-boys Harlem high school was removed as principal after someone complained that he had been arrested two decades ago for allegedly soliciting a boy for sex, The Post has learned.

A gadfly priest charges that Christian Brother John Walderman- who spent 12 years at Rice HS before his abrupt removal last spring - should never have been permitted to work there because his superiors knew of the arrest when it occurred.

"This is another case of the Christian Brothers coddling a sex abuser," said the Rev. Bob Hoatson, a former Christian Brother and an advocate for clerical sexual-abuse victims.

The 1986 solicitation case against Walderman was dismissed a year later, court records show.

But the 62-year-old Walderman - who declined to comment- now is out of his job and barred from working in the ministry until an investigation by the Christian Brothers is completed, according to the religious order.

The Congregation of Christian Brothers - whose members have a ministry but are not priests - specializes in education.

The Christian Brothers refused to answer when The Post asked why Walderman was allowed to work with children after his 1986 arrest.

On New Year's Day in 1986, Walderman, then the principal at Bishop Hendricken HS in Warwick, RI, was arrested in nearby East Providence after police found him and a 17-year-old boy "in a car parked in an isolated area," according to reports at the time.

Police said Walderman, then 40, was trying to buy sex from the boy.

After the dismissal of the case for reasons that are not clear, Walderman began working in 1987 as a teacher at Cardinal Hayes HS in The Bronx.

In 1991, he went to Rice, where he worked until 2001 in various posts, including president and principal. After a four-year stint at the Edmund Rice Institute, in 2005 the Christian Brothers brought Walderman back as principal of Rice.

Last summer, the Christian Brothers received a letter from someone who referred to Walderman's 1986 arrest, according to Hoatson.

In a prepared statement, the Christian Brothers said the order's new leadership "acted with great dispatch" after receiving the letter, and that Walderman "was immediately removed from his ministry."



Br. John Walderman

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