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## The search for 'honest men' seems no easier today

He walked the streets a pauper, lived in a tub and had few friends. He begged for food and wasn't shy about voicing his opinions, notably his disdain of others. When he ran into the smartest and the wisest of his day, he scoffed at and ridiculed them.

To be sure, Diogenes the Cynic, a man who roamed Athens in the fourth century B.C. and was among the city's wisest, didn't mind offending the status quo.

Diogenes' exploits were legendary. Alexander the Great, who became accustomed to the praises of all, once sought Diogenes out and found him sunning himself. Alexander stood over Diogenes and asked whether he could do anything for him.

"Yes," the cynic replied. "Move a little out of my sun." Alexander was so taken with him that he said, "If I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes."

When Plato once described human beings as no more than two-footed featherless animals, Diogenes plucked a rooster and brought it into Plato's school.

"This is Plato's man," he said.

Diogenes' view of the moral fiber of those around him was no secret. He was perhaps most famous for wandering the streets holding a lantern during the daylight hours, claiming to be "looking for an honest man."

Once, when he was returning from the Olympic Games, he was asked whether there were many people there in attendance.

"A great multitude," he replied, "but very few men."

Sadly, not much has changed since Diogenes uttered those words. Consider the recent Penn State scandal. While the story is really too tortuous to stomach on so many levels, perhaps most incomprehensible was the complete failure of so many people, specifically men, to stand up and protect children from molestation.

Here are a few chronological lowlights, as set forth in the grand jury report, available almost anywhere online:

In 1998, assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky purportedly admitted to police that he showered with an underage male and that it was wrong. No criminal charges were filed, but Sandusky retired from Penn State with "emeritus" status



### Law & Politics

By Peter S. Stamatis

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the following year. Though retired, he was granted access to Penn State's facilities and given a parking pass and all the perks.

In 2000, a Penn State janitor is said to have observed Sandusky molesting an underage male in the Penn State gymnasium showers. He told other janitorial staff, a plant supervisor, other employees and his immediate supervisor. No police report was ever filed. Sandusky's honorary "emeritus" status remained and he was still permitted to freely roam the school.

In March 2002, a 20-year-old teaching assistant reported walking into the Penn State football showers and observing Sandusky raping another boy. The shocked teaching assistant called his father and the following day, met with head football coach Joe Paterno, who reported the incident up the chain to the Penn State athletic director.

Later that month, the teaching assistant was called to a meeting with the athletic director and Penn State's senior vice president for finance and business. But the graduate assistant was never questioned by university police and no other entity conducted any further investigation into the allegations. It was buried.

The grand jury report, which is a bear to read, tragically sets forth evidence of continued molestation well after these events. It reports that in 2007, Sandusky began courting one victim and then molested him repeatedly during overnight stays in Sandusky's home.

On one occasion, a wrestling coach at a nearby high school walked in when Sandusky had this boy in a compromised position in a gymnasium. "Hey coach, we're just working on wrestling moves,"

Sandusky is reported to have nervously claimed. Despite finding the circumstances odd, this coach didn't report anything.

Most litigators have had the experience, at one point or another, of hitting pay dirt, of realizing that the more you dig into the facts of a particular case, the more you will find. This scandal is already like one of those cases.

In the months to come, more and more facts will emerge, not only regarding Sandusky's conduct, but regarding others who had opportunities to act but didn't.

I'll bet that when it's all said and done, the number of people at Penn State who had caught a whiff of all this, who had the opportunity (the responsibility) to blow the whistle but remained silent, will be shocking.

How was it that so many people failed time and time again to take the matter into their own hands? These repeated failures are tragically ironic when one considers they took place at an elite state university.

At all relevant times, Penn State boasted one of the nation's finest collegiate athletics programs. It was a place purported to be an incubator of character, sacrifice, honor, valor, teamwork and achievement. But instead of entering the fray, so many men, young and old alike, stayed on the sidelines.

Even worse was that Penn State's hierarchy apparently shifted into some amalgam of circling the wagons and denial. They chose to handle the matter internally, rather than just blow it up. This was the wrong move, as the Sandusky scandal was bigger than Penn State, just like the Catholic Church scandal trumped internal procedures and the lives of those perpetrators.

Unlike Diogenes, these people — educators, mind you — were afraid to upset the status quo. Perhaps worse, they chose to protect the cash cow of Penn State football (hence the involvement of VP for finance and business).

Either way, they allowed and even facilitated a child molester's continued molestation of children.

Not much has changed since Diogenes walked the streets of Athens with his lantern. Unfortunately, real men are no easier to find at Penn State than they were at the Olympic Games 2,500 years ago.