

31st & Pearl

Doty was Duped . . . What is Nail's Excuse?

Regular readers of USMNEWS.net should visit the site's Archives from time to time. I was just there recently, looking back at [The Past 30 Years](#), a report submitted by a USMNEWS.net reader about one of the ugliest episodes in recent CoB history. It occurred in the fall of 2006, and involved former CoB dean Harold Doty and former EFIB chairman George Carter. It was the beginning of the fourth year of Doty's 2003-07 reign, while Carter was beginning year two of his second of two stints (2005-09) as chair of economics. Under the direction of Carter and former EFIB economics professor, Charles Sawyer, the EFIB had just hired economists Akbar Marvasti and Sami Dakhliya. Marvasti was coming to USM from a visiting gig with Pomona College. He got there from a tenured position at the University of Houston – Downtown. Sourced reports at the time indicated that Sawyer was telling various CoBers that Marvasti had a situation develop at UHD that necessitated the Pomona visit. Dakhliya came to the CoB from the University of Alabama, where he was fired after failing to produce the requisite scholarly research for UA. Shortly after arriving at USM, Dakhliya told a number of CoBers that his ousting was political.

As one might imagine at this point, these were two of the more disastrous hires ECO had ever made. Numerous reports in the USMNEWS.net Archives show that neither is particularly research active. We have also been learning recently that, after changing his affiliation from UA to USM on some leftover research, Dakhliya has not hit print since 2006. Of course, he has been spending a bunch of time over in Europe since then. Marvasti, on the other hand, has been presenting decade-old research at "EFIB Fridays" seminars. And, as recently as late 2009, Marvasti was given a special tenure dispensation by the Mississippi IHL Board after what reports indicate was some sort of internal inquiry that was conducted by USM. Tenure dispensations usually occur around the middle of the year.

As [The Past 30 Years](#) indicates, Carter and Doty announced to the EFIB and to the CoB that former Florida State University economist Ray Canterbury would be joining, as a scholar-in-residence, the Marvasti-Dakhliya duo. Canterbury was described by the two CoB administrators as a very well-known, distinguished economist – someone of the likes the CoB is not generally fortunate enough to land. What was not stated was that Canterbury was critical to what little success that Marvasti had previously achieved in his (Marvasti's) academic career. Looking back at other elements of the Archives, it was clear to others at the time that Canterbury was being brought in to re-ignite Marvasti's floundering academic career. However, it was not this angle that the author of [The Past 30 Years](#) chose to focus on.

[The Past 30 Years](#) compared Canterbury's 1976-2005 academic record to that of CoB finance professor James Lindley for the same time period. What is gleaned from that report is that Lindley produced two *premier* hits to Canterbury's zero, *and* that Lindley had more A journal pubs than Canterbury had produced. Clearly, Carter's biases were revealed by his e-mail announcement, which is contained in that report. Carter never liked Lindley, and his (Carter's)

views represented those in what some CoB faculty refer to as a good ol' boys club – a group of politically-connected under-producers that dominated CoB merit raise/tenure & promotion processes throughout the past 15 or so years. Looking at some testimonies in the USMNEWS.net library, it is clear that some CoB faculty believe that Doty relied on Carter's vetting of Canterbury's accomplishments vis-à-vis those of other scholars in USM's b-school. Clearly, Carter failed to perform the task properly, as was the case with Carter on so many other occasions during his 30-year career at USM.

Doty was reportedly fuming mad at Carter and others after USMNEWS.net published the reader's account entitled [The Past 30 Years](#). Other reports and editorials surrounded this more famous one, all building the case that Canterbury's hiring was shrouded in secrecy, and meant to benefit a select group of favored faculty. Interestingly, Canterbury would remain only about one month at USM, consequently never earning his near-six figure salary at the time. His departure was shrouded in as much, if not more, secrecy than his arrival. Marvasti, left alone in the CoB without a crutch, verbally lashed out at the whole EFIB department during a faculty meeting that occurred at about the time of Canterbury's departure. Carter would spend much of his remaining time as EFIB chair propping up Marvasti through reduced teaching loads and financial benefits, though none of it would amount to much. Doty would submit a surprise "resignation" just a few short months later (Apr-07). Dakhli would essentially disappear, working mainly with USM's study abroad programs. Carter would outlast Doty, only to meet a worse fate when he was forced into retirement after 2009-10 by the Martha Saunders/Lance Nail administration of USM/the CoB.

All of this history serves to illuminate a recent event in USM's b-school. That event was the recent awarding of a *University Distinguished Professorship* to MIS professor Chang-Tseh Hsieh. Hsieh, a politically-active CoB professor who was supported by former CoB associate dean Farhang Niroomand, now holds one of a select few such professorships, arguably the most distinguished ones attainable at USM. Like Doty, current CoB dean Lance Nail failed to take a proper path in supporting Hsieh for this award. Also like his predecessor, Nail had an opportunity to recognize the many accomplishments of Lindley during his (Lindley's) 20-year career in the CoB. How does Lindley compare to Hsieh? According to numerous reports in USMNEWS.net's Archives, Canterbury compares much more favorably to Lindley than Hsieh compares to Lindley, and yet [The Past 30 Years](#) made a clear case that Lindley's record (1976-2005) is superior to that of Canterbury. Thus, to shun Lindley (once again) in favor of Hsieh was much more egregious.

As stated above, Doty was likely duped by Carter in supporting Canterbury as a scholar-in-residence. In supporting Hsieh for the *University Distinguished Professorship*, there is little or no evidence that Nail was guided by anyone other than himself. As time marches on it will be decisions such as these that lock Nail into a permanent existence in USM's CoB. Perhaps one day he will learn that life on the assembly line, new building or otherwise, isn't as fun as being dean. That's a lesson Doty learned, and it took him two years and numerous cronies out in Texas to get out of the classroom.

31st & Pearl is a series housed at usmnews.net that features commentary on aspects of life in the CoB from a variety of columnists.