

# *31<sup>st</sup> & Pearl*

## **Harold Doty: Leaving Chancellorsville on the Way to Gettysburg?**

February 2007 is a make or break time in Harold Doty's life. It is in that month that AACSB will come calling on USM, and now, scarcely six months before the visit, the business school administration is scrambling to right a listing ship. As noted in an earlier commentary, Doty's game plan was to schmooze with the visit team, to wine and dine them, to mystify their minds with Southern cooking and some stout liquor, and to hope that they were amenable to the distraction. Unfortunately, Doty's balloon has been burst.

A USM visitor to a recent AACSB meeting was forewarned – AACSB is not a social organization, and visit teams are traveling on business – open bars, never ending buffets, late night visits to adult lounges, and a little fun on the side need not apply. So much for Plan A. Plan B was to get the business school's act together. After all, there should be enough pieces of the puzzle laying around so that the AACSB team can make out the picture, right? Apparently not. The b-school's AACSB committees have been relying on WEAVE and SEDONA to save the day, but nobody seems quite sure just how to make SEDONA leap tall buildings, and most of the b-school only knows a WEAVE as a hairpiece. Plan B is not looking good.

Plan C consisted of a bait and switch routine – blame the HVAC replacement and Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, Plan C is a no-go as well. Since the HVAC replacement is the physical plant equivalent of elective surgery, it can't really be painted as an albatross thrust around Doty's neck. Since Katrina happened in year 9 of the 10 year cycle, the business school should have made better progress in years 1-8. Plan D, anyone?

Compounding the problem is the set of revelations regarding Doty's right hand man and iron fisted (without the velvet glove) Associate Dean, Farhang Niroomand. From reports posted at USMPRIDE, it seems that Niroomand spends about 20% of his time away from USM and is burning through travel money faster than the Legislature can allocate it or the tax collectors can collect it. Add to that the fact that it seems Niroomand misrepresented himself on his

SEDONA vita. Just when Doty needs Niroomand to crack the whip on the faculty, Niroomand doesn't look like he's able to stick his head out of the foxhole. If there's any hope of retaining AACSB, Niroomand must be a part of it, and Doty knows it. With Doty's favorite general rocked by scandal, how does he face such a decisive moment in his career? He certainly can't turn to his faculty. The tactics of division he used to keep his faculty from really focusing on his constant dithering and job hunting have sowed the seeds of discord and apathy in the business school. He cannot rely on the faculty to pull him up by his bootstraps. He cannot wine and dine the AACSB team. He cannot get a reprieve based on the HVAC replacement or Katrina sympathy. Things look bleak. Doty often boasts about being able to handle situations and win battles against Thames, but the AACSB team won't be beholden to Doty, and the AACSB visit is a one-shot deal for the visit team.

Today, however, an announcement was made regarding a magic rabbit Doty no doubt hopes will breathe life into a dying AACSB cycle. Some of us had known for a number of weeks that the business school was attempting to engage a Scholar in Residence in an effort to boost the college's research profile. The announcement apparently came today. As sent to me from a member of the EFIB department, here is the body of the email:

"I take pleasure in informing you that Ray Canterbury has accepted an offer as Scholar-in-Residence in this Department for the 2006-2007 academic year. Ray is an accomplished scholar with twenty books and seventy-five other publications, including articles in AER and JPE. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Economics at Florida State University.

"Ray will work with the Dean's office in a variety of activities directed toward raising the image and profile of this Department, the College, and the University. While these duties will usually take him off the campus, he will teach ECO 672, International Trade and Finance, in the MBA program this fall, and maintain office hours. Consequently, he will be available to our faculty as a colleague of distinction for at least several days each week.

"The move back to Greene Hall is near but the third floor is still a construction zone. Once we have made the move, and the move may not be complete until after classes start, Ray will be in office JGH 309B. Please make every effort to visit with him and make him welcome as a colleague and friend."

By a series of coincidences, Canterbury is both available and willing to come to USM as Scholar in Residence. After hearing about this development, I contacted some colleagues at Florida State who know him socially and got the skinny on the man. After talking to friends and studying his vita, I am convinced that Professor Canterbury is a genuine scholar who values research for research's sake. Unfortunately, the b-school at USM is a less than perfect fit for such a man. Also unsettling is the statement in the email that Canterbury will be working with the Dean's office in what seems to be a pure public relations type of position – not exactly what I had envisioned when I first heard about the deal.

Canterbury is, for all intents and purposes, being used by Doty as a traveling dog and pony show to take the place of Doty's busted booze and social distraction plan – "Have vita, will travel." Of course AACSB sees it all the time, and Louisiana Tech has made a living off of recruiting to get through AACSB and then running the scholars off by withdrawing research support. Since Doty didn't get his act together in time to use the Louisiana Tech strategy, renting a scholar for a year seems like the next best thing. This action by Doty at this juncture tells me one thing: Doty is scared to death about AACSB. Assessment data are not in place, and he can't buy that with a booze account. AACSB reports cannot be written, and he can't buy those either. Because of his perverted reward system, quality research profiles are not in place, and Doty can't buy one of those for everyone either. Combined with the fact that a substantial portion of the faculty would relish loss of AACSB under Doty, these other issues are huge. E. Ray Canterbury (the name on his vitae) can't cure all those ills, and he shouldn't be asked to.

Doty has stated publicly that he won't be Dean if AACSB gets pulled from USM. That leaves just two options – straighten this mess out or resign. In five months, we may look around and see that Doty really has just heard news of his very own Chancellorsville, and that his own Gettysburg is right around the corner. Unfortunately for Doty, retreat won't translate into a college presidency in Virginia. For Doty, retreat may very well mean twenty years of teaching principles of management at USM.