

Aunt Martha's Extravagance

Part 4 – “And I said to myself, this is the business we’ve chosen.”

Via a Mississippi Open Records Act request, USMNEWS.net recently obtained a large batch of documents from USM relating to USM president Martha Saunders’ university aircraft. This series, *Aunt Martha's Extravagance*, provides analysis of these documents. This installment highlights an early March-09 trip, using the USM plane, to Washington, D.C., made by Saunders, Chad Driskell (Saunders’ executive assistant for external affairs), Cecil Burge (USM vice president for research), Julian Allen (USM associate vice president for research), Richard Hadden (USM director of strategic venture development), and David Davies (honors college dean). As the insert below shows, USM charged itself \$4,680 for this jaunt to D.C.

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INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOICE
 THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
 (FOR CAMPUS USE ONLY)

Date: 3/2/2009

CHARGE: President's Office/Research/Honors College CREDIT: Airplane Operations
DEPARTMENT NAME DEPARTMENT NAME

5001 266-5001 5003 266-4136
BOX PHONE NUMBER BOX PHONE NUMBER

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Dr. Saunders	780.00	780.00
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Chad Driskell	780.00	780.00
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Dr. Burge	780.00	780.00
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Dr. Allen	780.00	780.00
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Dr. Hadden	780.00	780.00
1	6.0 hours round trip flight time to Washington D.C. for Dr. Davies	780.00	780.00
Trip date March 2-4, 2009			
			TOTAL → 4,680.00

SPA APPROVAL IF REQUIRED: _____
SIGNATURE DATE

PROVOST APPROVAL IF REQUIRED: _____
SIGNATURE DATE

ACCOUNTING INFORMATION	ACCOUNT	FUND	DEPTID	PROGRAM	PROJECT/GRANT	AMOUNT
BUDGET STRINGS TO CHARGE FOR SERVICES OR MATERIALS RECEIVED	604121	10H10	100001	06000		1560.00
	604121	14H40	100006	02001	DE00054	2340.00
	604121	10H10	390500	04001		780.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE	DATE					
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604121	10H10	100011	06000		4680.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE	DATE					

JOURNAL NUMBER: _____
 JOURNAL DATE: _____

Checked against: Controller's Office, Box 5143

The presence of Hadden on this trip, especially in early March of 2009, makes this episode involving the USM airplane intriguing. As reported by *The Hattiesburg American*, USMNEWS.net, and other media, Hadden is [alleged by USM](#) to have funneled, throughout 2008, the better part of \$1 million from the USM Research Foundation’s Pinion Properties – an entity Hadden managed as part of his duties for USM – to Saone Corporation, an entity owned by Hadden and his wife, Helene. On [top](#) of this, USM alleges that Hadden, through his JMH Consulting concern, charged Pinion Properties \$260,000 in consulting fees. Hadden was paid \$150,000 in his capacity as the USM director of strategic venture development, with, again, one of his

duties being to oversee Pinion Properties. Thus, Hadden is also alleged to have ultimately collected \$410,000 from USM/USMRF for a duties he was supposed to collect only \$150,000 to perform.

It has been reported that Saunders was upset with the USMRF board as a result of the mishandling of the Hadden situation. Who sat on that board at the time? There were three private sector members and two officials from USM – Cecil Burge and Julian Allen. So, months after the financial coup that USM alleges Hadden pulled on USM and the USMRF, Hadden and USMRF board members Burge and Allen are flying, *in the \$2 million USM plane*, to Washington, D.C. *with* Saunders and Driskell, who would later serve as Saunders' [mouthpiece](#) regarding the charges against Hadden.

Is there something seedy about this picture? Were the plane's passengers smoking Cuban cigars to and from the seat of the national government?