Aunt Martha's Extravagance

Part 6 – 'Fly Me Out to the Ball Game'

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 examines the 6- and 7-June-09 trip in the USM airplane made by Saunders and her athletics director, Richard Giannini. According to the invoice, which is inserted below, USM charged itself a total of $2,640 for this trip to watch the USM Golden Eagles baseball team compete against Florida in a 2009 NCAA Baseball Super Regional series.

(Mark in RED)
Original ☐
Department Copy ☐
(Retain for Files)

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

Date: 4/16/2009

CHARGE: President's Office (DEPARTMENT NAME) — 5001 (BOX) — 266-5001 (PHONE NUMBER)

CREDIT: Airplane Operations (DEPARTMENT NAME) — 5003 (BOX) — 266-4136 (PHONE NUMBER)

QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF GOODS OR SERVICES, INCLUDING DATES OF SERVICE	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
1	3.3 hour round trip flight to Gainsville, FL for Dr. Saunders	1,320.00	1,320.00
1	3.3 hour round trip flight to Gainsville, FL for Richard Giannini	1,320.00	1,320.00
	Trip June 6 & 7, 2009 for Baseball Super Regional		
		TOTAL →	2,640.00

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	604021	10H10	100001	06000		2640.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE DATE						
BUDGET STRINGS TO CREDIT FOR SALES OF SERVICES OR MATERIALS	604021	10H10	100011	06000		2640.00
AUTHORIZED DEPARTMENT SIGNATURE DATE						

JOURNAL NUMBER: _____

JOURNAL DATE: _____

Signed original - Controller's Office, Box 5143

How is it that USM officials knew on 16-April-09 – or in the middle of the 2009 baseball season – that USM would win the Georgia Tech Regional in late May-09 and advance to an early June-09 Super Regional? Of course, the answer is "they didn't." The question is posed because the date of the invoice above is "16-April-09," or almost two months before the duo went to Gainesville in the plane. This mystery, and other mysteries like it, is beyond the scope of this report.

What can be commented on here, though, is the idea that Giannini should have traveled to Gainesville with *the team*, not with Saunders. That trip quite possibly was made via a chartered bus, which explains why "Mr. G" chose to wait and travel with Saunders. Thus, the biggest remaining question is: why didn't Chad Driskell, Saunders' executive assistant, also make the journey?