

Saunders Delivers 2011 Convocation Speech

HATTIESBURG – Using the backdrop theme “Southern Ventured, Southern Gained,” USM president Martha Saunders delivered her annual fall convocation speech on 8-Sept-2011 before a large audience on the Hattiesburg campus. Saunders’ speech was laced with other themes and surprises, such as her “10 for ‘12” goals. Many of these will be the subjects of future reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net. As far as USM’s business college is concerned, the only two praises came by way of Saunders’ comments about (1) [the recent](#) \$5 million [pledge](#) from [alumnus](#) Chuck Scianna, and (2) the announcement that USM’s b-school is now [nationally ranked](#) by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Sources tell USMNEWS.net that parts of Saunders’ address were simply bizarre. At one point she spoke to those who “lurk about” sports message boards on the internet in order to assure them that USM would always be, at least during her reign, an institution that competes at the highest level of intercollegiate athletics. In doing so, sources say Saunders was speaking, perhaps subliminally, to USM supporters who are now worried about all of the so-called conference realignments that are taking place with regard to college football. The doomsday scenario for USM is that the NCAA’s Division I will split into two separate tiers, and that USM will be in the bottom tier playing for (essentially) nothing. Of course, and as sources indicate, despite what she says, Saunders is totally powerless when it comes to shaping any of these types of changes.

USMNEWS.net reporters and editorial writers are already working on stories about the 2011 Convocation at USM. Stay tuned for these in the near future.