

usmnews.net has received the attached copy of a complaint filed by Dianne Stark against AD Hammond and former President Martha Saunders. A complaint states only one side. It is usmnews.net's understanding that depositions will be taken soon.

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## Stark Files Harassment Complaint against USM AD

HATTIESBURG - As Patrick Magee [reported on](#) 2-Apr-2012 for *The Hattiesburg American*, former USM senior associate athletics director Dianne Stark has filed a harassment complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging that she suffered harassment in [the workplace](#) at the hands of Jeff Hammond, the current interim AD at USM. Stark's complaint states, according to [Magee](#), that Hammond harassed her ". . . to the point that she was forced from her job at the first of the year after six years as senior associate athletic director-internal affairs." Stark's attorney, [Kim Chaze](#), told Magee that Hammond harassed Stark and others in the USM athletics department, resulting in Stark's involuntary departure from the university. [Chaze](#) also pointed out that USM president Martha Saunders failed to provide Stark with relief from Hammond's malicious treatment of her (Stark).



Diane Stark

Jeff Hammond

[Chaze](#) informed Magee that other employees in the USM athletics department plan to file their own harassment complaints against Hammond, and that Stark's EEOC complaint is "a precursor [to] a lawsuit" that USMNEWS.net sources believe will likely find its way into the United States District Court in Hattiesburg. That particular federal court is, as numerous reports here at USMNEWS.net attest, very familiar with [the atmosphere](#) conducive to harassment that exists at USM, as well as Saunders' reticence to either prevent or rectify such behavior (harassment) on the part of USM administrators.

A 3-Apr-2012 [follow-up report from](#) *THA's* Magee provides, through an interview with [Chaze](#), additional details of Stark's complaint. According to [Chaze](#), Hammond "screamed and cursed" at Stark during some of their interactions, and at times Hammond would "slam his fist" on tables/desks during meetings with Stark in the [USM athletics](#) facilities. One story about the situation that was told by [Chaze](#) (to Magee) is particularly disturbing:

"According to what I am told, [Hammond] allegedly referred to 'a twin brother who is a killer' and he would use that to intimidate persons. He would linger in [Stark's] office, he wouldn't leave her office. At one point, he was leaning over her desk, yelling and screaming at her. He attacked her character. He was screaming so loud at one point that

others [in the USM athletics facility] had to close their door. Then, he would come back and ask her to be on his team. That was rather an unfortunate approach to a female employee.”

[Chaze](#) added during the follow-up interview that Hammond made the work environment so hostile for Stark that she notified the USM police department, the university’s legal counsel, and Saunders’ office about her working environment. [Chaze](#) stated that USM’s EEO office was also informed, which sources indicate [means that](#) Rebecca Woodrick [knew](#) of the situation before it rose to the EEOC office in Jackson. According to [Chaze](#) (in his interview with [Magee](#)), “[t]here has been no relief forthcoming for [Stark]. I’ve written [USM’s] lawyer, phoned him and there’s been no response whatsoever to our concerns. They’ve just totally shut the door.” Perhaps most disturbing of all is Chaze’s account of what Saunders stated when informed of the situation (i.e., Hammond yelling at employees, etc.) in the [USM athletics](#) department - “They probably needed to be yelled at.”