Bo's Cost Overrun

Final Printing Cost of Centennial History 50% Higher than Originally Stated

Documents obtained by USMNEWS.net indicate that the printing cost to Mississippi taxpayers and USM students of the USM centennial history book, Treasured Past, Golden Future, ultimately rose from \$40,000, as stated in the original contracts, to almost \$60,000 by the time production of book was closer to completion. The insert below – the first page of a letter from Craig Gill, the editor-in-chief at the University Press of Mississippi, to Robert Pierce of USM – indicates that the UPoM incurred a final printing cost of \$59,817 in publishing the centennial history of USM that was authored by Bo Morgan, the "University Historian" hired by former USM president Martha Saunders in preparation for a grand centennial celebration at the institution in 2010.



November 6, 2009

Robert D. Pierce, II Executive Director Southern Miss Alumni Association 118 College Drive #5013 Hattesburg, MS 39406-0001

Dear Mr. Pierce

The University Press of Mississippi is very pleased to be working with you and your colleagues on Treasured Past, Golden Future: The Centennial History of The University of Southern Mississippi. This volume will be a notable contribution to the history of higher education in our state and a welcome book among all of the Southern Miss alumni, students, and supporters.

As per the requirements of our Publishing Agreement with the University, I am writing now to inform you that the costs associated with publishing the book will be greater than the \$40,000 originally estimated. As you may recall, we will need the University's written consent in order to proceed with publication at this higher cost.

The original estimate of \$40,000 assumed that the book would be printed overseas and that the schedule for layout and typesetting would not be rushed. This was based on a schedule in which the full manuscript, including captions, photos, and photo placements, would be delivered to the press by May 1, 2009, allowing the press ten months to edit and produce the book. Unfortunately, the manuscript was not delivered on time and, when it was delivered, it arrived in piecemeal fashion, making our work on the text more difficult. Half of the text was delivered in June and half in July. The text that arrived was much longer than anticipated necessitating additional time and work at the copyediting stage and resulting in a longer book. Photos and captions were not delivered until even later in the summer and fall with the final captions arriving at the press on October 30, 2009, and final photo placements arriving on November 5, 2009.

In sum, we lost six months from the original planned schedule making it impossible to print books overseas and causing some additional costs related to the now very rushed schedule for the layout. We will also have to have the index rushed and, since the book as a whole has grown in length, every cost associated with it has gone up slightly. We now estimate that the total costs for publishing the book will be approximately \$60,000, \$59,817 to be precise. Most of this increase is due to the cost of printing in North America. The increase also includes a cost of \$2500 for shipping 200 books by 2nd-day air freight in an attempt to insure that books will arrive in time for Founder's Day at the end of March. The other additional costs are related to the rush schedule for the book and the fact that it is longer than originally estimated.

The money figures reported in Gill's letter above, dated 6-Nov-2009, indicate that the printing cost to UPoM of Morgan's history came in at \$19,817 higher than originally planned. This printing cost overrun comes to 49.5% of the original estimate of \$40,000. It also raises the total cost, including other

expenses already examined here at USMNEWS.net, of *Treasured Past*, *Golden Future* to anywhere from \$118,000 to \$168,000.

Interestingly, a partial reason for the 49.5% printing cost overrun was, according to Gill, that the manuscript was both delivered late and in a piecemeal fashion. This sloppiness, which falls at the feet of Morgan and, perhaps, Saunders (and others), meant that the UPoM faced greater difficulties in editing the book than had been earlier anticipated. The text was also, according Gill, much longer than anticipated, and the accompanying photos and captions arrived months after Morgan's written drafts. As sources indicate, the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of Gill's letter inserted above represent something like a scathing admonition of those at USM who were responsible for putting the book together.

The second (final) page of Gill's letter is inserted below for interested readers.

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The new production schedule for the book is still very, very tight, but we are working to make sure that some books will arrive by the end of March. This assumes, however, that everyone working on the book will be able to rush every aspect of its production over the next four months, including the author when he reviews the page proofs. We could return to a total cost much closer to the original estimate if we agreed to deliver books in the early summer, thus allowing us to print overseas and relieving the burden of the short schedule from all parties involved. This would save the University a substantial amount of money and still allow books to be sold at events at the beginning of the Fall semester, but would of course miss the Founder's Day celebration.

We are continuing to work with the printer and the compositor in an attempt to reduce costs if possible, but any such reduction will be very modest and should not be assumed. This will be a beautiful book, but given the circumstances over the past six months in when and how the manuscript was delivered to us there is no way to avoid this increase in costs and still have a chance of delivering books by March 30, 2010.

I look forward to receiving your response to this letter and confirmation that we should proceed with production despite the higher costs now anticipated.

Sincerely,

Craig W. Gill

Assistant Director/Editor-in-Chief

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