

# Cleveland Warns Giannini and Saunders

Media Luminary Argues that USM's Berry is Grossly Underpaid

Through his 6-Apr-2011 [sports column](#) in *The Hattiesburg American*, famed Mississippi sportswriter Rick Cleveland warns the USM administration – athletics director Richard Giannini and president Martha Saunders – that its head baseball coach, Scott Berry, is grossly underpaid, representing a real bargain for the institution. However, at Berry's “. . . barely . . . \$100,000” annual salary, USM may not have such a luxurious bargain for much longer, at least according to Cleveland. Berry is currently in his second season at USM, and his Eagles currently stand at 22-6 (0.786) on the season, and 58-30 (0.659) overall since the beginning of last season. Of course, this remarkable run has USM nationally ranked now, and comes on the heels of USM's recent appearance in the College World Series. That achievement came under former head coach Corky Palmer, Berry's USM boss/mentor for a number of years.



Richard Giannini



Martha Saunders

Cleveland points out that the Ole Miss and Mississippi State baseball coaches earn more than five times Berry's USM salary. Mid-2009 [minutes](#) of the Mississippi IHL indicate that Berry's starting salary (in 2009-10) as head coach at USM was only \$85,000. That entry is inserted below.

#### University of Southern Mississippi - Athletics

Scott Berry, *from* Associate Head Coach, Baseball; salary of \$62,400 per annum; Auxiliary Funds; *to* effective July 1, 2009, Head Coach, Baseball, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics; four-year contract period through June 30, 2013; salary of \$85,000 per annum pro rata; Auxiliary Funds

Those same minutes indicate that Ole Miss' women's tennis coach, Mark Beyers, was being paid \$84,000 per year at that time. That comparison is, according to sources, more indicative of the real problem in this case. If anything at USM can be labeled premier, sources tell USMNEWS.net that it is USM's baseball program. This situation is even more egregious if Joye Lee-McNelis' USM women's basketball program is considered alongside Berry's baseball power. As USMNEWS.net [recently reported](#), Lee-McNelis' annual compensation is up to \$143,000, and yet she is coming off of a 10-20 (0.333) season, and her overall record is only 98-116 (0.458).