

CoB Flashback: January 18, 2007

January 18, 2007, was a sad day for the USM family. As Rachel Leifer of *The Hattiesburg American* reported on January 19, 2007, the USM community awoke on January 18, 2007, to the sad news that then-Dean of USM's College of Arts & Letters, Elliott Pood, had died of a massive heart attack the previous evening, January 17, 2007. As Leifer strolled the USM campus on January 18, 2007, looking for words of condolence and/or wisdom from USM faculty, staff and students, she ran across Harold Doty, then-Dean of USM's College of Business. Doty must have seemed to Leifer like the perfect person to talk to; after all Doty and Pood both came to USM at the same time (2003) and both had been serving as colleagues/Deans since then.

Any visions Leifer might have had about words of condolence and/or wisdom from Doty were dashed almost as soon as Doty's mouth opened. Here is an excerpt from Leifer's front page story for *The Hattiesburg American* on January 19, 2007:

"Elliott's eye was on the future,' [Harold] Doty said. 'He would never stab you in the back or cut your throat . . .'"

Leifer wasn't expecting Doty to provide a Ted Kennedy-esque eulogy of Pood. Perhaps no one on campus would have been capable of speaking the way Kennedy can in times of grief. No, all she wanted was something sensible, something members of the "USM family" could read before their evening meal that would comfort them in their time of loss. Instead, Doty's brain cramped up and the Tony Soprano-esque quote you see above flooded out of Doty's trap -- that Pood would never slice your jugular and watch as you "bleed out."

The USM family expected more; it got less. Fortunately, Doty would hold the keys to the CoB's Dean suite for only 80 days past the date of Leifer's article on Pood's death. On April 9, 2007, and in a surprise move, Doty resigned his post as Dean of USM's CoB. In describing the events of April 9-10, 2007, some would say that then-USM President Shelby Thames fired Doty, and that in doing so Thames stabbed (figuratively) Doty in the back.