

Two Boondoggles are Better than One

by Duane Cobb

I was recently informed by *usmnews.net Reporter* that the CoB's Center for Financial Services is now working to help CoB Dean Harold Doty's spouse, Susan, in her campaign to provide economic education instruction to Mississippi educators. This new plan calls for a financial literacy effort, supported by the CFS and its Director John Clark, that would reach students and/or educators throughout South Mississippi. As a result, two of the CoB's centers -- the CFS and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) -- will be fully engaged in Susan Doty's education initiative.

What makes this latest news interesting is that the CoB's Center for Financial Services was started with money from the private sector, and was established for the purpose of supporting the goal of some CoB students to enter the financial services/planning industry upon graduation. (For those readers not up to date on the history of the CFS, I would urge you to read "Niroomand's Nemesis . . .," which is available here at *usmnews.net*.) It was the generous support of David and Mike Landrum (Primerica), and Bill Hudson (Hudson's Salvage), that made this happen.

As a result, two of the CoB's Centers -- the CFS and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research -- will be fully engaged in Susan Doty's education initiative.

Now, with the hijacking of the CFS, Susan Doty's economic education enterprise has entered new territory. By conscripting John Clark and the CFS into the delivery of economic and finance literacy to Mississippi educators and students, the Dotys, Harold and Susan, are breaking a promise made to those private donors who supported the beginning of the CFS for other purposes. Let's be clear, I'm not arguing that the delivery of economics and finance literacy across the state isn't a worthy goal. What I am saying is that, if this is deemed to be a worthy agenda by the state, then Mississippi tax dollars, not the Landrums' or Hudson's bank accounts, should be paying the freight. Thus, it

seems to me that the Dotys and Clark are treading on shaky ground with this one, and that the Landrums and Hudson (and, perhaps, others) should be informed about it.

the . . . Center for Financial Services . . . was established for the purpose of supporting the goal of some CoB students to enter the financial services/planning industry upon graduation.

According to several reports at *usmnews.net*, BBER Director William Gunther seems to have few qualms about "fronting" for Susan Doty's economics education enterprise. Gunther takes his two-course teaching load release and his \$120,000 salary and goes quietly on his way (usually on Thursdays, and to Josephine, AL). How Clark acts during this latest development remains to be seen. We will continue to focus our attention on the CFS as things take shape.

. . . the Dotys and Clark are treading on shaky ground with this one . . . the Landrums and Hudson . . . should be informed about it.

As I stated at the end of the "Where were Gunther's BBER and Clark's CFS?" inactivity seems to be the order of the day with these two CoB Centers. The cost to Mississippi taxpayers for this type of behavior is not trivial, particularly in the case of Gunther's BBER, where taxpayer support may be higher (than with the CFS), and the level of activity is basically non-existent. As long as the CoB's constituents, both public and private, remain in the dark about these issues, this may simply represent a case of two boondoggles being better than one, at least where the Dotys are concerned.