

Enter Pillage Leave

An Editorial from **Victoria Tyler**

There will be a number of analyses and histories of the Martha Saunders administration of USM (2007-12) produced over the coming weeks and months. I think at least one should list some of the examples relating to the large sums of money that Saunders mismanaged, misspent, or simply allowed others to misappropriate during her time as president of the institution. Six examples, along with their sums, that come to my mind are listed here:

- the [ongoing mobbing of a USM accounting professor](#) that began in 2007 -- **\$2.5 million**
- Pinion Properties [stock swap scandal](#) in 2008 -- **\$1.2 million**
- renovation of [master bedroom suite of president's mansion](#) in 2008 -- **\$0.3 million**
- lease of a [Beechcraft King Air airplane](#) at the beginning of recession in 2008 -- **\$1.9 million**
- Tabletgate Samsung Galaxy Tab [hand-held tablet scandal](#) in 2011 -- **\$0.4 million**
- unaccounted for [deficit in athletics](#) in 2012 -- **\$1.1 million**

These *six* examples, beginning with Saunders' mobbing of the editor of USMNEWS.net and running through the current financial crisis in USM's athletics department, come to a whopping total of **\$7.4 million**. How many of you can say that, in your leadership or management position, you mismanaged, misspent or generally misappropriated almost \$7.5 million of your employer's money? Or, in your governmental position, that you mismanaged, misspent or generally misappropriated almost \$7.5 million in taxpayers' funds? Not one person? I didn't think so.

Martha Saunders, on the other hand, can say as much, if not worse. It's a real shame that is so, because many in the USM family had such high hopes for her as the president who would follow the disastrous USM administration of Shelby Thames (2002-07). The links above provide a beginning place, in each case, for newer followers of USMNEWS.net to investigate each of these examples. Of course, the USMNEWS.net Archives are packed with additional reports and editorials covering each example. I invite each of you to explore these in order to get a greater understanding of the problems that occurred under Saunders' leadership. A good one to start with is the Pinion Properties scandal, which reads much like something out of a John Grisham novel and involves characters from USM's past and present, from former provost Jay Grimes to current USM vice president of administrative affairs Chad Driskell, and others in between.