

Fifty Years Later, Part II

Slavery Officially Over in Mississippi!!

Southern Miss recently announced its celebration of fifty years of integration. Let's revisit Southern Miss' role in Mississippi's racist past.

In February 2013, The New York Post's Michael Blaustein reported that [148 years later, slavery officially over in Mississippi](#). According to the report, "The landmark event happened earlier this month when Mississippi became the final state to officially ratify the amendment, which ended slavery."

[Delay in correcting injustice](#) is nothing new to Mississippi or the [University of Southern Mississippi](#).

During the late 1950's, Aubrey K. Lucas was the Director of Admissions at Mississippi Southern College, later named the University of Southern Mississippi, when Mr. Clyde Kennard applied for admission. Among other accomplishments, [Mr. Kennard](#) was "a former sergeant and paratrooper in the U.S. Army." Mr. Kennard's clearly met all conditions for acceptance, except for one insignificant thing: he was black.

Mr. Kennard wasn't just rejected, he was punished for his efforts to become the first black to be admitted to MSC-USM. He was falsely accused of a crime, prosecuted, and jailed.

Mr. Lucas blamed "the governor, J. P. Coleman, who decided against admitting Mr. Kennard." Although Mr. Lucas said, in 2006 – long after Mr. Kennard's death -- "[it was a mistake](#)," he did not stick his neck out to prevent the injustice. Let there be no mistake that the behavior of Mississippi officials was disgusting and despicable. Their behavior was so disgusting that no one, much less one who professes to be a devout Christian, could have perceived what was done to Mr. Kennard was anything other than an appalling injustice.

Mr. Lucas did then what he continued to do over many years. He sat back and watched injustice be perpetrated against others by USM officials including Presidents Thames and Saunders.