

How Much has Really Changed?

Photos from the Recent USM Foundation Board's Pre-Meeting Party

Though many in the “USM family” are hopeful that the return of Martha Dunagin Saunders will usher in a “new beginning” for USM, recent photos from a USM Foundation cocktail party (submitted by Phyllis Debrow to *The Hattiesburg American*) have to give many cause for concern. The recent event was held at the home of Fred and Bonnie Drews of Hattiesburg, both staunch supporters of former USM President Shelby Thames. Among many scandals to plague the Thames Administration at USM (2002-2007) was the firing of former USM professors Frank Glamser and Gary Stringer. The firings, occurring in the spring of 2004, sent the University into a tailspin that lasted through mid-May of 2007. This firings also characterized what many believed to be the ultimate goal for USM of the Thames Administration – to strengthen the sciences at the expense of the liberal arts.

One of the Debrow photos, which shows Saunders happily lodged in between the two Thames supporters, is inserted below:



The University of Southern Mississippi Foundation Board of Directors recently gathered at the Hattiesburg home of hosts Dr. Fred and Bonnie Drews on the evening before the board’s quarterly board meeting. Guests included University President Martha Saunders, center, pictured here with the Drewses. (Phyllis Debrow, Hattiesburg)

Interim CoB Dean Alvin Williams was even captured in another of Debrow's photographs. That picture, showing Williams with Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Boucher, is inserted below:



Alvin Williams and Jennifer Boucher (Phyllis Debrow, Hattiesburg)

If the Debrow photos do nothing else, they give many in the USM family reason to be cautious in their decisions to support the new USM President.