

President Martha Saunders Under Oath

Are You Listening, Mr. Bounds, Mr. Lucas? Do You Approve?

Part 5

“Don’t count her out yet. There are plenty of low level colleges where she could rise again.”

[Name withheld](#)

If there is a chance that Martha Saunders can repeat her incompetence as an administrator at another college or university, its faculty and administrators should have a clear picture of her conduct as president of Southern Miss. This series provides a rare opportunity for the Southern Miss family, as well as potential employers, to consider Martha Saunders’ words, under oath. Click for [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), and [Part 4](#).

Martha Saunders didn't just squander millions of dollars in student and taxpayer money on an airplane, or hundreds of thousands decorating the Presidential mansion's bedroom, or hundreds of thousands on a misguided, illegal computer tablet give-away scheme, or at least a million in mismanagement on athletics that we know of, etc. She spent approximately two and a half million dollars trying and failing to fire me for opposing and exposing the questionable conduct of USM faculty and administrators.

It’s your money -- your millions and millions of dollars. Taxpayer and students’ money. If you care to understand just how incompetent Martha Saunders is, take a front row seat at her deposition. And where were Hank Bounds and Aubrey Lucas? With millions being spent to try to fire DePree, you can bet they knew. And, you don't have to take anyone's word. Observe it for yourself. Her deposition continues below:

Questions directed to President Martha Saunders at her deposition on April 12 and 13, 2010--Q is question; A is President Saunders’ answer.

Part 23

Q. The (Interim Dean Williams’) letter (that calls for the termination of tenured full professor DePree) states that Dr. DePree engaged in disruptive behavior by cursing and storming out of the [May 4, 2007] meeting in a manner that left faculty members fearful. Did you ask Dr. Williams what Dr. DePree actually did? [Keep in mind that President Saunders had a recording of the meeting—the best evidence available as to the events of the May 4, 2007 meeting—and choose not to listen to it.]

A. I don't remember.

Q. What does "storming out of the meeting" convey to you?

A. Leaving abruptly, slamming the door.

Q. Does any of that rise to the level of threatening behavior, leaving abruptly?

A. I wouldn't think so.

Q. Slamming a door?

A. No. It indicates anger, but...

Q. Not threatens violence?

A. Not necessarily, no.

Q. Is there anything that indicates that Dr. Depree left abruptly?

A. Is there anything where that indicates that?

Q. In any information that you have?

A. I don't recall that being said.

Q. Okay. Would you look at page 152 of Dr. Williams' testimony [sworn testimony which Saunders had chosen not to read until required to do so at the deposition.]?

A. (Saunders looks at document.) Okay.

Q. On line seven: Did he [DePree] throw a chair? And what did Dr. Williams say?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' sworn statement] He [DePree] did not throw a chair.

Q. Did DePree throw anything? That's line 16. What did he say?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' sworn statement] He [DePree] did not throw anything at all.

Q. Did he lunged at anybody? What did he answer?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' sworn statement] The answer was no.

Q. Did he make any type of physically threatening gesture at anybody? And what was the answer?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' sworn statement] No.

Q. So do you see evidence there that Dr. Depree behaved in a threatening manner?

A. No.

Q. Thank you. Did Dr. Williams specifically tell you the identity of any faculty who was left fearful?

A. I don't recall.

Q. Are you aware that Dr. Williams testified that he did not know of anyone who was fearful at the May 4th meeting other than himself?

A. No.

Q. And if he testified that, then his letter to you would be false?

A. I don't know that, that he testified that.

Q. Well, let's find it, and we'll look at it together. Let's go to page 157.

A. (Saunders looks at document.)

Q. Again, you can look before or after, but I'd like for you to start at about line 11 on page 157.

A. (Saunders looks at document.) Okay.

Q. The question is: And right now here today, some ten months later [from May 2007 till March 2008], you can't give me the name of a single person as you [Williams] recall in your mind of Mark Depree storming out of that room, can you? Tell me the name of a single person who was fearful, can you? And what was his [Williams'] answer?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' sworn statement] I can't give you a specific other than myself.

Q. So when he says he left the faculty fearful, that was not supported by his testimony, was it?

A. It doesn't appear to.

Q. So is that statement false?

A. Well, it's contradicted.

Q. And which would you give more weight to, testimony under oath or a letter?

A. One would expect to give it to a testimony under oath.

Were Williams' claims of fear merely smoke to hide his motive to silence Dr. DePree? Dr. Williams, all by himself, delivered a letter from Dr. Saunders to Dr. DePree on the first day of class, fall 2007, and ordered him from the building. Williams' behavior belied his comments of

fear. So, what are we to believe Williams was afraid of? Was he afraid his decision to allow Assistant Professor Dahklia to bushwack Professor DePree at the May 2007 faculty meeting with an off agenda item demanding DePree to be silent about his criticisms of faculty misconduct was cowardly? Was Williams afraid he had orchestrated a mobbing that was, on reflection, evidence of poor leadership? Was Williams afraid that the mobbing of DePree was a disgusting display reminiscent of intolerance to which Williams, an African-American male, should be knowledgeable? Or, was Williams just ashamed of himself for encouraging an attack on a fellow member of the faculty? Was he so ashamed he had to create a reason to justify his behavior?

While we can only speculate concerning Dr. Williams' reasons, we do know that Dr. Saunders punished a professor without a shred of evidence and without looking for a shred of evidence. When Dr. Saunders unilaterally decided who is worthy of the protection of our rules and procedures and the Constitution of the United States, she denied all of us our rights.

Part 24

Q. [I]f you would, look at his [Interim Dean Alvin Williams'] letter [demanding termination of tenured professor DePree] again.

A. (Saunders complies.) Okay.

Q. And I believe there's a section where he says: To add to the air of fear and intimidation, I'm told that Dr. Depree manages a web site that routinely disparages the university. Have you located that?

A. I see that.

Q. Would you read that paragraph?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' letter, which it should be remembered is not under oath] To add to the air of fear and intimidation, I'm told that Dr. Depree manages a web site that routinely disparages the university, administrators, and fellow faculty members. The departure of some faculty members from the college of business has been facilitated by the vile, unprofessional, and damaging comments made about individuals on this web site. Given the widespread dissemination of this web site, professional reputations have been injured in the academic marketplace. This site is viewed by fellow academicians and administrators at other institutions, friends, alumni, and perspective donors to the university. It provides a false representation of the college of business and the University of Southern Mississippi and –

[Stay tuned for a series of reports serialized from a peer reviewed publication chronicling proof of Williams' false claims.]

Q. Okay. We can stop there. We'll cover more later. Does Dr. Williams say he visited the web site?

A. He says he is told.

Q. Did you check the web site to see if it meets these standards?

A. No.

Q. Did ask you Dr. Williams what he meant by this?

A. I don't recall.

Q. I'd like for you to go to page 157 of Williams' deposition?

A. (Saunders complies.) Okay.

Q. And let's go to line 20, and I believe the question is: The website of Dr. Depree also adds to the fear and intimidation, doesn't it? What does Dr. Williams reply?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] Yes.

Q. Why are they afraid of the web site? What is the response?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] As I indicated earlier, this morning, when people are taped by this perceived recording device --

Q. Let's stop there. How do you tape somebody with a perceived recording device?

A. Well, I don't know that you can. You can only tape by a real recording device.

Q. Okay. Let's continue. "It's the fear of disclosure," and then what was his response there?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] Of their conversations, their private conversations.

Q. Question: That's the fear? And that was the answer?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] That would be a primary concern.

Q. Are there other concerns?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] To the extent that things that appear on the website are untrue, are not based in fact, or they are malicious, I think people would be concerned about that.

Q. What is -- tell me the first untrue thing that is on the website.

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I have not read the website, so I could not respond to that.

Q. What's the first thing on there that's malicious?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I could not tell you that either.

Q. What was the other word that you used, not based on fact?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I used that phrase.

Q. And what on that web site is not based on fact?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I haven't -- I can't respond. I don't know.

Q. So would you agree that based on his testimony, Dr. Williams' claims of fear are based on his dislike for Dr. Depree's web site?

A. I'm sorry. Ask that again.

Q. I'm sorry. That was a badly phrased question. It's been a long day. Does Dr. Williams state that a basis for fear is the website?

A. He states that in his letter.

Q. And he states that in his testimony, doesn't he, what we just reviewed?

A. (Saunders nods head affirmatively.)

Q. And Dr. Williams was very unhappy with Dr. Depree's speech?

A. I don't know.

Q. He considered the website as something that made faculty fearful?

A. He included that as another item that -- I'm sorry. I have to go back to it again.

Q. Okay.

A. (Saunders looks at document.)

Q. We are on page 157 through 159.

A. No. What I was referring to was that he said, "I am told," and so he referred to that in the original letter to me as additional information that inspires fear.

Q. Words inspire fear?

A. He didn't say that. I said that.

Q. But in your opinion, the words on the website inspired fear based on what you just read?

A. It would have to be words, unless it's pictures.

Q. And what words on that website inspired fear?

A. Well, I don't know.

Saunders said, "I don't know." She doesn't know, but she punished Professor DePree, regardless that Williams and Saunders "don't know." Interim Dean Williams and President Saunders testified that they never read the website but they were willing to terminate a tenured full professor on the basis of the content of the website they chose never to read. The evidence, website, is as easy to access as typing www.usmnews.net. Well, were they lying (since its under oath, it would be perjury) or did they really attempt to terminate a tenured full professor without looking at readily accessible evidence? Are Williams and Saunders credible? Does their sworn testimony make sense? If you don't believe their sworn testimony is credible and/or makes sense, are they participating in some secret "Star Chamber" process to accomplish what they cannot do or say publicly? Or are they ignorant that their positions of responsibility require that they have evidence, facts, and sound reasoning as a basis for their decisions? Or are they just plain stupid?

To paraphrase an unknown source, "a failure of justice for an individual, is a failure of justice for all." Are you next, dear colleague?

Part 25

Q. Well I would assume that they [DePree's accusers] would be included in any [psychological] investigation. Now, where would that assumption come from?

A. In my mind.

Q. In your letter?

A. No, in my mind.

Q. In your mind. Okay... Did you ever ask any party to confer with an independent professional psychologist to meet with the faculty and see if they had any basis for the claims [against DePree]?

A. I have not.

Q. Do you intend to?

A. I could.

Q. Do you intend to?

A. I don't know.

Q. When will you know?

A. I can't answer that.

Q. It's been what, coming up on three years?

A. Yes.

Martha-in-Wonderland? Is President Saunders a true solipsist? Everything and everyone exists only in her mind? If it's true that you exist only in her mind, then you have access to her thoughts, if any, and her reasoning, if any. So, what's in there? Anything?

President Saunders, as you will learn in future reports, expected others to know what is in her mind. We're not kidding, just continue to read the series. She may expect you to "hear" her telepathic communications. If you were chosen as one of USM faculty to be discharged due to budget shortfalls, all you needed to do was read her mind to learn your fate.