

President Martha Saunders Under Oath

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

Part 6

“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](#), [Part 4](#), and [Part 5](#).

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:

Part 26

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

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?

Part 27

Q. Did the ombudsman tell you in his report that a significant point of contention between Dr. Depree and the faculty was his website?

A. (Witness looks at document.) Yes.

Q. Did you ask him what the contention was or did you know?

A. I don't know, didn't ask.

Q. I believe Dr. Cannon says that he was told that Dr. Depree used the web page in his classes?

A. (Witness looks at document.) I see that.

Q. And do you know who told Dr. Cannon that?

A. It does not say.

Q. Do you know if there is any evidence other than claims by the accounting faculty that he did so?

A. I don't know.

Q. Did you ask?

A. No.

The website, usmnews.net, was one of the speech activities intolerant administrators and a few faculty insisted cease. After all, with the other accusations firmly disproven, freedom of speech is the reason left to punish Professor DePree. Did he, for example, use usmnews.net in his classes? Did Ombudsman Cannon bother to ask Professor DePree if he used usmnews.net in his classes? The answer to both questions is no. It's simple to prove or disprove: ask the students. A place to start is the student teacher evaluations that were readily available to President Saunders and other USM administrators.

President Saunders acted on mere accusations -- nothing more. President Saunders needed nothing but accusations to punish Professor DePree for his speech. (By the way, her area of academic study was communications theory--public relations. Public relations by definition is maintaining a favorable public image.)

Remember that some of Professor DePree's accusers had been caught copying other's ideas and words "without proper citation"—Charlie Jordan's phrase to describe his participation. Dr. Jordan and his friends attacked Dr. DePree and other colleagues who initially brought the potential misconduct to the attention of those who copied "without proper citation"—Charlie Jordan among them. Dr. Jordan and the other participants were afforded an opportunity to say, "Oops, we'll correct that" or "it's boilerplate ask anybody". After being ignored, Dr. DePree and colleagues took the potential misconduct to internal USM decision-makers for review. They were ignored again, but the decision-makers quietly got to work behind the scenes "fixing the problem." [Mississippi Open Records Act requests filed by the editor of usmnews.net produced the supporting information.]

Part 28

Q. In your sworn testimony in May [2008] after you wrote that letter [*in August 2007 banning DePree from the business college building and advising him of termination proceedings*], you said it was not a demand or a requirement [*for DePree to have a psychological exam. In Saunders' first deposition she testified that DePree "was not a danger to students or otherwise"*]; is that correct?

A. I did.

Q. When did it become a demand or a requirement?

A. Well, it became a demand in my mind, after -- when we were unable to come to any agreement. I'm really only left with this letter [the May 2008 letter which clearly does not make the demand].

Q. Okay?

A. And I can't tell you when, when in my mind it became a requirement.

Q. And have you conveyed to Dr. Depree that it is a requirement?

A. I have not.

What Saunders is saying –“when we were unable to come to any agreement”—was that she would employ the “he’s crazy” ploy to try to force Professor DePree to do what she wanted—for Dr. DePree to be a good “public relations” drone advocating USM regardless of acts of corruption some members of the USM community committed and continue to commit. The threat is clear and it is a despicable tactic that intolerant administrators use to scare and isolate faculty. And, of course, as promised in a previous part, Saunders expects Dr. DePree, and—never doubt—you, to read her mind: “Well, it became a demand in my (Saunders’) mind...”: a “demand in her mind” that Dr. DePree do what she commands “in her mind.”