

Palmer by Land, Saunders by Air II

In speaking about the [national exposure](#) that USM is currently receiving for winning the Gainesville Regional and advancing to the College World Series, USM president Martha Saunders told *The Hattiesburg American* that "[p]eople are writing about this Cinderella team, and connecting it to the school. Four years ago, we were flat on our backs after Katrina. We recovered from that and we received a \$6 million gift from heaven. We just think the universe is smiling on us." In her comment, Saunders appears to have forgotten that most of USM's scholarship and professorship endowments are underwater, and that the University and State are facing dire budgetary situations (and for the second year in a row). Not only that, some readers are offended at Saunders' statement about the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Long-time readers of USMNEWS.net are well aware that, at the time of Hurricane Katrina (Aug-05), Saunders was tucked away in the comfort of Whitewater, Wisconsin, where she served as president of UW-W. It was not until May of 2007, almost two years after Katrina, that Saunders moved to Hattiesburg. Thus, the only thing she knows about being "flat on our backs" is secondhand, at best. That said, outgoing USM baseball coach Corky Palmer and his 2009 USM Golden Eagles are to be congratulated for winning the Gainesville Regional and heading to the school's first-ever CWS. The team [loaded the bus on 12-June-09](#) and headed off to Omaha for the CWS, though it can be reported now that they lost game 1 to Texas by a single run. Still, the team is alive and set to face North Carolina on 17-June-09, so the dream lives. It's a shame, however, that they had to take a bus all the way to Nebraska, especially given that Saunders has already flown to Omaha and back on 14-June-09 for the Texas game. No doubt she will be making the return trip by air tomorrow for UNC. The whole presidential plane fiasco is beyond salt in the wounds. Saunders' statements about Katrina and "the universe smiling on us" are indicative of a president who is completely out of touch with reality. The chickens will come home to roost. The only points to ponder now are when, and how badly it will affect the institution.