

Quotable Doty

2nd Edition: Doty on the Center for Economic Education

“In the past several years, the scholarship of teaching economics has become more of a focus in the discipline, and our college economists have stayed current with this trend. The level of expertise we have in the College of Business is a contributing factor in our recent launch of the Center for Economic Education,” said Dr. Harold Doty, dean.”¹

“Economics requirements for students are becoming reality as the incoming high school freshman class of 2008 will be required to take an economics class before graduation, and universities will require economics for college admission. Additionally, there are economic standards required by the Mississippi Department of Education that are to be integrated across the curriculum at the elementary and middle school levels,” said [Harold] Doty. ‘In addition to our work with high school teachers, we want to help current K-8 teachers, who may not have had formal education in economics, feel prepared, confident and enthusiastic about meeting these requirements.’”²

Quote number one was the basis for the 1st edition of Quotable Doty and is included in this edition as a segue between our analysis of Doty’s statements about Economic Education and a highly related subject – the USM Center for Economic Education. In this first quote, Doty cites national recognition and ranking in the field of Economic Education research as a “contributing factor in [the CoB’s] recent launch of the Center for Economic education.” What are the other factors? Maybe the second quotation will shed some light on the subject.

The second quote – taken from a separate USM Public Relations Release – identifies increased primary and secondary education emphasis on Economics and a lack of Economics training in the education ranks at these levels. These are valid reasons for starting an outreach program such as the Center for Economic Education. For the Center to have credibility, however, it needed a recognized scholar to act as the front man and the instructor of record, so to speak, for Economic Education seminars and other programs. According to the USM website, the Center for Economic Education is a component of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, headed up by former dean Bill Gunther.³ Strangely enough, Gunther has apparently never published an Economics Education article, so why is he at the helm, at least officially?⁴ Scuttlebutt in the CoB indicates that at least three Economics Education researchers declined the post prior to Gunther’s acceptance. The next passage may present some relevant information.

“Susan Doty, lead educator for the Mississippi Council on Economic Education (MCEE), will coordinate economic education programming for teachers through the center.”⁵

Notice that this is a statement of fact presented by the PR Release’s author rather than a quotation representing an opinion. The passage is taken from the same source as the second quotation from above. So Susan Doty, wife of Harold Doty, is an Economics Educator affiliated with the Mississippi Council on Economic Education. Investigation of the MCEE website reveals that the MCEE has two Centers affiliated with the Council – the Center for Economic and Personal Financial Literacy at Mississippi State

University and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at USM. The MCEE's Board of Directors includes Mississippi Superintendent of Schools Hank Bounds, several executives of banks located in Mississippi, and one D. Harold Doty, Dean of the College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi. The website identified Susan Doty as lead educator for the MCEE and states that the MCEE was "recently instituted" by a group of business leaders.⁶

So there it is. A new state Council. A board of directors with substantial overlap with Harold Doty's Business Advisory Council, former MSU business dean Sara Freedman, and Harold Doty himself as a Board member, a position not listed on Doty's Sedona vita as of May 2, 2006. And then there's Susan Doty, who is most probably not volunteering her time as lead educator. That seems like a tangled web. Don't forget about Freedman, who Doty often refers to as his "good friend".

So, here's a hypothetical for you, straight from the Odds & Ends Department at usmpride. Doty contacts Freedman sometime prior to 2005 and suggests the MCEE as a way to combine forces against Ole Miss' stranglehold on contributions from the Mississippi business community. The MCEE will give MSU and USM exposure and will allow Harold Doty and Freedman more points of contact with business leaders. This will be a good thing for all involved. It just so happens that Doty's wife Susan has some Economic Education experience from Arkansas and will be able to structure seminars and act as lead educator, for pay of course. A board is established from supporters of the MSU and USM business schools, and Freedman and Doty get Board positions. They also get publicity for their fledgling/struggling Economics centers at their respective schools. It's a win-win for Doty, who gets vita building activities and a boondoggle for his wife, who can be paid by the MCEE rather than USM, thus avoiding nepotism laws. Perhaps that's why the three USM professors turned the position down – they knew it involved dirty money.

To add to the intrigue surrounding the USM CEE, the CoB is/was planning to hire or has already hired John Mundy, an Economics Education "specialist" from Nevada for a position at USMGC. Mundy is not terminally qualified in Economics, having earned a Ph.D. in higher education administration from UNLV, according to a CoB email sent to the O&E Department by a member of the CoB faculty. Mundy does, however, have significant experience with the Nevada Council on Economic and Entrepreneur Education and Director of the UNLV Center for Economic and Entrepreneur Education. This move was undertaken because, "[t]he Dean wanted us to find an economics education person for the economics position on the Coast." The O&E Department is sure that Mundy fits some plan to further exploit Economic Education for Doty's gain.

The O&E Department of the usmpride.com Research Division will investigate this situation further. However, in the meantime, our next installment will examine other Centers at USM. Since Doty has used the CEE to his personal advantage so well, we think the others deserve some attention as well.

¹ "Study Ranks Southern Miss in Top 100 for Economic Education Research," USM PR Release, May 3, 2005. Available online at <http://www.usm.edu/pr/prnews/may05/mixonbookstory.htm>.

² “Southern Miss Center to Focus On Economics Education,” USM PR Release, July 21, 2005. Available online at <http://www.usm.edu/pr/prnews/july05/cee.htm>.

³ <http://www.usm.edu/business/centers/BBER.htm>

⁴ This determination is made after consultation of EconLit, the academic search engine dedicated to Economics publications.

⁵ “Southern Miss Center to Focus On Economics Education,” USM PR Release, July 21, 2005. Available online at <http://www.usm.edu/pr/prnews/july05/cee.htm>.

⁶ <http://www.mscee.org/>