

Rouse's Behavior Becoming Bizarre

IHL Board Member Hangs up on Local Paper

According to *The Hattiesburg American's* [higher education reporter](#) Ed Kemp, IHL Board member Douglas Rouse has recused himself from membership on the IHL's presidential search committee that will, in 2013, name a successor to former USM president Martha Saunders. Regular readers of USMNEWS.net will recall that Rouse is the university trustee who has maintained [an economic relationship](#) with USM, despite holding [a position](#) of authority over the institution. He is also accused of [pressuring Saunders](#) to choose someone other than Jeff Hammond to replace former USM athletics director Richard Giannini. When, during its 7-Sept-2012 monthly meeting, the USM faculty senate asked search committee chairwoman (and IHL trustee) Robin Robinson about Rouse's absence, Robinson, as Kemp reports, informed the USMFS that "[Rouse] resigned from the committee[, yet he still remains] a member of the College Board."

In response to Robinson's statement to the faculty senate, *THA's* Kemp contacted the IHL Board office in Jackson, but was told by officials there that no comment would be forthcoming regarding Rouse's resignation from the search committee. As Kemp reports, IHL spokeswoman Caron Blanton directed all media inquiries about Rouse's status with the IHL to Rouse himself. At that point, Kemp contacted Rouse, who promptly "hung up the phone." As Kemp reports, Rouse is currently waiting on the Mississippi Ethics Commission to reconsider its July-2012 opinion that he may have violated Mississippi ethics laws in maintaining an economic interest in USM over the past few years.