

## *Special Report*

# Hovering Lieutenants

## A Look at Thames Era Leaders who Remain Near the Top of USM

The ongoing USM Research Foundation (Pinion Properties) [scandal](#) involving Jay Grimes and Richard Hadden, two highly-placed officials from the Shelby Thames administration (2002-07), coupled with the [mystery surrounding](#) the recent “resignation” announcement from USM chief financial officer Joe Morgan, [another former](#) Thames administration executive, highlights the [perils](#) facing current USM president Martha Saunders from retaining/relying on the former president’s lieutenants. Listed below are a number of other servants of the Thames administration who continue to hold important positions in the Saunders administration (note: Morgan’s actual departure is still weeks away).

- Joe Paul, *VP of Student Affairs*
- Joe Morgan, *Chief Financial Officer*
- Bob Pierce, *Acting VP for Advancement*
- Homer Coffman, *Chief Information Officer*
- Lee Gore, *University Legal Counsel*
- Richard Giannini, *Director of Intercollegiate Athletics*
- Cynthia Easterling, *Associate Provost*
- Russ Willis, *Director of Human Resources*
- Connie Wyldmon, *Director of Sponsored Programs Administration*
- Julian Allen, *Associate VP for Research and Economic Development*
- Greg Pierce, *University Registrar*
- Becky Woodrick, *Director of Office of AA/EEO*
- Jana Bryant, *Director of Marketing & Public Relations*
- Rusty Postlewait, *Director of Physical Plant*
- Eddie Holloway, *Dean of Students*
- Rusty Anderson, *Director of Career Services*

Whether or not these officials cause Saunders additional problems remains to be seen. However, reports here at USMNEWS.net have [shown](#) that members of the USM and Hattiesburg communities have serious reservations about Joe Morgan and Russ Willis.<sup>1</sup> Willis, currently the Director of Human Resources, will assume the CFO duties in August-2010 (when Morgan steps down). Finally, there is also a thread on the *USM Forum* (USM AAUP message board) expressing the reservations of some about Bob Pierce, who was recently elevated by Saunders to VP of Advancement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the comments from the linked USMNEWS.net report come from online readers of *The Hattiesburg American*.

<sup>2</sup> Sources say that, if asked, many USM faculty would warn Saunders about relying on others in the above list.