

Special Report Series

The 'Secret Degree' Strikes Again

Former CoB Dean in Hot Water Once Again

PART 2

In light of former CoB dean Harold Doty's litigation history, USMNEWS.net reporters periodically check the courts near where Doty lives and works. Recent documents [obtained from](#) the Smith County, Texas Court Clerk, indicate that Doty is once again likely headed back to court, this time in his capacity as [dean of business](#) at the University of Texas – Tyler. These documents indicate that former UTT business student advisor, Karen St. John, is suing UTT based on [actions largely taken](#) by Doty vis-à-vis St. John's employment. According to St. John's complaint (relevant portion inserted below), UTT officials exercised unlawful discriminatory and retaliatory actions against her. St. John also asserts a claim under the *Texas Whistleblower Act* for additional damages. This report covers the *Whistleblower* claim:

VI. WHISTLEBLOWER

Plaintiff's termination by Defendant was in direct violation of Texas Government Code § 554.001, et seq., which provides that "a state or local governmental entity may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or take other adverse personnel action against, a public employee who in good faith reports a violation of law by the employing governmental entity or another public employee to an appropriate law enforcement authority". TEX. GOV'T CODE § 554.001. In June of 2010, Dean Doty and Dr. Mary Fischer asked Plaintiff to falsify documentation to award Dean Doty's daughter an Accounting Degree without proper course work. Plaintiff in good faith refused and reported that violation of the state law on September 7, 2010, to Dr. Rodney Mabry, the President of the University. Plaintiff was terminated on December 22, 2010, in retaliation for having made this report. Further, the September 23, 2010 report occurred less than 90 days prior to her termination, creating a presumption of retaliation. TEX GOV'T CODE § 554.004.

As indicated above, St. John alleges that Doty and UTT business school associate dean Mary Fischer asked, in June-2010, St. John “to falsify documentation to award dean Doty’s daughter an Accounting Degree without proper coursework.” St. John adds that she refused to do so, and in September-2010 she [reported](#) this [potential](#) violation in Texas [law to](#) UTT’s [president](#), Rodney Mabry. St. John was terminated in December-2010, less than 90 days after a negative report was filed against her by UTT officials. Thus, St. John’s complaint adds that a “presumption of retaliation” seems reasonable, at least according to Texas law.

As numerous reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net attest, Doty, as dean of the CoB at USM, [hounded members](#) of the college’s undergraduate programs committee over [his desire](#) to [have what was](#) referred to as “signature authority” [to award](#) general business degrees (no specified major) on [rare occasions](#) to certain business students who were accumulating the hours for graduation, but not the requisite GPA(s). Readers [are invited](#) to simply type “secret degree” into USMNEWS.net’s Google [search bar](#) and examine what pops up. Doing so reveals a number of reports and columns about Doty’s [obsession with](#) being able to [award degrees](#) in such an untoward and dictatorial fashion. USMNEWS.net’s vast archive of audio, video and written documentaries contains reports that Doty’s desire to have such a power at USM had to do with granting the daughter of a South Mississippi fast-food magnate a USM business degree after she had struggled to earn one the traditional way. Sources point out that if Doty would go that far for an acquaintance, even if he expected a large donation to USM’s b-school in return, it is not a stretch to imagine he would want to use his executive authority to pressure a staffer to do something similar for his own daughter.

Stay tuned to USMNEWS.net for part three in this series.