

Special Report Series

'Tongue Lashing'

Former CoB Dean in Hot Water Once Again

PART 4

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. This is Part 4 in this series.

In mid-March, 2010, Defendant issued St. John an unjust and unfair written warning, signed by Cowart but not written by her. This was the first written disciplinary action St. John had ever received from the University. Dean Doty called St. John into his office and immediately told St. John that he would fire her for no reason as he didn't need a reason, and St. John began crying. The warning cited no less than five separate reasons for the warning, yet Dean Doty denied St. John the opportunity to refute such allegations, in direct violation of the University's Handbook of Operating Procedures ("Handbook"). Instead, Dean Doty administered a 45 minute tongue lashing to St. John. Dean Doty further told her in no uncertain terms that she must restrict the time devoted to teaching her class to her lunch period only. He revoked permission for St. John to take even ten minutes before or after class; she had to go straight there and come straight back to the office. He and Cowart chastised St. John for taking too long in returning from her class to the office, and she attempted to explain that as her pregnancy progresses, she was physically unable to walk as fast. She also again reiterated the need to get some lunch so that she will not become sick, but they did not care about these concerns. The Dean reaffirmed that she would not be allowed a lunch period of any length. When they were finished verbally attacking her, Dean Doty asked St. John if she

According to St. John's complaint (relevant portion inserted above), in March-2010 Doty issued a "written warning" to St. John, one that was signed by St. John's immediate supervisor, Tammy Cowart, an assistant professor of business law in UT-T's business school. As stated above, this was the first written censure ever issued by UT-Tyler to St.

John. St. John's legal complaint continues by stating that Doty then called a face-to-face meeting with St. John to inform her that she was an at-will employee whom he could fire for any reason. Predictably, St. John began crying at this point in the meeting. St. John explains that the censure included five separate warnings/claims, yet Doty refused to allow her to have the opportunity to refute the claims, as she is allowed according to UT-T's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Sources tell USMNEWS.net that this is, and has been for decades, Doty's *modus operandi*. When he's not producing some tortured interpretation of a faculty or employee handbook, Doty denies altogether the right of aggrieved faculty/staff to make use of one's due process rights. Clearly, to sources at least, St. John's story is *classic Doty*.

With St. John crying, Doty turned up the heat, another tactic sources say is commonplace when it comes to Doty. According to the complaint, ". . . Doty administered a 45 minute tongue lashing to St. John," telling her that her teaching must be contained to the hour around noon, the scheduled time for her course. At this point Cowart joined the chorus, chastising St. John for "taking too long" to return from class to her office. Again, both Doty and Cowart completely ignored the effects of St. John's high-risk pregnancy on her physical state. Doty reiterated (as a "verbal attack"), according to St. John's complaint, that he was unconcerned about her ability to eat a noontime meal. Finally, Doty relented long enough to ask St. John if she had any response to his harangue. However, as indicated below, St. John ". . . could not talk for crying."

had anything to say but she could not talk for crying. He told her she had to sign the disciplinary action. Under fear of termination, St. John did not try to defend herself but simply wrote that she had always tried to do her job to the best of her abilities and would continue to do the best job she knew how. This meeting occurred at the end of the day on a Friday. The first thing St. John did when she got to work the following Monday was go to the Dean's office to speak with him to explain the inaccuracies in the disciplinary action, before he sent the written disciplinary action to HR to be included in her permanent file. Dean Doty told St. John that it was too late; that he had already been sent it to HR and warned her never try to speak to him again. He made it clear that she could not speak to anyone but her immediate supervisor. Again, Dean Doty threatened St. John with termination "for no reason, at any time". He repeated those threats to her on several later occasions.

Next, Doty forced St. John to sign the complaint against her – yet another occasion on which Doty forced a faculty/staffer under him to sign a document of one form or another. Of course, all of this was done to St. John ". . . at the end of the day on a

Friday.” That sounds, to sources at least, [like something right out of](#) Art Bedeian’s “Dean’s Disease.” Finally, this portion of St. John’s complaint ends with the sad account of her attempt to correct the record before it became part of her permanent employment file at UT-T. Once again, Doty thwarted her efforts to have due process, claiming that her attempt to amend the personnel action against her came too late – his complaint against was already in the file.



Cowart

Yet again, [Cowart](#), who some in USM’s CoB would refer to as Doty’s minion, plays a prominent role in this saga. In this installment she is described as an active participant in the 45 minute tongue lashing of St. John. Sources say that Cowart’s academic record appears to be light on significant scholarly activities, meaning that her service to Doty in this and other settings will likely be a critical factor in gaining her tenure and/or future promotions and merit raises.

Stay tuned to USMNEWS.net for part five.