

Special Report

Testified

How Williams Described an Encounter with Stamper

The recent USMNEWS.net report entitled [USM 'Sends a Terrible Message' to College Co-Eds](#) lays the groundwork for a multi-part series on the Davida Williams v. USM, Rex Stamper, et al. case that was brought to Forrest County Circuit Court back in 1996. Williams alleged in the suit that USM officials wrongly and malevolently prevented her from receiving her doctorate degree, and caused her serious mental and emotional anguish. Williams also alleged that USM English professor Rex Stamper sexually harassed her over a relatively lengthy period of time.

This *Special Report* examines more of the 2005 court documents regarding the Williams-Stamper situation. The text below contains Williams' description of one visit that Stamper made to her home while she was a USM student:

Williams's account of the assault was that Stamper just appeared at her door, and she was stunned. He had her dissertation in his hand and said that he had read it that weekend. As she put it, "I didn't say anything because now I'm like totally distrustful. And he just came on in. I didn't invite him and he just came on through the door. He's aggressive in that way." She said she was upset and scared but confronted him with what she had been told by Jessie Stevens, a staff person in the English department: "[A]fter you promising me that you are, after three years now, that you're going to get me defended this semester, she just told me you're not even going to be on campus, that you're taking sabbatical leave.' And he just laughed and said, 'well don't worry about it; we'll have plenty of time; we'll have lots of fun.' And at that time he pushed me . . . backwards on top of the glass table . . . and he was on top of me and running his hands all over me, my private parts, and he seemed to be enjoying it immensely, and he said . . . '[d]on't worry about your doctorate . . . because when I sign off on your dissertation, the rest of the committee members will do what I tell them.'" Williams explained that she was able to get away from Stamper: "I was hysterical, and I was screaming at the top of my lungs, get out of here, get out of here, and he left." He also implied "no sex, no dissertation, no Ph.D.," according to Williams.

Williams' description of this episode paints a disturbing picture of USM. Put together with all of the other reports and editorials here at USMNEWS.net, readers get a sense of what some describe as a runaway institution. That these and other misguided activities have surrounded USM for so long is more than troubling.

