

Special Report

The Williams-Stamper Facts

Anatomy of how Bad USM can Behave

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 the facts of the case, as they appeared in the official court records of 2005. Those facts are listed below:

Summer 1985 enrolled at USM to pursue Ph.D. degree in English

Fall 1985 passed doctoral qualifying examination; completed 10 hours, made three A's and one B

Spring & Summer 1986 completed 19 hours, made all A's

August 6, 1986 passed graduate school foreign language test

Fall 1986 completed seven hours, made all A's; dissertation committee selected

Spring 1987 completed three hours, made an A; passed doctoral comprehensive exam (now ABD); admitted to candidacy for Ph.D., enrolled Eng. 898

Fall 1987 Eng 898(independent study on dissertation); instructed in English department – USM

1988 dissertation in progress (not shown on transcript); instructed in English department – USM; instructed in criminal justice department – USM

February 1989 received inappropriate Valentine card from [Rex] Stamper

Spring & Summer 1989 dissertation in progress (not shown on transcript); instructed in criminal justice department – USM

March 3, 1989 prospectus for dissertation approved by committee

August 31, 1989 dissertation still in progress (not shown on transcript)

Fall 1989 instructed in criminal justice, Pearl River Community College (PRCC)

June 21, 1990 [Rex] Stamper's memo to [Davida] Williams indicating valid dissertation premise but underdeveloped concept, some suggestions, requesting to see it before proceeding

Aug. or Sept. 1990 [Rex] Stamper's visit to [Davida] Williams's home to discuss dissertation revisions/attempted sexual assault

Sept. 1990 meeting with Dr. [Glenn] Harper, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Dr. [David] Wheeler, Chair of the English Department, to report [Rex] Stamper's conduct and request his removal

Spring & Fall 1990 instructed in criminal justice and English, PRCC

Spring 1991 instructed in criminal justice and English, PRCC; still trying to meet with Dr. [Harry] McCraw, new director of her dissertation committee appointed by Dr. [David] Wheeler

April 17, 1991 head of USM's criminal justice program humiliated [Davida] Williams at annual awards program by calling her to stage to thank her, then making improper remark with sexual overtones about her before roughly 200 people

May 13, 1991 letter to Dean [Glenn] Harper to report incident, continued harassment, [Rex] Stamper still making unwanted calls to her

Summer & Fall 1991 instructed in English, PRCC; renewed request to Dr. [Harry] McCraw for advice and direction as to how to proceed with dissertation

February 1992 married and moved to Gautier, MS

Spring 1992 instructed in English, PRCC

March & September, 1992 letters to Dr. [Harry] McCraw, still awaiting response

January 1993 another letter to Dr. [Harry] McCraw requesting a meeting with him to discuss dissertation

December 1993 yet another letter to Dr. [Harry] McCraw asking to meet with him, pointing out she's been ABD since 1987, must see him and determine the future course of dissertation

November 1994 talked separately with Dr. [David] Wheeler and Dr. [Harry] McCraw, gave [Harry] McCraw revised dissertation, and was told Dr. [Thomas] Richardson would have to be replaced; plans made

to defend, finish all work, and get degree by December 1995; no further communication for 6 months

June 5, 1995 received letter from Dr. [Harry] McCraw noting dissertation not a viable project and she needed to start over; included was a letter from Dr. [Anne] Wallace, appointed to the dissertation committee without [Davida] Williams's knowledge or approval, corroborating [Harry] McCraw's evaluation

December, 1995 letter to Dean [Glenn] Harper saying the sexual harassment and discrimination still continue, asking for help; [Davida] Williams's attorney's letter to Dr. [Bud] Ginn, Vice President of Administrative Affairs, denoted as grievance notice outlining eleven specific complaints

January 8, 1996 letter from Mary Villeponteaux, graduate director, offering sympathy but no specific help with complaints

February 15, 1996 meeting between [Davida] Williams, her attorney, Dr. [David] Huffman, and USM's attorney [Lee Gore] to discuss problems and solutions connected; [David] Huffman to get back in touch, but did not

April 23, 1996 letter to USM attorney [Lee Gore] requesting status report; no response

July 15, 1996 filed suit in Forrest County Circuit Court

Court documents note that these facts span 17 years. The prior USMNEWS.net report (linked above) indicates that one judge was of the opinion that USM's behavior during these 17 years should send a chill down the spines of co-eds across America. What is your view?