

## *Special Report*

# "Where All of 'the Magic' Happens"

## An Investigative Report on Martha's \$300,000+ *Boudoir* Makeover

According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the 2007 median value of new homes in Mississippi stood at \$135,000. Unfortunately for Mississippi's taxpayers, this figure is **less than 45 percent** of the amount of money that USM President, Martha Saunders, requested to renovate her *boudoir* in the President's mansion in Hattiesburg. According to the official Minutes of the IHL Board Meeting of 14-Nov-07, Saunders requested, and was awarded, **\$300,000** to renovate her *boudoir* (see below).

### MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

November 14, 2007

### REAL ESTATE & FACILITIES AGENDA

Presented by Mr. Scott Ross, Chair

16. USM – Approved the initiation of **IHL 208-282, Renovate Bedroom Wing of President's Home** at the Hattiesburg campus, and the appointment of Landry & Lewis Architects of Hattiesburg, Mississippi as project professionals. Funds are available in the amount of \$300,000 from university sources.

As the insert above shows, Item #16 on the "Real Estate & Facilities Agenda," presented to the full IHL Board by RE & F Chair, Scott Ross, is Saunders' request for renovation of the "Bedroom Wing of President's Home" at the Hattiesburg branch of USM. Saunders' request was approved by the IHL, and Landry & Lewis Architects of Hattiesburg were appointed as project professionals. According to **IHL 208-282**, \$300,000 in funds from "university sources" will be used for the project.

During the IHL Board's next meeting, in January of 2008, some of the real estate issues dealt with in November of 2007 had to be revisited by the full board. One of these was the renovation of the bedroom wing, Saunders' *boudoir*, of the USM President's mansion. What the IHL Board considered in January of 2008 is inserted below:

### MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

January 17, 2008

## EXHIBIT 3

January 17, 2008

Real Estate & Facilities items that were approved by the IHL Board staff subsequent to the November 14, 2007 Board meeting in accordance with Board Policy 904 Board Approval.

### University of Southern Mississippi

The Board staff approved Change Order #1 for IHL 208-282, Renovation of President's Home, in the amount of \$24,622.63 with no change in contract time. The change order is to accommodate unforeseen conditions involving sub-flooring, insulation, adequate electrical boxes, new wall beam, extra dumpsters for debris removal and relocation of a catch basin. The project budget is \$300,000. Funds are available from university sources.

As the insert above shows, the full IHL Board had to approve a Change Order (#1 for **IHL 208-282**) to the mansion's *boudoir* renovation. According to the IHL, this change was made "to accommodate unforeseen conditions involving sub-flooring, insulation, adequate electrical boxes, new wall beam, extra dumpsters for debris removal and relocation of a catch basin." These unforeseen problems resulted in a cost over-run of **\$24,622.63**, raising the total cost of the project to **\$324,622.63**. These problems raised the costs of Saunders' *boudoir* makeover to **2.4 times the median value (2007) of a new home in Mississippi** (NAHB)!

Given the sacrifice being made in this instance by Mississippi's taxpayers, one can only hope that, when finished, Saunders' spouse, Joe Bailey, will allow camera crews from MTV's popular series, *Cribs*, to come into the mansion so that Mississippi taxpayers can see just how well (or not) their money was used. Maybe Bailey will even introduce the *boudoir* makeover the same way so many of America's pop stars introduce their own bedroom wings. That is by saying: "And here's where all of 'the magic' happens."