

“That’s Confidential . . .”

USMNEWS.net’s Final **Mock Interview** with *Former* EFIB Chairman George Carter

Q: It has been a while since we sat down with you like this. Thank you for coming.

Carter: Happy Day to ya!

Q: Since we last sat down, you have been forced into retirement by the USM administration. What do you have to say about that?

Carter: What goes around comes back around.

Q: So, are you saying that you are planning some type of revenge? Or, are you saying that what happened to you might be the result of some of the bad things you’ve done to so many others over the years?

Carter: There’s a price to pay for everything.

Q: I guess we can explore the former. You told *Inside Higher Ed* that the USM administration orchestrated a “subterfuge” against you and the CoB economists. Wouldn’t you be doing the same if you engage in a campaign against them?

Carter: Contrary to what you might think, Americans don’t get their ethical or moral cues from churches or religious teachings. They come from interactions in the workplace; more precisely, they come down from the leaders of businesses and flow to the subordinates. It’s a rewards-and-punishments type of system. That’s the natural progression of ethics development in society.

Q: So, are you saying then that the bad ethical or moral character of USM’s administrators countenances a negative PR campaign against them by you?

Carter: By and large.

Q: Just how do you feel about the whole forced retirement situation?

Carter: I’m a “what is” kind of guy. I don’t deal with “what could be” or “what might be.”

Q: You once said that when faculty take on administrators the faculty “get stuffed.” What would happen in a battle between private citizens and university administrators?

Carter: They’ll “get stuffed.”

Q: Who is “they” in this context? Martha Saunders? Lance Nail? At least one of them is popular among the Hattiesburg community.

Carter: There are a bunch of good ol’ boys out in Hattiesburg. You can figure it out.

Q: Why do you think economics was targeted during the summer 2009 budget-cutting process?

Carter: We are the best scholars in the business college. We are the best teachers also, and we do excellent service. So, I think some component of it was professional jealousy. You just don’t have scholars in other parts of the college like we do. I also think Skip [Hughes] worked against us, even though he was new. In that recent audio recording that he was a part of [and that was discussed at USMNEWS.net], you could hear the glee in his voice when he said that economics was leaving the college soon. Finally, I think Alvin Williams worked against us while he was interim dean [in 2007-08].

Q: But you told *The Student Printz* that Williams was top shelf.

Carter: I know. I am a company man, and I was EFIB chair at that time.

Q: Back to the forced retirement for a moment . . . Why wasn't Akbar Marvasti part of the group of 5 retirees? He has 25 years in academia.

Carter: He helped us do so many things in the past few years. He was one of Farhang's [Niroomand's] favorites. Plus, I wanted to take one more shot at Trellis [Green], even though he has a young daughter to care for. So, we made the decision to take Akbar out and put Trellis in.

Q: Who is "we" *this time*?

Carter: Mark [Klinedinst] . . . and Sami [Dakhli]. Akbar also suggested it. You know he took Trellis' office, right?

Q: So, you're still bitter about losing the 1994-1997 lawsuit Green filed against you and others?

Carter: It's "what is" again. Trellis should've used proper university grievance channels only [instead of a lawsuit]. I never thought what he did was right. And, Trellis didn't "win."

Q: But he was awarded his promotion [to associate] and the raise that comes with it. You resigned as chair at about the same time. Doesn't it smell?

Carter: Again, there's a price to pay for everything.

Q: What did you think about Deniz Gevrek's sudden departure from USM over the 2009 Christmas holidays?

Carter: She probably shouldn't have left before getting tenure. That's a red flag. However, I can understand leaving when you've been targeted by the institution.

Q: How do you think the three remaining economists will do over in the liberal arts school?

Carter: I hope they do well. We are going to vote on a committee-style faculty governance for them next year so that they don't fall prey to a subterfuge by a single administrator over there.

Q: You say "we" as if you'll have a vote. You'll be retired . . . not part of the "corps of instruction." You can't vote.

Carter: We'll see.

Q: What if Sami Dakhli is away in Europe when the vote occurs?

Carter: I'll have his proxy.

Q: Switching subjects, what do you think about your former colleague, Stephen Bushardt, going to work for your former boss, Harold Doty, out at Texas – Tyler?

Carter: Doty will come and Doty will go. They probably couldn't get anyone better.

Q: What about the recent revelation of allegations of Bushardt's spousal abuse?

Carter: That's confidential. How did you hear about that?

Q: Moving on . . . What were some of your regrets as chair?

Carter: I have several actually, but I am a “what is” kinda guy. I regret that I couldn’t save BA 303 and ECO 336 the way I wanted to. I regret that we lost Doug Witte. I wish I could’ve been dean, actually.

Q: Some say you acted much like one during your times as chairman. Did Ed Nissan ever get special treatment from you?

Carter: Faculty evaluations and faculty support are confidential matters, not open for discussion in an interview like this.

Q: Okay, what about all of your co-authorships with Nissan? Would like to address that here?

Carter: No, except to say that the two of us sure did have literature presence, didn’t we?

Q: What about foundation funds? Have you ever moved around any Parham Bridges money?

Carter: I’m not sure what you’re even talking about. Department chairs don’t have “booze accounts” if that’s what you’re getting at.

Q: Address all of that outside consulting work you did the last decade or two. What did all of that amount to?

Carter: Don’t know. I did that only at night and on the occasional weekend.

Q: You never went to court?

Carter: Not since the [Trellis] Green case.

Q: You’re sticking with that?

Carter: By and large. Each faculty member in the business college has his or her own standard of accuracy.

Q: Much has been made about your role in the [Frank] Glamser and [Gary] Stringer firings. What do you have to say about that?

Carter: First of all, the decision to fire them was made above my pay grade. Second, that’s a decision presidents make, and we [faculty] aren’t supposed to worry about what presidents do. Faculty are meant to do teaching, research, and service. Glamser and Stringer were doing some things they shouldn’t have been doing . . . investigating the credentials of their superior [Angie Dvorak], not teaching, research, and service.

Q: How did you vote in the no-confidence [in USM president Shelby Thames] hearing back then?

Carter: Confidential.

Q: Professor Carter, who were your favorite administrators at USM?

Carter: As far as presidents go, I would have to say [William] McCain with [Shelby] Thames. In terms of college deans, that would be Harold [Doty]. I absolutely hated Bill [Gunther] as dean. Farhang [Niroomand] as associate dean. Myself as chair, of course. I couldn’t stand [Jim] Crockett and the accountants . . . and all of *their* journals.

Q: Okay, let’s wrap this up . . . What about your regrets as a faculty member?

Carter: Probably that I didn’t spend even more class time explaining to my students how they should live their lives. If I could do some of that over again, I would cut even more of the core material for that.

Q: What will you miss most?

Carter: Coffee & stats.