

# **The Sandusky Nightmare: How Could it Happen at a University?**

Former CoB Administrator George Carter Provides the Answer

*A Guest Editorial from C. Anna Hall*

With each passing week it seems as though information about yet another former child victim of Jerry Sandusky is brought forward to explain the costs faced by those who were preyed upon by the former Penn State football coach. Instead of doing something about the situation involving Sandusky's alleged sexual assaults of young boys, many of which were introduced to Sandusky through his Second Mile charitable organization, former Penn State administrators like Graham Spanier (president), Gary Schultz (senior vice president), Tim Curley (athletics director) and Joe Paterno (head football coach) acted in ways that covered up the dastardly activities that, at times, occurred on the very campus of one of America's finest educational institutions. The effort was made, it seems, to protect the reputations of those at the top of the organization, while also maintaining their places at the table (trough). That effort, however, also tarnished the psyches of those young boys who allegedly found themselves at the mercy of Sandusky.

While similar allegations are coming forward from other top-flight academic institutions like Syracuse University, many Americans are wondering how it is that these venerable organizations are being captured by executives who are failing in their duties to preserve the public trust and to protect the weakest of the nation's citizens. Relatively new readers of USMNEWS.net may be surprised to read here that some of the answers to questions like these can be found right here on these web pages, and particularly in the [What does George Carter Think?](#) series that was so popular in 2006 and 2007. For those new to these pages, Carter served as a department chair in USM's CoB on two separate occasions, with the latter stint (2005-09) falling mostly within the infamous Harold Doty administration (2003-07). Carter's views on university administration were captured as an audio recording during both 2006 and 2007 by various faculty members in the CoB. In one recording, Carter explains what it means to be a university administrator who serves at the pleasure of his or her superiors:

"It's doing what somebody wants you to do, even though you don't think it's the right thing to do. You're a company man, by definition. And, you're on 'the team' or you're not on 'the team.'"

As Carter points out, if you are a college dean or a university vice president, you are on "the team" and, therefore, expected to do what is asked of you. Note here that whether or not what is asked of you is "the right thing to do" is of no importance when you are called upon to serve others. You simply do what you are told. Clearly, Curley and Schultz were on the Spanier team at PSU, and when it came to protecting Paterno's reputation and legacy, they did what they had to do, even if that meant putting young boys in harm's way.

You may be wondering how principled leaders, those at the very top, could involve themselves in such a scheme. To get to the heart of that, Carter reminds us of just what type of person is attracted to university administration in the first place:

"Academic administration basically attracts people who aren't that good. They go into administration because they're not true scholars . . . People who are scholars don't want any part of administration . . ."

Through the above quote, housed in USMNEWS.net's vast audio library, Carter tells us that higher education administration attracts people who are *not* principled or high-minded. In fact, these are the very types of persons who are repelled by administration in academe. Thus, there is nothing about the positions that Graham Spanier or Gary Schultz once held that should prompt us to give them any benefit of the doubt.

If you are an insider to academia, you understand that one of the primary tasks assigned to administrators is the evaluation of faculty. Here's what Carter had to say, back in 2006, about the CoB's faculty assessment process under Doty:

“... [our] system doesn’t leave much differentiation, and you see stuff that’s not appropriate. . . And, there’s a certain injustice to . . . [our system], but that’s the way it is . . .”

Even though the faculty evaluation system was (and perhaps still is) plagued by injustice, “it is what it is” to use modern-day parlance. If you talk to faculty who were below him on the CoB’s organizational chart, Carter administered that unjust system with an iron fist. Remember, he was on “the team,” and that meant administering an unjust faculty assessment process, whether he agreed with it or not. If you are still unconvinced, Carter provides additional fodder:

“I’m a ‘what is’ kind of guy . . . It may not be right and it may be unacceptable . . ., but that’s ‘what is’ and that’s what I’m going to do – this [the CoB’s] evaluation system being one [example] . . .”

Unjust or not, Carter was a CoB administrator, and administering the CoB’s faculty evaluation system would be done by him, one way or another.

Whether or not Carter agreed with the unjust system seems like an open question. But, it really is not:

“I can’t do much about . . . other [tenured faculty] . . . I just live with it. That’s one of the great things about tenure, is that you do have a club over somebody’s head.”

As one audio recording of Carter reveals, he (Carter) enjoyed the presumed right of holding “the tenure club” over the heads of untenured faculty. According to Carter, wielding “the tenure club” is simply *one of the great things* about being an academic administrator. In other words, being on “the team” is a treasured experience. And, to be there is to be bad (i.e., not good). What are the other nicer aspects of academic administration? Well, having the power to fire or “can” people is near the top of the list:

“... you can really put a person into an awkward situation professionally for a number of years, if not the rest of their career, by ‘canning’ them. I mean they become a pariah on the profession.”

As Carter states above, “canning” an academic puts him or her in an awkward position from a professional perspective. The ability to put someone in that position is a power that administrators can, and often do, revel in having at their disposal (or in their arsenal).

One of the more shocking details of Doty’s CoB is that Carter, *an economist*, was allowed to teach a business ethics course for the department of philosophy, which is part of USM’s liberal arts college. Explaining the follies associated with this situation is one of USMNEWS.net most popular reports -- ["The Ethics Professor and the Company Man."](#) That report details an interview Carter did back in 2004 with *Episcopal Life* magazine, during which Carter explained that the church once (50 years ago) provided the behavioral standards that people took with them into the workplace. Now, according to Carter, ethical decisions are guided by self interest, and relate more to seeking reward and avoiding punishment than to any moral foundation rooted in religion or some other principle. Carter explains that the ethical systems in the workplace are set up to conform with this self-interest approach, wherein employees seek rewards from administrators. As such, the workers’ ethical system is derived directly from that of their superior(s), which in the case of the 2004 USM business college was (were) Harold Doty (and George Carter, etc). Clearly, all of this feeds into the Penn State ethos that led to the protection of both Sandusky and Paterno *at the expense of the young boys who were allegedly victimized by Sandusky in the Penn State showers and elsewhere*.

The “Ethics Professor and . . .” goes on to provide the story of how Carter appears to have suckered former USM professors Gary Stringer and Frank Glamser into revealing to then-USM president Shelby Thames the information they obtained concerning the alleged falsification of credentials by Thames’ vice president for research Angeline Godwin (Dvorak). Carter’s “ethical advice” to Glamser had its intended effect – to serve “the team’s” goal of maintaining the hierarchical order/respect that was deemed necessary (by the Thames administration) in order to

allow that same administration to continue to build their reputations and enrich themselves financially. Carter would soon thereafter join that very (Thames) administration ("team"). So, the Sandusky nightmare not only seems possible at an institution of higher education like Penn State, judging by the details provided in this column, it seems probable. Given those who could, and allegedly did, fall victim to such hubris and corruption, that is a really sad state of affairs.