

## President Saunders' Last Days Squandering Students' and Taxpayers' Money

### Part 4 2012

#### **“Dumb, dumber, or dumbest. It’s hard to decide.”**

Looking back on last week’s reports arising from usmnews.net’s recently obtained documents through a Mississippi Open Records Act, we are challenged to identify which report—[Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), or today’s report, Part 4—is dumb, which is dumber, and which is dumbest. Granted, Part 2, which reported that the purpose of using USM airplane N777AQ was to “Discuss [USM’s] School of Nursing and attending NCAA finals” at a cost of **\$21,678.57** is in contention for the top honor. A case can be made, however, for Part 3, too. Its reported purpose of using the USM/Martha Saunders airplane, N777AQ, to transport wealthy Hattiesburg businessmen on a freebee junket—free for them—was to attend C-USA Conference Basketball Tournament at a cost of **\$15,897.62**. It no doubt is incredibly stupid, too. The competition is stiff.

Since there are three categories—dumb, dumber, and dumbest—let’s offer today’s report as a contestant. It, too, is sports related. That makes sense, doesn’t it? USM exists as a delivery device for football and basketball. Anyway, USM Interdepartmental Invoice reports N777AQ was dispatched on April 15, 2012, to Hickory, North Carolina to pick up Charlie Cobb, Lindsey Cobb, and Brennan Cobb. One of them was being interviewed for the position of Athletic Director at USM. N777AQ was also employed to return them to Hickory, NC. The number of flight hours cited in the pilots’ Trip Log was 8.6.

The cost to USM students and taxpayers for the use of the airplane is the cost per flight hour times the number of flight hours. The cost per flight hour is \$7,226.19. (For details of the cost per flight hour and copies of source documents obtained from our recent open records request, see [Part 1](#), in this series.)

So, the cost just for the use of the airplane to interview the Athletic Director candidate was cost per flight hour x # flight hours or 8.6 flight hours times \$7,226.19. That is **\$62,145.23**.

Let me repeat that: **\$62,145.23**.

You decide which use of N777AQ is dumb, which is dumber, and which is dumbest. Tough competition for sure.

The context of this waste of Mississippi Taxpayer and USM student resources was not missed by a Hickory website, [The Unofficial Appalachian State Athletics Blog](#):

What a mess. Southern Miss needs an athletic director and they are torn between taking App State’s AD Charlie Cobb OR hiring their interim AD who is dealing with 2 workplace harassment accusations.

Well the person that was going to make that decision was USM President Martha Saunders – who has now resigned!

Well said, AppStateNation. What a mess. Anyway, make your selections for dumb, dumber, and dumbest for the behavior described in Parts 2, 3, and 4 of this series of reports. Have fun. That's what it's all about, isn't it?