

“Virginia Tech Danger!”
Part 11

We continue a series taken from “*Virginia Tech Danger!*” *Echoes of Mississippi Supremacists at the University of Southern Mississippi* by Chauncey M. DePree, Jr., DBA, a longtime professor at USM. [If you’ve missed [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#), [Part 3](#), [Part 4](#), [Part 5](#), [Part 6](#), [Part 7](#), [Part 8](#), [Part 9](#), or [Part 10](#) they’re reported below.

***Martha Saunders, former president of
University of Southern Mississippi***



Martha Saunders, [currently provost at University of West Florida] like the other mobbers, has a special personal reason for joining the mobbing. This seems to be her *modus operandi* -- to curry favor early in her leadership positions. In other words, she has done before what you are about to witness in her deposition and will do it again, if given the chance. (For details, see USMNews.net, especially her experiences at University of Wisconsin at Whitewater.) Keep in mind, Saunders very carefully fashions “news” reports about herself through USM’s public relations personnel and an outside public relations firm for which students and Mississippi taxpayers paid nearly a million dollars over several years. Public relations by its very nature does not reveal negative information. And, we accumulated much documentation that clearly is negative about Martha Saunders, especially financial misconduct.

I did not personally know then-President Martha Saunders. Nevertheless, without ever talking to me, Saunders began termination proceedings to fire me without the slightest concern that mobbers had no evidence whatsoever to terminate my employment, except that they refused to tolerate anyone who does not “view the world in the correct manner,” as testified by Patty

Munn. Saunders ignorance and incompetence, as revealed in her deposition, is appalling, given her position of responsibility as president of USM.

I did get to know Martha Saunders professionally as we deposed her. You can get to know her, too. Read on.

The following is the sworn testimony of Martha Saunders, taken on **April 12-13, 2010** in the case, *DePree v. University of Southern Mississippi*. **Note that Saunders had almost two years to read the depositions of Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams.** (Q. is my attorney's questions directed to Saunders; A. is Saunders' responses.):

Q. I believe you previously testified you relied on each and every allegation in a group of letters [from Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams—see their depositions above] that were delivered to you by Dr. Williams?

A. I may have.

Q. What did you rely on?

A. The letters [from Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams] that in their totality which of course included each an every allegation...

Q. Anyone else?

A. Not that I recall.

Q. You indicated you had not reviewed the depositions of the other defendants [Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams]?

A. That's correct.

Q. Do you think those would be helpful to you in your understanding of this matter?

A. They maybe.

Q. And when did you plan to review them?

A. I don't know.

Q. And you've had what, a year and a half to review them?

A. Probably more than that.

Q. What investigation of the facts and circumstances of this matter have you undertaken since your deposition in May of 2008?

A. Would you repeat the question?

Q. Surely. What investigation of the facts and circumstances of this case have you undertaken since your deposition in **May 2008**?

A. None.

Q. None at all?

A. None at all.

Here is what Saunders said in her sworn deposition on May 15, 2008:

Q. Is it fair to say that you have better than a layman's knowledge of the concepts of due process as they relate to the employment rights of a tenured professor?

A. Yes...

Q. Had the letters [from Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams] been written at that point [August 2007]?

A. They [Williams and Lee Gore, then-USM Counsel] had letters they brought me letters...

Q. So you reviewed those and then you wrote your own letter [advising DePree that termination process had begun] I suppose?

A. I did...

Q. Did you ask any questions?

A. No.

Q. Did you make any investigation into the matters that were presented by these letters [from Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams]?

A. No.

No questions. No investigation. Years passed between Saunders first deposition and her second deposition and Saunders still couldn't be bothered to ask questions or investigate. So what did she do? She acted and continued to act on unsupported accusations in the letters from Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams. No review of the depositions that contradicted every allegation they made in the letters and which Saunders said she depended on to fire me. **Keep in mind that the letters are not sworn testimony. Saunders knew that. The depositions of Anderson, Posey, Munn, Jackson, Jordan, Pate and Williams that she refused to review, are sworn testimony. And be clear, their [Anderson's, Posey's, Munn's, Jackson's, Jordan's, Pate's and Williams'] sworn testimony discredited and recanted the accusations they made in their letters. Furthermore, Saunders' attorneys witnessed each and every deposition and they reported to and were accountable to Saunders. In other words, she knew the truth, they lied and she chose to act on those lies.**

As of the date of her April 12-13, 2010 deposition, Saunders knowingly relied on the discredited and recanted accusations to attempt to fire me. How do we know she knew the accusations were recanted or discredited by the accusers themselves? My lawyer walked her through the accusers' letters and their testimony at her depositions. She knew, because my attorney made her read documents she refused to read for her divinary "due process" to fire me.

Saunders raises deliberate ignorance to the level of a virtue, if you believe she was ignorant. Or was she simply claiming ignorance to hide a more sinister purpose? And, given her level of education and history as an administrator, she should know better. That is, she should have been educated to understand a principle that is so fundamental it seems redundant to say: reliable evidence is essential to support important conclusions and decisions. But she clearly chooses, in her own words, ignorance. She also chooses to deny ethics, conscience, and reason. Since she chose ignorance when she had the option of being informed, she is incompetent.

Saunders' testimony can now be understood in context. Anyone who deals with Martha Saunders needs to clearly understand what she is capable of. Her deposition clearly reveals incompetence or worse.

Conclusion

We should consider mobbing behavior in a larger context. What in our environment makes this kind of expensive mobbing possible? Let me offer a few ideas. Sovereign immunity gave carte blanche to Saunders to embark on a very expensive and incompetent mobbing. Without sovereign immunity, she and her attorneys would have done elementary due diligence. She would have been forced to educate her subordinate incompetent mobbers. Or consider, if she and the other mobbers had to use their own money to pay to litigate their incompetent approach to fire me, they never would have followed through with their mobbing.

USM administrators, like then-President Martha Saunders, learned the hard way that mobbing is senseless: she had recklessly supported incompetent accounting faculty and College of Business administrators. On faith, without asking relevant questions like any lawyer, including her lawyers, for that matter, could have discovered, as my lawyer discovered during depositions, that Munn, Anderson, Williams, Pate, Jordan, Jackson, and Posey were incompetent or lying, or both. Instead, Saunders forced me and my attorneys to do the job she should have done and done without spending better than two and a half million dollars of student and taxpayer money.

The proof of her incompetence, the short version: I'm still a tenured full professor at USM drawing full salary and benefits.

Here's another dose of reality Saunders et al didn't reckon on. I refused a confidentiality agreement with the mobbers. That means you have an opportunity—a front row seat—available so infrequently. You may never again read such details of well-documented misconduct of mob behavior by a small group of faculty and administrators.

The mobbers goals were to shut down USMNews.net website and to silence me. That is all too obvious from the sworn depositions. So much for USM's public declaration that it "cherishes the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought..." And don't credit the courts for preserving my 1st Amendment freedom of speech. They have so perverted what constitutes freedom of speech that it hardly exists. Nevertheless, I won the litigation against the mobbers and I am still a tenured full professor at USM and paid my full salary and benefits. The credit goes to my attorneys. They pounded the mobbers and administrators into submission.