

“Virginia Tech Danger!” **Part 5**

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](#) or [Part 4](#), they’re reported below.]

After reading the following sworn testimony of Mary Morgan Anderson, my bet is you’ll identify her as not just intolerant but ignorant, maybe even stupid.

Mary Morgan Anderson



I had no idea before Mary Morgan Anderson’s deposition that she was so offended by the notes on my office door that she tore them down. The notes were non-confidential documents USM staff members and employees had given to me that showed cost management of state funds by USM administrators. I teach cost accounting, among other courses, and the documents were examples of real-life expenditures that were theoretically discussed in our accounting textbooks.

The financial documents, like any financial documents, are subject to interpretation, and, therefore, are excellent educational tools. Regardless, the documents offended Anderson. Rather than discussing her concerns with me, she undertook vigilantism and destroyed them. Since my office was next door to hers, she could have easily talked to me about the documents. She didn’t. She chose not to. And, she had no idea how I integrated the documents in my courses. I do know that my student/teacher evaluations reported that students appreciated the integration of real world cost documents in their coursework. Student interest in the ever-increasing cost

of college tuition and fees was, and continues to be, an opportunity for Mary Morgan Anderson, and others, to participate in their education.

I also know that Joe Morgan, one-time Chief Financial Officer at USM, is Mary Morgan Anderson's brother. He retired, or was fired, depending on whom you believe. Financial mismanagement at USM has been an ongoing scandal for years.

As you read her deposition, pause to ask whether she makes any sense.

The following is the sworn testimony of Mary Morgan Anderson, taken on June 10, 2008, in the case, *DePree v. USM* (Q. is my attorney's question directed to Anderson; A. is Anderson's responses):

Q. Let me hand you a copy of your letter, which has been produced to us. It's marked 0-02439. Can you identify that, please?

A. That's what I wrote.

Q. On August 21st, 2007?

A. That's the day I dated it, yeah.

Q. When did you write it?

A. On that Monday when we were told [by USM counsel] that we needed to have it in writing, I thought we were told by noon the next day or nine o'clock the next day or something. I sat up all night and wrote it.

Q. Tell me -- you've got a quote in here -- is the ranting of a lunatic (DePree). What is that a quote from?

A. Like I said earlier today, it's from other people that have gotten onto the website (USMNews.net, DePree is editor). I couldn't name who, have gotten on the website for the first time, you know, because I was worried about people's thoughts about it. I mean I really -- you know, I -- do y'all believe this stuff (on USMNews.net)? You know, go on there and tell me, do you believe this stuff. And—

Q. How do you think Virginia Tech compares to the situation here at USM?

A. Well, I'll tell you, I think it's very similar. How do I think it's very similar? Because I think we're dealing with a person (DePree) who is not

stable. Think there's been a lot of signs of that. I think he's done a lot of damage to the University. I think he's done a tremendous amount of damage to the School of Accounting. And we talked in the halls, I mean and every faculty member there will say we talked way before Virginia Tech, why won't the administration do something. Well, because they are afraid of a lawsuit. Well, then there's going to be a you know, when he does kill everybody, then there's going to be a lawsuit, a bigger lawsuit...

Q. Has Dr. DePree ever threatened you?

A. I have felt very threatened by Dr. DePree.

Q. Tell me when you have felt threatened.

A. Any time that I was sitting in my office and he slammed his doors around and threw papers around. And, in fact, at one point I felt like I was trapped in there and nobody else was in the hall. And I gathered you know, quit working. My point was to get out of the building as quietly as I could. And I got my stuff together and went outside and Dr. DePree was standing outside and I about had a stroke.

Q. Well, did he say anything to you?

A. I don't even know that he knew I was out there. He was busy on he was walking up and down. I got in my car as quick as I could. No. He didn't have an opportunity to say anything to me.

Q. He didn't say or do anything with regard to you, did he?

A. I made sure that I stayed out of I was afraid he was. You know, I was afraid he was going to lose it...

Q. Okay. How did you know when Marc threw papers?

A. Part of Marc Marc had all these memos on his door, you know, and I found them offensive, students would ask about them. And one night I just tore them all down.

Q. You tore them off?

A. The outside of his door, yes, I did...

Q. Okay. Did he ever find out you did it?

A. I did everything in my power to let him know I did it.

Q. Did you walk up to him and say, Dr. DePree, I'm the one that took the stuff off your door?

A. I put stuff on because what he would do then is put it in the window –

Q. Would you answer my question? Did you ever walk up to Dr. DePree

A. I was scared of Dr. DePree. I am still scared of Dr. DePree.

Q. So if you were so scared why were you trying to do everything in your power to let him know?

A. Because I was sick of what he had done to the school...

Q. In your letter look at your letter, the second paragraph, the last sentence of that paragraph, and read it for me, please.

A. Okay. The second paragraph, last sentence: With limited interaction with Dr. DePree it became evident to me immediately that his reality's based upon his perceptions rather than the fact of the situation, e.g. his request for a computer.

Q. Well, did you check into what the facts were surrounding his request for a computer were before you wrote this letter?

A. I didn't check into the facts. It was common conversation. I heard from Dr. Posey that he had requested a computer.

Q. Have you ever gotten a new computer since you've been at USM?

A. When I started.

Q. Do you know that Marc DePree has never been given a new computer by USM?

A. No. I don't know that.

Q. If that were the truth would that surprise you that almost 20 years USM has never supplied him with a computer?

A. I would find that hard to believe. As a – a computer?

When I read this, I wonder if you have the same reaction as I do. This woman, who has a PhD, is still teaching your children.

Just how afraid do you think she really was? She went to my door, ripped down documents she didn't like, and then claimed she did everything in her power to make sure I knew. I didn't know until she testified that she tore the educational documents from my door.

In fact, Dr. Anderson's fit of pique – tearing memos from my door because she found them "offensive" and didn't like students asking questions about the documents is behavior that should have been the subject of discipline. Instead, then President Martha Saunders found Dr. Anderson's actions and plea to terminate my employment worthy of affirming and unquestioningly following. Then President Saunders and Ms. Anderson acted as though intolerance and foolishness are guiding principles of higher education.

When asked for details, Anderson claimed that I had done irreparable damage to the school and the program, but she had no specifics. She recited rumor and gossip as if they were The Truth. Her problem with me was that I should not have the right of free speech because she disagreed with what I had to say.

Do you think Ms. Anderson would think twice about doing the same to you? Remember, if she decides that you do not deserve to be part of her school, her neighborhood, or her state, because she doesn't like your speech, or for some other reason known only to her, she won't say a word to your face. She'll just make wild, unfounded accusations intended to end your career - - and encourage others to join her.

In effect, Anderson's testimony is irresponsible and unsupported by facts. Furthermore, USM attorneys could have as easily determined that Anderson was an incompetent witness before wasting taxpayer and student money on a witch-hunt.

Let me offer an additional thought about Ms. Anderson. Perhaps the most unforgivable and, in my opinion, evil accusation, is Ms. Anderson's willingness to falsely impute to her deceased father, Dr. Jerold Morgan, an accusation that I had committed a "crime" of destroying USM property 20 years ago. That is a display of false witness and malice unworthy of the

memory of the fine man who was her father. Here's what I'm talking about:

Q. What's that [files broken into] got to do with [DePree]?

A. And that [DePree] had done it.

Q. Your daddy [Jerold Morgan, past Department Chair of Accounting] told you that?

A. Yeah.

Q. Do you know why your daddy said that?

A. Because he found it was very hard to believe. I mean, you know, very shocking that there was not enough integrity among faculty that had been there to not get into department files, that were not really considerate.

However, when asked for a single detail that would substantiate her fabrication, Anderson backed away from her fairy tale and acknowledged:

A. You know that was 20 years ago. I don't remember exactly what he said..."

Dr. Jerold Morgan was a friend and had an office across the hall from mine for some time. On more than one occasion he told me he was embarrassed by his daughter, Mary. Now I understand why he said it.