

“Virginia Tech Danger!”
Part 7

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](#) or [Part 6](#) they’re reported below.]

Gwendolyn Ann Pate is currently Director of School of Accountancy. After reading her deposition, I bet you’ll wonder whether she is stable or competent enough to hold a leadership position. Her testimony reveals that if she believes someone at USM is a “Virginia Tech danger,” she has no responsibility to seek law enforcement help. What do you think if your children depend on her leadership? The fact is she should have been fired for making false accusations.

Gwendolyn Ann Pate



I did not personally know Gwen Pate, then an Associate Professor at the School of Accountancy and Associate Dean of the College of Business at the University of Southern Mississippi. My only professional interaction occurred when long-time College of Business administrator Roderick Posey asked me to help Ms. Pate publish research to get promotion and tenure. Her research record was practically non-existent. I offered her a research opportunity on a project that had already passed a first— positive—review at the premier education journal in accounting—a generous offer to a junior faculty member. I was glad to help. I provided her with a draft copy of the article to work from.

Ms. Pate had never participated in a high-level research project, so I was available every day to help her in an office just down the hall from hers. She

got her promotion and tenure, in no small part with her representation that she was participating in a high-level research project with me.

I learned a measure of her integrity, when she did absolutely nothing on the project. At first, I took her word that she was making progress. From time to time, she promised she was working on it. I advised her I was available anytime she wanted to discuss the project and outlined what she might work on. I delayed for over a year and got no input from her. Not responding to suggestions of the editor and reviewers for a year put the project in jeopardy. I advised Ms. Pate that we needed to complete the project. After all the delay, she finally admitted she had done nothing and didn't want to do it.

I offered the opportunity to another junior faculty member. He contributed significantly to the success of the research and it was published in the premier education journal in accounting.

A few years later, Rod Posey, who at the time was an administrator, asked me to help Ms. Pate with her research. It was still woefully inadequate, both in quantity and quality. Posey didn't remember my last effort to help her, so I reminded him. Although I didn't refuse to help her, I asked why I should expect anything different from her. Posey didn't answer the question but, behind my back, accused me of lacking "collegiality." His accusations showed up in my annual evaluations as an excuse to downgrade my scores. (We'll hear more from Posey in a later section of this booklet.)

The following is the actual sworn testimony of Gwendolyn Ann Pate, taken on June 10, 2008, in the case, *DePree v. University of Southern Mississippi* (Q. is my attorney's questions directed to Pate; A. is Pate's responses.)

Q. When did the current efforts to remove Dr. Depree from the Joseph Greene Hall [USM's business college building] begin?

A. Current efforts probably began in the last year, since the year prior to when he was removed.

Q. So you're saying back into '06?

A. '06/'07 academic year.

Q. What ... complaints did you have about Dr. Depree and his behavior?

A. Choking Dead Chickens [a novel by DePree].

Q. And what was your complaint about that?

A. My basic complaint about it was that he spent an inordinate amount of time posting fliers all over the building promoting it...

Q. Did you read the whole thing?

A. I didn't read any of that.

Q. What was your next concern that you had about Dr. Depree?

A. He began a string of e-mails with Stephen Bushheart.

Q. And was the subject of those?

A. I can't remember now.

Q. What would be the next problem you had with Dr. Depree?

A. We never knew when things were going to appear on the website [USMNews.net]

Q. So if you wanted to clear up any misinformation that was being disseminated the place to have begin would have been Marc DePree, correct?

A. No, not necessarily.

Q. Okay. So where you go to try to clear up the false information that was being disseminated?

A. I did not go anywhere.

Q. Okay. What would be your next problem you had with Marc DePree?

A. I suppose the next thing would be the faculty meeting of May the 4th or 4th, whichever day it was [May 4, 2007].

Q. Why don't you describe that meeting for us?

A. It was routine meeting up until the very end. When Professor Dakhliia [not on the meeting's agenda] put an overhead on there with some point that he had written about asking Marc to ... cease and desist on some of this stuff he was doing on his website.

Q. Did you know that was coming?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you first learn about it?

A. Not too far in advance of the meeting.

Q. Well, how far?

A. Maybe a day.

Q. Did you have an opportunity to sign it?

A. I did.

Q. Did you sign it?

A. I did.

Q. Did you ask anybody has anybody told Depree that this is coming?

A. I do not know. I didn't tell him.

Q. Okay. Do you think it was fair to spring that on Dr. Depree without advance warning?

A. What would he have done...

Q. Do you think that was a good way to approach it with Dr.

Depree?

A. Personally I don't know of any good way to approach Dr. Depree.

Q. So that was just as good as any?

A. As far as I was concerned. Yes.

Q. I hand you a copy of your letter marked D04325. Ask you if you can identify that?

A. Yes. A letter I wrote.

Q. What is it?

A. It's a letter I wrote to [Interim Director of the School of Accountancy] Dr. Steven Jackson.

Q. And it was written for the purpose of trying to get Dr. Depree removed from Joe Greene Hall?

A. I did think that he did not need to be in that suite [Greene Hall, CoB building]...

Q. And why was that?

A. For safety concerns... I question whether he would one day snap...

Q. How do you think Virginia Tech applies to the situation?

A. Well, Virginia Tech had recently happened and that was the state of a student who had had mental issues and snapped.

Q. Do you believe Marc has mental issues?

A. I do.

Q. You were aware of Dr. Dakhli's intent to confront Dr. Depree [about DePree's website, usmnews.net]... is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you first learn of this plan?

A. He came by my office and showed me the document and asked for my support.

Q. When he showed it to you were you concerned that Marc might snap?

A. I wasn't really sure what would happen.

Q. Did you express any concern to Doctor Dakhli that he was dealing with somebody who was volatile and dangerous?

A. I can't recall specifically...

Q. Did you ever contact campus security regarding Dr. Depree [in Pate's opinion, "a Virginia Tech danger who could snap"]?

A. No.

Q. Did anybody ever tell you that you should call campus security if you had an issue regarding your personal safety?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever request assistance of campus security?

A. No.

Q. Has Dr. Depree ever threatened you?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever seen him threaten anybody else?

A. Not threaten anybody else.

Q. Has he ever sworn at you?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever seen him swear at anybody?

A. No.

Q. Are you telling me [DePree's attorney is referring to Pate's letter in which she makes an hysterical plea for her life to keep DePree from harming her] that you would prefer to stay in a situation that you perceive as dangerous and that could result in your death and you're not seeing your 12 year old son become an adult, than to leave and seek employment elsewhere?

A. The other person [DePree] should seek employment elsewhere.

Q. So you don't think it's necessary for your safety to seek employment elsewhere?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever talk to Dr. Depree about any of [her concerns about DePree's] behaviors?

A. No.

Q. Did you ever file a grievance?

A. I'm not the filing grievance type. No.

Q. Did you ever ask any of the deans why they didn't straighten the situation out?

A. No.

Q. What type of person does file grievances?

A. Some other type than me.

Q. Well, isn't that legal matter in which to redress issues that you have with fellow faculty?

A. I don't think it should have to come to that.

Q. I disagree with you, but sometimes it does. I mean they've established those procedures for a reason, don't you agree? You're shaking your head yes, is that affirmative answer?

A. Yes.

Q. Did anyone ever consider filing a grievance [especially given your belief DePree could snap and is a Virginia Tech Danger]?

A. I don't have the time or the money to file grievances for somebody that I know is going to fight back.

Grievance is a practice that is more appropriately called a request for USM administrators to discuss and consider an important issue. It is a right offered in the Faculty Handbook.

Not only does Gwen Pate believe that a right to speak, offer a grievance—a request to discuss an important issue, shouldn't be exercised, but believes bushwhacking a colleague in public is an appropriate response to a person she says will “snap.” She believes it is appropriate for her and her allies to fabricate “Virginia Tech danger” accusations she doesn't believe enough herself to report to campus police to get help or protection. Her, and their, goal has nothing to do with “Virginia Tech dangers” but is to satisfy

personal vendettas. Their goal is to get rid of a colleague whose speech she and her ally colleagues don't agree with.

In effect, Pate's testimony does not warrant firing me. Her claims of "Virginia Tech danger" are irresponsible. USM attorneys could have as easily determined that Pate was an incompetent witness before wasting taxpayer and student money on a witch-hunt.