

“a personnel issue”

Documenting the Return to the Relationship Between *Adams & Reese* and USM

The relationship between Mississippi law firm *Adams & Reese* and the University of Southern Mississippi dates at least as far back as to the Shelby F. Thames administration of USM (2002-07). The Thames administration often used the firm to supplement the legal work being done for the University by USM legal counsel Lee Gore and then-USM risk manager Jack Hanbury. The relationship has continued well into the Martha D. Saunders administration (2007-present), and it has dealt primarily with an *anonymous* “personnel issue” since Aug-07, if not before. The payments submitted to *Adams & Reese* from USM (through Mississippi’s IHL Board) since that time (Aug-07) are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

IHL Board Meeting	<i>Adams & Reese</i> Payment	Services Rendered
14/15-Jan-09	\$17,769.07	“two personnel issues”
19/20-Nov-08	\$ 6,409.21	“a personnel issue”
15/16-Oct-08	\$17,044.43	“a personnel issue”
17/18-Sept-08	\$34,708.87	“a personnel issue”
20/21-Aug-08	\$ 7,691.79	“a personnel issue”
22-May-08	\$ 6,935.25	“personnel issues”
16-Apr-08	\$ 4,099.85	“a personnel issue”
20-Mar-08	\$ 6,912.75	“a personnel issue”
21-Feb-08	\$ 2,506.36	“personnel issues”
17-Jan-08	\$33,310.95	“a personnel issue”
14-Nov-07	\$13,403.25	“a personnel issue”
19/20-Sept-07	\$ 5,175.00	“the <i>Servedio</i> case and a personnel issue”
Total:	\$155,966.78	

Data above come from IHL Board meeting minutes (available online).

As IHL meeting minutes indicate, *Adams & Reese* has been paid the nice sum of **\$155,966.78** since Aug-07 (or over the past 1.5 years). The largest portion of this payment, or about **\$137,500**, represents *Adams & Reese*’s handling for USM of “a personnel issue.” And, since the beginning of the 2008-09 academic year alone, *Adams & Reese* has billed USM for almost **\$85,000** for various “personnel issues” stemming mainly, again, from the anonymous “a personnel issue.” These monies (i.e., about **\$156,000**) represent about 2% of the budget difficulties that USM has suffered during the current 2008-09 academic year (the 2009 fiscal year). Thus, one would think that the Saunders administration could save loads of money simply by following its own dictum, and one that was stated early on by Saunders administration (i.e., in 2007). What is that dictum? Simply this – [USM should treat its people better](#).