

## ***Fifty Years***

Southern Miss recently announced its celebration of fifty years of integration. Let's revisit an episode in Southern Miss' racist pass. The incident is not merely embarrassing. It is disgusting and despicable.

During the late 1950's, Aubrey K. Lucas was the Director of Admissions at Mississippi Southern College, later named the University of Southern Mississippi, when Mr. Clyde Kennard applied for admission. As a matter of fact, Mr. Kennard wrote a letter to [Director of Admissions Aubrey K. Lucas](#) seeking admission to the school. Among other accomplishments, [Mr. Kennard](#) was "a former sergeant and paratrooper in the U.S. Army." Mr. Kennard's clearly met all conditions for acceptance, except for one insignificant thing: he was black.

Mr. Kennard wasn't just rejected, he was punished for his efforts to become the first black to be admitted to MSC-USM. He was falsely accused of a crime, prosecuted, and jailed.

Mr. Lucas blamed "the governor, J. P. Coleman, who decided against admitting Mr. Kennard." Although Mr. Lucas said, in 2006 – long after Mr. Kennard's death -- "[it was a mistake](#)," he did not stick his neck out to prevent the injustice. Let there be no mistake that the behavior of Mississippi officials was disgusting and despicable. Their behavior was so disgusting that no one, much less one who professes to be a devout Christian, could have perceived what was done to Mr. Kennard was anything other than an appalling injustice.

USM Interim President Aubrey Lucas knew Clyde Kennard. Not too long ago, USM administrators and Mississippi officials insisted on purity of race at USM. Aubrey Lucas was director of admissions at USM (then-Mississippi Southern) when Mr. Kennard applied for admission. Mississippi officials and USM administrators were not satisfied with rejecting Mr. Kennard's application to USM, they banished and punishment him. That's their modus operandi: false witness-for Kennard, stealing \$25 of chicken feed; banishment-rejection of Kennard's USM application; and punishment-jail to make sure he never returned to apply for admission again."