

Part 12

Q. Let's go on, and tell me what else you considered as describing disruptive, intimidating and frightening behavior by Dr. Depree?

A. (Saunders looks at document.) Again, there's a reference to disruptive behavior.

Q. What specifically?

A. [Interim Director] Dr. Jackson said: I feel uncomfortable when I'm on the Hattiesburg campus and actually am concerned for my safety.

Q. What specifically does he describe?

A. He's describing a behavior at a spring [May 2007] faculty meeting.

Q. Okay?

A. As one of the most frightening experiences of his academic life.

Q. What did the independent ombudsman have to say about that meeting?

A. Let me go back to that (Saunders looks at document again).

Q. I believe it's about one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight -- about eight lines down in paragraph four.

A. (Saunders looks at document.) Well, he said that a short heated exchange occurred and he [DePree] left in the room in an abrupt fashion. While his behavior was not appropriate I cannot say I find it frightening having witnessed similar or worse behavior numerous times during my tenure at USM. Is that what you're asking?

Q. Yes, that's what I'm asking. So he was not able to confirm any particularly frightening behavior by Dr. Depree?

A. Well, I think he said that that was described to him.

Q. Yes.

A. And I think his perception was what I just read to you, that he's seen worse.

Q. So did you rely on Dr. Cannon's perception or Dr. Jackson's?

A. Well by the time Dr. Cannon had written this, I had already taken action.

Q. Okay. But you could un-take it couldn't you?

A. I could.

Q. You have not.

A. I have not.

A series of reports on Interim Director Jackson (among others) will begin at the culmination of the series drawn from President Saunders' April 2010 deposition. Relevant to this series is to ask if Interim Director Jackson hid under his desk quivering in fear at the May 2007 faculty meeting when Sami Dakhli and several faculty insisted that Professor DePree shut down usmnews.net? No. Jackson was not hiding in fear under his seat nor did he run from the room for his life. In fact, he sat calmly smiling as he witnessed the attack on Professor DePree and usmnews.net.

However, Dr. Saunders did not ask that fundamental question. When it became clear that no facts supported the specious claims found in the letters she nevertheless continued down the path of terminating Dr. DePree's tenure and employment. When you think about Dr. Saunders' failure to comply with University procedures or to act in accordance with fact, remember it could happen to you. What is your hard earned tenure worth when you cannot rely on the president of the University to honor either the letter or the spirit of the law and facts?