

Part 24

Questions directed to President Martha Saunders at her deposition on April 12 and 13, 2010--Q is question; A is President Saunders' answer.

Q. [I]f you would, look at his [Interim Dean Alvin Williams'] letter [demanding termination of tenured professor DePree] again.

A. (Saunders complies.) Okay.

Q. And I believe there's a section where he says: To add to the air of fear and intimidation, I'm told that Dr. Depree manages a web site that routinely disparages the university. Have you located that?

A. I see that.

Q. Would you read that paragraph?

A. [Saunders reads Williams' letter, which it should be remembered is not under oath] To add to the air of fear and intimidation, I'm told that Dr. Depree manages a web site that routinely disparages the university, administrators, and fellow faculty members. The departure of some faculty members from the college of business has been facilitated by the vile, unprofessional, and damaging comments made about individuals on this web site. Given the widespread dissemination of this web site, professional reputations have been injured in the academic marketplace. This site is viewed by fellow academicians and administrators at other institutions, friends, alumni, and perspective donors to the university. It provides a false representation of the college of business and the University of Southern Mississippi and –

[Stay tuned for a series of reports serialized from a peer reviewed publication chronicling proof of Williams' false claims.]

Q. Okay. We can stop there. We'll cover more later. Does Dr. Williams say he visited the web site?

A. He says he is told.

Q. Did you check the web site to see if it meets these standards?

A. No.

Q. Did ask you Dr. Williams what he meant by this?

A. I don't recall.

Q. I'd like for you to go to page 157 of Williams' deposition?

A. [Saunders complies.] Okay.

Q. And let's go to line 20, and I believe the question is: The website of Dr. Depree also adds to the fear and intimidation, doesn't it? What does Dr. Williams reply?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] Yes.

Q. Why are they afraid of the web site? What is the response?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] As I indicated earlier, this morning, when people are taped by this perceived recording device --

Q. Let's stop there. How do you tape somebody with a perceived recording device?

A. Well, I don't know that you can. You can only tape by a real recording device.

Q. Okay. Let's continue. "It's the fear of disclosure," and then what was his response there?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] Of their conversations, their private conversations.

Q. Question: That's the fear? And that was the answer?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] That would be a primary concern.

Q. Are there other concerns?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] To the extent that things that appear on the website are untrue, are not based in fact, or they are malicious, I think people would be concerned about that.

Q. What is -- tell me the first untrue thing that is on the website.

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I have not read the website, so I could not respond to that.

Q. What's the first thing on there that's malicious?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I could not tell you that either.

Q. What was the other word that you used, not based on fact?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I used that phrase.

Q. And what on that web site is not based on fact?

A. [Saunders reads Williams sworn testimony] I haven't -- I can't respond. I don't know.

Q. So would you agree that based on his testimony, Dr. Williams' claims of fear are based on his dislike for Dr. Depree's web site?

A. I'm sorry. Ask that again.

Q. I'm sorry. That was a badly phrased question. It's been a long day. Does Dr. Williams state that a basis for fear is the website?

A. He states that in his letter.

Q. And he states that in his testimony, doesn't he, what we just reviewed?

A. (Saunders nods head affirmatively.)

Q. And Dr. Williams was very unhappy with Dr. Depree's speech?

A. I don't know.

Q. He considered the website as something that made faculty fearful?

A. He included that as another item that -- I'm sorry. I have to go back to it again.

Q. Okay.

A. (Saunders looks at document.)

Q. We are on page 157 through 159.

A. No. What I was referring to was that he said, "I am told," and so he referred to that in the original letter to me as additional information that inspires fear.

Q. Words inspire fear?

A. He didn't say that. I said that.

Q. But in your opinion, the words on the website inspired fear based on what you just read?

A. It would have to be words, unless it's pictures.

Q. And what words on that website inspired fear?

A. Well, I don't know.

Saunders said, "I don't know." She doesn't know, but she's still punishing Professor DePree, regardless that Williams and Saunders "don't know." Interim Dean Williams and President Saunders testified that they never read the website but they were willing to terminate a tenured full professor on the basis of the content of the website they chose never to read. The evidence, website, is as easy to access as typing www.usmnews.net. Well, are they lying (since its under oath, it is perjury) or do they really choose to terminate a tenured full professor without looking at readily accessible evidence? Are Williams and Saunders credible? Does their sworn testimony make sense? If you don't believe their sworn testimony is credible and/or makes sense, are they participating in some secret "Star Chamber" process to accomplish what they cannot do or say publicly? Or are they ignorant that their positions of responsibility require that they have evidence, facts, and sound reasoning as a basis for their decisions? Or are they just plain stupid?

To paraphrase an unknown source, "a failure of justice for an individual, is a failure of justice for all." Are you next, dear colleague?

What is your hard-earned tenure really worth?