

Part 3

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

Q. What evidence today do you have that their [DePree's accusers] fear is factually justified?

A. I don't have any.

Q. You have none?

A. Correct.

[In Saunders' first deposition (2008), she testified under oath that Dr. DePree "was not a danger to students or otherwise." But she still held out fear as a reason for her action in 2008 and her continuing efforts to terminate Dr. DePree's tenure and employment in 2010.]

Q. Thank you. Are there any other reasons that you removed Dr. Depree from teaching and service?

A. That's the one that stands out in my mind.

Q. And no other reason?

A. That I can recall.

Q. Nothing else at all?

A. No.

Q. Just that this group of faculty [Alvin Williams and some accounting faculty] said they were afraid?

A. That led me to the action that I took [in August 2007].

Q. Did anything else support your action?

A. Did any --

Q. Any other facts, information, evidence known to you on August 21st support that action?

A. No.

Q. As we sit here today, do you have any facts or evidence supporting the letter writers' claims of fear?

A. Beyond the ombudsman's affirmation of their fear, no.

Q. Did the ombudsman give you any reason to justify their fear?

A. No.

Do good science, good research, and justice require objective evidence? Taking Dr. Saunders' testimony at face value, she does not agree. If you are considering a position at the University of Southern Mississippi or are a current member of the faculty, be forewarned. Accusations without a shred of proof may be the means administrators at the USM attempt to terminate your hard earned tenure and promotions.