

Fred Thompson
9302 Alanbrooke Street
Temple Terrace, FL 33637
May 13, 2002

Dear brother Harmon,

Since you may not already know this, I wanted to tell you that Colly fired me on Friday, May 3. After talking with Marty Pickup last night, he convinced me that I should contact you. Marty said that after he spoke with you last summer regarding how Colly dismissed Shane Scott without due process, you said that you could not do anything about it at that point, but you assured him that it would not happen again. I would like to give you a written statement about the events leading to that date—from my perspective, of course.

In January the sophomores on the yearbook staff met to decide the yearbook dedication. Although I nominated two other recipients, they voted unanimously to dedicate the book to Shane Scott.

They did not dedicate the book to Shane to be rebellious. They dearly love the guy. The yearbook editor remembered how Shane often tried to reach those in his classes who were not Christians (many of whom were ball players). He had a wonderful rapport with the students, and spent a lot of time sponsoring their activities. The total cost of the yearbook's production comes from their student fees. It is surely their book.

The yearbook dedication is always kept secret until the books are handed out in chapel. Not realizing at the time just how very sensitive this issue was with Colly, I approved the students' dedication. The desktop publishing person on my staff (Monica Arellano who works with me to produce the alumni magazine) called the Barclays in Indiana and asked for pictures of Shane to work into the double page spread. Shane preached where the Barclays worship before he came to FC to teach. Colly held a meeting there in April, and Mrs. Barclay unknowingly asked if "the little tribute to Shane that Monica was going to do had ever been printed."

Colly called me from Indiana where he was in a meeting. He tersely asked me, "Is the yearbook dedicated to Shane Scott?" And I said, "That's correct." "I want to see you when I get back," he countered. He returned on Thursday morning, April 11. By the following Tuesday, he had not come to see me or called me to come to his office. I saw him on the parking lot outside the admin building and asked him if he would come to my office to discuss some information I wanted him to see explaining a health insurance brokerage. I had been pushing for the college to take its health insurance to a broker, instead of using the independent agent. Rates have been forecast to go up drastically and a broker has much more clout to get us better rates. Steve Wilsher concurs with

this approach and was also advising Colly to do this (but that's another story)..

After we viewed the brokerage web site and talked about that, he started to leave. I said, "Colly, I am very sorry that you feel so hurt about the yearbook dedication." He lit into me with a tirade about how I should have known it was such a sensitive issue, I should have come to him, it was going to hurt the college, etc. etc. He stood in my door with his face as red as a tomato and talked at me with a raised voice. He stopped any dialogue with his tirade, and then he turned around and left. When someone acts that unreasonable when you try to start a conversation about an issue, it left me thinking that there was not much of anything else that I could do.

Of course, I knew some of the issues surrounding Shane. However, at the May faculty-admin meeting at the close of school last year [May 2001], Colly refused to tell anyone why Shane was dismissed. He did say that (1) Shane did not teach any false doctrine, and (2) he was not dismissed over any moral issues. I learned later from others that Colly considered Shane insubordinate because he did not take down his web site. I did not see Shane's letter to certain faculty members until earlier this week.

When he left my office on Tuesday, April 16, that was the last thing he said to me about it until he called me into his office last Friday, May 3, at 1:30, after the faculty-staff-admin luncheon. He simply said, "You have betrayed the college and the whole administration. You have broken trust with me. I want you out of your office by Monday morning."

I replied, "Colly, 'betrayed' is pretty strong language. That means I am a traitor." I asked him to repeat the sentence again so I could write what he said. I asked him if I could stay in the office until May 31 where I do project management for publishers, and he agreed. He said my pay would be continued until the end of the month. Earlier this week I received a letter from him saying he had instructed the business office to issue me three months of severance pay.

There was **no due process, no warning** that said, "Fred, I have a problem with what you did, and we've got to resolve this issue." Most companies as well as academic institutions have such policies which require a (1) warning in connection with a meeting to discuss the problem; (2) a second warning [if necessary] with a probation; (3) a dismissal process. FC has no such policy in place. I suggested in the fall of 1998 that FC needed a Human Resources department and implementation of many such policies. It fell on deaf ears.

This is the third time I have seen this happen in the four years I have been here. Brent Hunter, Ralph Walker, and Matt Qualls went to see Colly Saturday (May 4) to ask him to reconsider his decision. I understand that Ralph had told Colly several months ago that FC needed a "conflict

resolution" or "due process" policy in place, and reiterated that need at the May 4 meeting. There are many promotional pieces that need to be produced immediately. For this time of the year, we are behind in the recruitment process, and another deficit has been forecast. When he fired me Friday, Colly had no plan for a smooth transition — or for that matter, no one at all in mind to replace me. He went to Brent Hunter's office an hour later to tell him. Brent was astonished, and asked him what arrangements he had in place for replacing me. "None," he said. "I plan to think about that tonight."

I would also like to say that I have been serving FC since 1971 when Harry Pickup came to my home and asked me to design and produce literature for the college. I did that for many years at no charge. In the early seventies, I started doing the college catalog, and soon after the lecture book (Ferrell took that on in 1992). In 1995 Margie Garrett asked me to produce the 4-color book to commemorate the 50th anniversary. I gave at least a 1000 hours to that project.

Early in 1998, Colly persuaded me to come to FC to take over the publications, and specifically to start an alumni magazine. My wife, Carolyn, teaches home ec at the high school level. She had to take a 20% cut in pay to come to Florida, and then got her retirement fouled up by moving from one system to another. So it was a major sacrifice for her. I agreed to come to Florida College on a part-time basis and work approximately 5 hours a day. For the rest of the day I was supposed to keep my project management and consulting business going.

When I was shown the office area designated for publishing at the time I came for an interview, two people were working there: Joy Lewis and Paula Walker. When I got here, Paula had been moved to Academic/ Administrative Computing to work as Ray Hinds secretary. Joy remained. But she had no experience in process color work, wanted to work part-time anyway, and left within a year.

At the time I came here, I had several publishing accounts, and a [large] annual retainer to provide services to one company. For three years I had a very limited staff — just freelance or part-time people. To keep things together, I rarely worked less than 8 hours a day and often more. I tried to keep my business interests strung together by putting in 2 or 3 hours in the evenings, and all day Saturday.

To give FC what they needed, I let my business suffer. About 18 months ago I gave up the retainer because I could not do justice to the company that was paying me. I have let my other accounts dwindle down to two, with an occasional job coming in from other publishers. During this time I never asked Colly for a "full-time" salary.

Very few people are aware of the huge savings in printing which I have made since arriving here in 1998. To be effective in this job, you have to be knowledgeable about the types of presses which printers have available. You have to understand press sizes and how jobs fit on a press, what kind of paper should be selected for any given job, what company has the right pre-press and proofing facilities, etc. This year I brought in three Nikon 995 digital cameras to improve the quality of our magazine and yearbook color. It saved us money because we eliminated enough film and development costs to pay for the cameras. Phil Roberts noticed immediately the tremendous improvement in color quality. . . .

In the college catalog alone, we have saved over \$10,000 in the last four years over the way it was being printed. The year before I came, FC paid \$1.53/copy for the catalog. After I placed it with a printing company with equipment designed to print books, we paid \$1.02/copy.

On the April 2002 issue of the *FC Magazine*, the printer made a color error in the Honor Roll of Donors section. I had spent the day doing a press check on the regular section of the magazine. Then I press checked the first signature of the Donor section, instructed the pressman about watching the buff colored backgrounds, and signed off on the job. The pressman was negligent and allowed the buff color to turn into a sour yellow streak on some of the pages. I rejected the job when they brought me the first 50 copies to approve before mailing. The salesman agreed that it was their mistake. They came back to me the next day and offered a \$600 discount on an \$18,000 job. I told them to just go ahead and reprint it. "How much discount do you want, Mr. Thompson?" I told them I would think about it and call them tomorrow. The next day I said I wanted a \$5,000 discount, and I got it. . . .

We are down on our recruitment for this time of year. Colly announced a projected \$500,000 deficit in the faculty meeting two weeks ago. Then, this week he told my former staff that he was cutting the magazine to two issues per year. There may be places you have to cut, but when you need sales (i.e., students) you don't cut your advertising and your sales effort. . . .

I have lost count of the number of people from whom I have received letters (emails) of support. I did not solicit any of them. I did call some of my best friends to let them know what happened because I did not want them to hear it from somewhere else, or be misinformed.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this. I sincerely hope that an equitable solution can be found to allow me to continue to serve Florida College. Jim Cope convinced me to come as a student, and we sent all three of our children here. Carolyn and I moved here at considerable sacrifice four years ago, and expected to finish our careers here: me at FC and Carolyn at King High School. We consider this a terribly unfair blow to both of us.

I would like very much to talk with you after you have had a chance to digest this letter. My office number is (813) 984-1772, and home (813) 914-7325.

Yours in service,

Fred Thompson