

Statement read to Colly Caldwell by Fred Thompson in his office on Wednesday, May 22, 2002, in the presence of Buddy Payne and Kenny Moorer.

The first thing I want you to know is that I wrote a six-page letter to Bob Harmon on Monday, May 13, 2002, and faxed it to him early that afternoon. At the end of the letter, I sought his advice and gave him two phone numbers where I could be reached. He did not call. He attended services Wednesday, May 15, at University and seemed to avoid me. I did not ask him to read the letter to the board and was sorry to learn that he had done that. Earlier, I sent similar correspondence to Wally Hayes and Steve Wilsher.

Now I want to address what you said when you fired me on May 3. At the time I was so shocked by what you did that I could not think clearly enough to respond. I have had 19 days to think about it. You said, **“You have betrayed the college and the whole administration. You have broken trust with me.”** I think the word *betrayed* apparently makes me a traitor. So let’s examine what the traitor has done in the last four years:

1. You recruited me to come here. I did not apply for or seek the position of Director of Publications.
2. We came here at considerable personal expense: (a) Carolyn took a 20% pay cut and pushed back her eligibility for retirement by several years. (b) In addition to the “5% of salary” moving expenses the college gave me, I spent \$4,500 to move here (\$3,200 of which was for the Learjet ambulance that I had to hire to move my mother here).
3. I agreed to come on a part-time basis. Although there were two people in the publications office when I interviewed, only one remained when I got here. Mrs. Lewis wanted to work part-time and resigned about 15 months later. I used freelancers and part-time help who were not trained or skilled in producing printed literature and publications. To perform my work on this basis required far more than the 5 hours a day I expected to work. I usually spent a full 8 hours at F.C. and then tried to keep my project management business going by working 2-3 hours in the evenings and all day Saturday.
4. In less than two years, the lack of attention I was able to give my business interests caused me to lose a \$44,000 annual retainer from one company. I continued to work for the agreed-upon salary while my accounts dwindled from lack of attention.
5. After my mother’s death on Sept. 3, 1998, I established a fully-funded memorial scholarship fund in her honor with Howard (my brother) supplying half of the \$25,000 required to establish it.
6. During the fall of 1998, I laid the groundwork for the first issue of *FC Magazine*. As one issue after another kept coming, we received accolades from all over the country. Alumni compared *FC Magazine* to the alumni magazines they received from the universities where they received their bachelors and advanced degrees. Alumni wrote enthusiastically to fill the Class Notes pages and reconnect with their friends. It built a pride and an *esprit de corp* which we did not have earlier.
7. Our literature improved exponentially and high school students received 4-color brochures that competed well against the pieces they were receiving from universities.
8. I cut the cost of the college catalog by 33% per copy which saved the college over \$10,000 over the next four years
9. For the same dollars we were spending on a black & white yearbook, I made the yearbook 4-color throughout and established a Macintosh pre-press lab where the students learned valuable skills they could use in their careers. At least three students changed their major to graphic design after working on the yearbook.
10. When Clinton Hamilton died, I set up another named memorial scholarship fund to honor him and switched my \$100 monthly contribution to go specifically into his fund. Few, if any, faculty or administrators give that much monthly.
11. When John Kempen died, the next day I gave Brent \$500 to start a fund in his honor.
12. When Homer Hailey died, another \$500 to help establish a named scholarship for him, and I solicited donors until we had enough to fully fund it.
13. When Dee Bowman made an impassioned appeal on Thursday, Feb. 7, for contributions to

- erase our deficit, I gave Brent a check for \$500 the next day.
14. Last year, out of existing printing budgets in three departments, I found the right color laser system to economically produce short-run color pieces for targeted audiences. Matt Qualls, Brent Hunter, Bobby Blackburn, and Ralph Walker have been thrilled with the results. It has saved the college money by allowing us to produce critical pieces that we could not have afforded with conventional outsourced printing.
 15. This past year I bought three Nikon 995 digital cameras and eliminated film and chemicals, saving enough in one year to pay for the cameras. Not only did we get much better color in the yearbook and magazine, the \$2500 saving for film and chemicals will continue.
 16. By requiring three bids on any job of consequence, I have saved FC thousands in the four years I have been here, including a \$5,000 savings on the last issue of the magazine.
 17. This spring I was the anonymous donor who pledged \$10,000 (which was to have been earned from an investment) for the construction of the Riverwalk. The investment (which was planned and recommended by the FC Development Office) has never paid off, and is currently tied up in litigation.

The above 17 items do not mention the 28 years I produced literature for Harry Pickup, typeset and produced 18 lecture books and approximately 20 college catalogs, and contributed at least 1,000 hours to project manage the 50-year history book. I figure I have either donated or saved the college at least \$100,000 in the four years I have been here.

Now I want to comment about the yearbook dedication which apparently upset you enough to fire me. First, when the students wanted to dedicate the book to Shane, I nominated two other people: Jim Hodges and Curtis Pope. They still voted unanimously for Shane. It was not a rebellious act. They love the guy and missed him very much. It is my opinion that the yearbook belongs to the students and they have the right to dedicate to whomever they wish, as long as that person exists within the bounds of right thinking and decency. You told us in the faculty-admin meeting last year, when asked why Shane was fired, that (1) he was not guilty of teaching false doctrine, and (2) he was not guilty of anything immoral.

Subsequent conversations with the Bible faculty, Ferrel Jenkins, and others convinced me that it really boiled down to a personal issue between you and Shane. You were put out with him because he was a little brash, and you interpreted as insubordination his determination to defend himself and not take down his website immediately after you suggested that he do so.

Yes, I figured you would be piqued when you found out that the book was dedicated to Shane. I had planned to tell you about the dedication about a week before the event so you would not be blindsided in front of the audience. I made a judgment call between fairness to the students and the sensitivity of a president whom I believed used bad judgment in wrongfully dismissing a young man who was a very good Bible instructor. I believed you would show your graciousness in acknowledging the rights of students and others to honor someone for whom they cared very much.

You told me after you learned of the dedication by accident that I should have known that this was a sensitive issue. You implied that it was going to cause the college great harm. Well, thanks to the mole who "leaked" to Harry Osborne everything he needed to know, the college was dutifully exonerated of all responsibility in permitting the students to dedicate the book to Shane.

Now at that point you could have discreetly let the whole thing blow over and it would have quickly become a non-issue. But now you were severely piqued with me because you felt you had been hornswoggled.

You said in your phone call from Indiana, "I want to see you when I get back." If my

dates are correct, you returned on Thursday, April 11. You did not ask me to come to your office nor did you come to see me. On Tuesday, April 16, I saw you on the parking lot and asked you to come to my office to look at the Gallagher website and discuss what a broker could do for the college health insurance program. When we finished, you started for the door which was open. I said, "Colly, I am very sorry that you feel so hurt about the yearbook dedication." You lit into me with a tirade about *the "sensitivity matter"* (it appears that the only person who was sensitive was you); *I should have come and told you* (the school yearbook policy was and is that the dedication should remain a secret until books are distributed); and *it was going to hurt the college* (that never materialized, did it?). You stood in the door with your face as red as a tomato and spoke in a raised voice.

I broached the subject because I was trying to apologize to you. You stopped any dialogue with your tirade, and then you turned and left. After you responded so unreasonably after my effort, it left me thinking that there was not much of anything else I could do.

The whole imbroglio continued to fester in your mind, as you told Brent Hunter, because you felt I should have been in your office apologizing and demonstrating remorse (*your word*). I thought I had been rebuffed and that there was no point in further effort. On May 3, when I had not taken what you considered to be the appropriate action to ingratiate myself with the president, you fired me with **absolutely no due process**.

Most academic institutions have due process policies which require a
(1) warning in connection with a meeting to discuss the problem;
(2) a second warning [if necessary] with a probation; and finally
(3) a dismissal process.

Frankly, I think you acted rashly when you fired me. When you went to tell Brent Hunter over an hour later what you had done, he expressed shock and astonishment. He asked you, "Colly, what plan do you have for a smooth transition? What Fred does is critical to the functionality of several departments." You replied, "None." Brent then suggested to you that you should be the one to tell the other administrators, and not let them find out by hearsay.

Up to this point the whole issue for you, as you expressed it in my office, was the yearbook dedication. But the following Monday, Buddy began approaching faculty whom the two of you felt might be sympathetic to the yearbook dedication, and probably now to me. Buddy suggested to Kenny and others that "there were other reasons why Colly had to fire Fred."

It had become necessary to build a better case against Fred. Both of you knew that it did not look good to fire me just because I permitted the yearbook students to dedicate the book to Shane. After all, Shane got a 5-minute standing ovation before he could say a word. And after a brief innocuous acceptance speech, he received another 3-minute standing ovation. You knew that a significant number of the faculty also stood and applauded.

"So what were the other reasons," Kenny asked. "Well, we can't discuss the reasons for a dismissal. That's a privacy issue. You will just have to trust the president and me," Buddy replied.

It is interesting that I don't know what the "other reasons" were either. By saying what you did, Buddy, you created innuendo, speculation, and subsequently gossip.

I wrote a letter of apology to you, Colly, nearly three weeks ago. **As a brother in Christ, I am coming to tell you both that you offended me by trying to convince faculty and administrators that there were "other reasons."** At this point, I think both of you owe me letters of apology.

In the middle of a severe recession, you deprived me of my remaining \$50,000 of annual income and I am faced with trying to revive a dormant business. At Brent's request, I took \$100,000 of my retirement fund and put it with [name deleted by request] last Sept. 5 to generate a \$10,000 gift for Florida College. The note was supposed to have been paid off last February. You know the dire situation that [he] is in now. My "investment" is now tied up in a [legal] case and I stand a good chance of losing the entire amount.

I am very damaged financially at this point, and mostly because of you. The yearbook dedication to Shane may have embarrassed you, but it did not hurt the college. I really thought that you could be graciousness enough to let the students have their day. Instead you wanted retribution from me that has been nothing short of vindictive. **How much does an administrator have to do for you and this college to get past offending you one time without being fired?**

To tell me that I "have **betrayed** the college and the whole administration" after my working twice the time I agreed to, and after giving thousands to the college and saving it thousands, is the most absurd thing I have ever heard.

Based on the number of faculty, administrators, and staff who have personally come to express their dismay over your treatment of me, I can tell you that you do not have the support of most of FC's employees. The emails which I have received from FC alumni and friends from all over the country (unsolicited) express a lack of confidence in Florida College's leadership.

The *FC Magazine* gave the college a new face and a credibility with its constituency that it desperately needed to move forward. It brought our alumni together with a renewed pride in their school. One board member told me, "Our magazine is better than the alumni magazine I receive from the university where I got my bachelor's degree." **When sales are down (i.e., student enrollment), it is suicide to cut your visibility with your customers (students) and your donors.** The *FC Magazine* is Brent Hunter's primary media for raising funds. Doug Nerland was slated to have a regular column in the magazine.

As I said in my letter to you, I am willing to rebuild trust with you, and to be a team player. But I expect to be treated as an equal partner among the administrators. I have received many emails and letters from those who lost respect for you because of what you did. I did not bear my case to any of those people.