

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

November 30, 2011



Mr. David Wilson
University of Alabama
National Alumni Association
University of Alabama
P. O. Box 861928
Tuscaloosa, AL 35486-0017

Hello Mr. Wilson:

Initially, I was going to write this letter to Dr. Robert E. Witt — whom I know and **admire greatly**. To be sure, he is an honorable person, an accomplished academician and an effective executive. In addition, Dr. Witt is bringing bold and long-overdue changes to the University of Alabama.

But, with all due respect, Dr. Witt is not a native of Alabama. He was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut. On the other hand, I am an African-American, who was born in Tuscaloosa and attended the University of Alabama from 1966-1970. Yes. That was a rough period for the University vis-a-vis race relations. But look at us now, baby!!! I LOVE the University of Alabama. **But even more importantly**, I love and want to protect Alabama's amazingly beautiful streams, rivers and forests.

When I was a boy in Tuscaloosa, my family was poor. In fact, my mother worked at the University for 35 years. She was a janitor. And to this day, she thanks the University for employing her. However, the only vacation that I could afford was a trip to the banks of the Black Warrior River off Greensboro Avenue. But there was a problem. The river was literally very, very black with pollution. Still, I went and sat along the smelly river. But, I always wanted someone to help ME to clean up that river. Childhood dreams are precious, huh?

Long story short, I have returned to Tuscaloosa many times — after vacationing on pristine lakes, rivers and streams in Montreal, Seattle, Colorado, Maine, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon. Two years ago, I returned to Tuscaloosa to see my mother. And during my wonderful stay, I visited the Black Warrior River along River Road. Put simply, I was filled with pride and uncontrollable emotions. That portion of river looks awesome.

For economic/business, recreational and health-related reasons, I am sure that Dr. Witt and his administration helped to arrest/improve that portion of the Black Warrior River — along River Road ending at Greensboro Avenue. And, to underscore my sincere thanks, I made a somewhat generous contribution to the Alumni Association. Without a doubt, I want to give more to the University of Alabama, since I am nearly sixty-five-years-old, and I have been blessed with enough wealth for at least four life's time. But I have a conundrum.

Briefly put, I have been reading articles in the Crimson-White newspaper about the University's controversial leases and industrial pollution along other portions of the Black Warrior River. Yes. There are two sides to every story or conflict. And, as a successful businessman/lawyer, I

SCHOOL OF LAW ■ ONE CAMINO SANTA MARIA ■ SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78228-8603
OFFICE: (210) 436-3308 ■ FAX: (210) 436-3717

St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.

understand why the University would extend leases or consider leasing land to *arguably* industrial polluters. The reasons fall under the headings of JOBS and REVENUE. But the Administration has considerable bargaining powers to ensure that lessees do not destroy Alabama's beauty and pristine natural resources. Furthermore, the Administration should not forget young boys in Tuscaloosa and elsewhere in Alabama who cannot find jobs, yet they want to play and have to fish along the Black Warrior River. Without a doubt, clean rivers, streams and forests in Alabama are the life lines for thousands of middle- and lower-class citizens.

Therefore, just to get the Administration's attention and, perhaps, the attention of our alumni, I will donate only \$40 this year to the Alumni Association or to the University's general fund. **But, I am willing to donate exceedingly more under the right circumstances.** In fact, after taking care of my 75-years-old mother's needs, I am prepared to leave my seven-figure estate to the University of Alabama. **But I want to know that the Administration will be a good steward.** At this point, my confidence is shaken a bit, because I do not see any probative evidence of the University's wanting to help arrest and preserve one of Alabama's amazing treasures: The *entirety* of the astonishingly beautiful Black Warrior River.

Sincerely,



Willy "Willie" E. Rice, Ph.D. J.D.

Class of 1966

Professor of Law

School of Law

St. Mary's University

One Camino Santa Maria

San Antonio, Texas 78228

210-436-3758