

McConnell, Barker Lied About Hunley Project

By [fitsnews](#) • on February 24, 2009



S.C. Senate President Glenn McConnell and Clemson University President James Barker made false statements to the press and the public about the University's involvement in the H.L. Hunley project, according to documents obtained by FITS in a related investigation.

They may have also violated the state Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in concealing these documents from legitimate requests made by members of the media.

Additionally, an effort to expose McConnell and Barker's false statements and potential violation of the state's FOIA laws was dismissed by the office of S.C. Attorney General Henry McMaster, who along with McConnell is represented by the same consulting firm that also handles publicity for the Hunley.

The sensational documents – which were discovered during a FITS investigation of allegations that McConnell improperly pressured the S.C. State Ports Authority on Hunley-related issues – clearly show that statements made by McConnell on the floor of the S.C. Senate and by Barker to members of the media were patently, and perhaps deliberately, false.

The documents also show how Clemson trustees warmed to the multimillion dollar Hunley project – which it can now conclusively be stated was McConnell’s idea all along – out of a desire to curry favor with the powerful Lowcountry leader.

“We are in a legislative state where a close relationship with the President Pro Tem of the Senate is good for Clemson,” reads an excerpt from one of the University’s internal documents.

Another excerpt paraphrases a Clemson trustee as reaching the conclusion that “the more (Clemson) can gain from our association (with McConnell), the better.”

In addition to being provided to McMaster’s Office, copies of the documents were also provided to Ken Wingate of the Commission on Higher Education and *The State* newspaper more than two months ago.

Amazing.

Stay tuned for much, much more ...

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