

# Barker To McConnell: Hunley Is “Your Offer”

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S.C. Senate President Glenn McConnell was an angry man when he took to the floor of the State Senate on May 16, 2006.

John Monk of *The State* newspaper had just written three front-page stories exposing how McConnell and his friend Warren Lasch had funneled millions of taxpayer dollars into a foundation they controlled for the restoration of the H.L. Hunley submarine.

Monk had also zeroed in on how McConnell had allegedly coned Clemson University into going along with the project, ostensibly to curry favor with the powerful Senator.

Clearly, it was damage control time for both McConnell and Clemson, and the first step in that process was to make absolutely sure that it didn't look like McConnell was the one who had pitched the plan for a multimillion dollar Hunley “Restoration Institute” to Clemson.

“Talk to the Clemson people; talk to the President of the school,” McConnell said from the Senate floor. “I did not pressure them. I did not dream up the Restoration Institute. I just don't have the intellectual capacity to have created what they call the restoration economy and the Restoration Institute.”

“Clemson approached us,” McConnell specifically said of his *Friends of the Hunley* group, while blasting Monk for his inaccurate and misleading reporting.

Similarly, in an oped published in *The State* paper four days after McConnell’s remarks, Clemson President James Barker backs up McConnell’s statements, saying “(Clemson) sought support from the senator,” and accuses Monk of inaccurately portraying McConnell’s role in the process.

In addition to these documented claims, both McConnell and Barker have both stated on multiple occasions publicly and privately that the Clemson-Hunley collaboration was “Clemson’s idea.”

As we noted in our post yesterday, both [McConnell and Barker are lying](#) about who came up with the idea for this “Institute” - a project that two years later has produced nothing but a staff of developers at Clemson whose taxpayer-funded salaries total \$425,000 annually.

In a letter to McConnell dated Sept. 23, 2003, Barker specifically refers to the collaboration between Clemson and the Friends of the Hunley as “(McConnell’s) offer.”

Barker’s letter also begs the powerful Senate President to be patient as he greases the skids at the University for approval of the funding.

“My hope is to respond to you by early November,” Barker wrote to McConnell in the letter. “If that is not comfortable with you, please let me know - I do not want to take advantage of your patience.”

Months earlier, McConnell and Lasch had sent Barker a “wish list” outlining fourteen points of agreement between the University and Friends of the Hunley.

This “wish list” - which McConnell and Lasch hoped would form the basis of the partnership - was included in a communication from former Clemson Board of Trustees Secretary Thornton Kirby to President Barker in 2004.

“This document was the original ‘wish list’ developed by Senator McConnell and Warren Lasch before they approached us last year,” Kirby wrote to Barker. “I think it’s helpful to remind ourselves what they sought from the partnership.”

Again, “*they approached us.*”

“*They sought.*”

Once again, Kirby’s communication to Barker leaves no doubt that it was McConnell and Lasch who not only came up with the Research Institute idea, but who proposed the collaboration with Clemson.

Much more on this to come ...

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