

The Untold Truth: Facts Surrounding Paige Patterson and his Removal from SWBTS

By Sharayah Colter

May 2018

“The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him.”

Proverbs 18:17 (NASB)

When I received [news](#) that Paige Patterson had been fired from his role as president emeritus, I was standing under a sunny sky listening to my toddler son squealing with pure delight as he chased his dog around my legs. It struck me how oblivious he was to the sobering news, and I felt the weight of the realization that the history we write today is the future he lives tomorrow. In the spirit of writing a truthful history, I'd like to offer a more complete picture of what has transpired over the past month in regard to Patterson and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I believe we are all better served operating with the truth, and since I am aware of these truths, I feel I need to share them.

The first fact I'd like to offer in full disclosure is that I have had a front row seat to observing Paige Patterson during my time at Southwestern as a student and most recently as wife to his chief of staff, Scott Colter. I have been in his home, ridden in his car, passed him on the sidewalk, been a student in his class, sat through his chapel sermons, emailed with him and shared meals with him. I've observed him in large groups and small family gatherings.

Second, I want to be clear that I have compiled this account of the truth completely of my own volition. Paige and Dorothy Patterson have not asked me to write on behalf of or in defense of them, and my words are my own.

Third, the fact is, Southern Baptists deserve to know the whole story. Thus far you've heard one side of it, and that is because Patterson holds the conviction not to defend himself personally, following the example of Christ. However, this story has spiraled out of control to a

point that demands a balanced and truthful response. The facts below will characterize a man who — while a sinner with feet of clay like each us — is not guilty of all of which he has been accused in recent days.

Please allow me to address the accusations against him here.

Accusation # 1: Patterson encouraged a female Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary student not to report an alleged rape to police.

This accusation was outlined in a [Washington Post article](#) published May 22 while the trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) were meeting. In the article, a student who in a [Tweet](#) later identified herself as Megan Lively (Megan Nichols during her time at Southeastern), alleges that Patterson met with her along with four male seminarians and encouraged her not to report the alleged rape to police. The article states that she was placed on probation but that she did not know why.

Truth: Patterson says he does not recall meeting with Lively, which appears in keeping with a letter Lively sent to Patterson dated April 15, 2003 (see attached letter and response).

Megan Nichols
[REDACTED]
Wake Forest, NC [REDACTED]

Tuesday, April 15, 2003

Dr. Paige Patterson
Southeastern Seminary
President's Office
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Dear Dr. Patterson,

I just wanted to write you and first of all apologize. I know that you have been made aware of the sin that was in my life. While I have confessed this to the Lord, repented and sought accountability in my own life, I feel that I have disgraced the school. I know that one day I will be judged more harshly because of this. I want you to understand the conviction that I have felt in my own life. I went to Dr. Catanzero to confess this because of the conviction and this conviction does not stem from that fact that I am sorry that I got caught.

I also want to thank you for allowing me to stay in school here at SEBTS. For four years I have been dreaming and praying of coming here. I did not think that I could graduate from Campbell fast enough. I love it here, even if my actions show otherwise. This is the best seminary in the nation and I firmly believe it.

Finally, thank you for the accountability and for putting me on probation. Even though Dr. Moseley has handled this, I think it is great that the school enforces discipline. At first, I was humiliated and embarrassed. But I know now this is from my own actions and the consequences of those.

I do not want you to think that this is the way that I usually live. While I am sinful by nature with absolutely nothing good in me I am truly desiring and praying for holiness in my own life and seeking the Lord. *I hope that my actions from here on out are an indication of that.* Thank you again.

Because He Lives,

Megan Nichols

Megan Nichols <<

**SOUTHEASTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY**



Office of the President
II Timothy 3:17

April 21, 2003

Miss Megan Nichols
[REDACTED]

Wake Forest, NC [REDACTED]

SHIPPED APR 23 2003

Dear Megan:

Thank you so much for your letter of April 15, 2003. I regret more deeply than anything I could tell you the events that have transpired. However, I can assure you that when one finds herself in a situation like yours, you have taken the graceful and appropriate way in openly owning the sin, confessing it to God and others potentially wounded, and seeking forgiveness from all. Anyone who would not extend his forgiveness under such circumstances, knowing for sure that God does, would be the worst sort of reprobate. I am sure all from whom you seek forgiveness will grant it readily.

The fact that you have been allowed to stay in school is a tribute to the confidence that we have both in you and in the Lord. Our confidence is in the Lord that he will use this incident to grow you into the magnificent young women that He wants to make you. Our confidence in you is that you will learn from the mistake and fly high in the future.

Megan, I do not think I have had anybody before to thank me for putting them on probation. Even that will be taken into consideration as time goes along. You now need to put this behind you and proceed in the important work that God gives you to do. We will be praying for you and standing by to help any way we can.

Until He Comes,

Paige Patterson

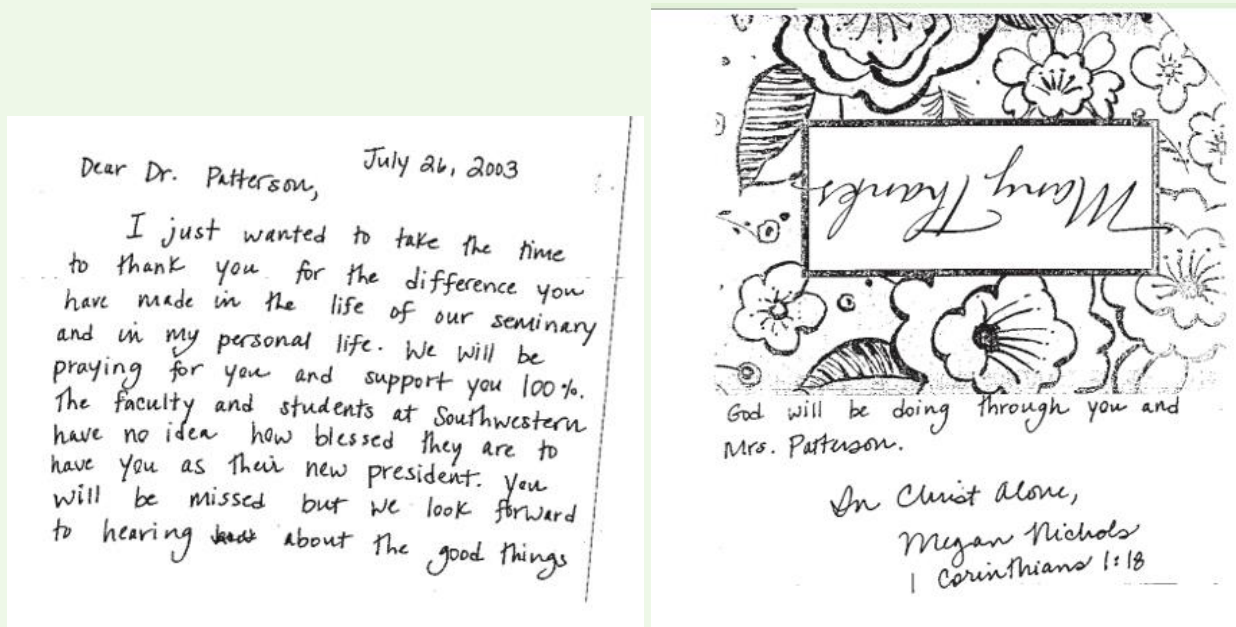
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“Finally, thank you for the accountability and for putting me on probation. Even though Dr. Moseley has handled this, I think it is great that the school enforces discipline,” Lively wrote in the letter. “At first, I was humiliated and embarrassed. But I know now this is from my own actions and the consequences of those.”

In the letter, Lively apologized and admitted what she recalled then as sin.

“I just wanted to write you and first of all apologize,” Lively wrote in the April 15 letter. “I know that you have been made aware of the sin that was in my life. While I have confessed this to the Lord, repented and sought accountability in my own life, I feel that I have disgraced the school.”

In July 2003, Lively sent a handwritten notecard to Patterson again offering her gratitude and appreciation to him (see attached notecard and response).



“I just wanted to take the time to thank you for the difference you have made in the life of our seminary and in my personal life,” Lively wrote in the notecard. “We will be praying for you and support you 100 percent. The faculty and students at Southwestern have no idea how blessed they are to have you as their new president.”

If a rape had indeed been alleged in 2003, and Patterson had known about it, he would have reported it to authorities, as he demonstrated in a different scenario involving a Southwestern Seminary student when he called police even when the student asked him not to do so.

**SOUTHEASTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY**



Office of the President
II Timothy 3:17

July 30, 2003

Ms. Megan Nichols
[REDACTED]

Wake Forest, NC [REDACTED]

Sweet Megan,

Thank you for your precious words of encouragement. You are so thoughtful. We covet your prayers as we go. We shall not cease praying for Southeastern and look forward to seeing what God does with your life.

Until He Comes,



Paige Patterson

PP:jd

P.O. Box 1889
Wake Forest, NC 27588-1889
telephone 919-556-3101 || 919-556-8550 facsimile
www.sebts.edu

This brings me to the second accusation against Patterson.

Accusation # 2: Patterson did not handle appropriately an alleged case of sexual assault against a SWBTS student.

Truth: Patterson immediately called police in response to a female student claiming she had been raped. The accused man admitted to having sexual relations with the woman, but said it was consensual. The man also produced evidence to the police to that effect.

Southwestern's chief of police can confirm that the Fort Worth Police Department was called and responded. Patterson expelled the male student accused of rape. However, because the female student refused to press charges, Patterson had done all he could by calling the police, expelling the student and encouraging the woman multiple times to press charges.

Assistant Professor of Theology in Women's Studies Candi Finch, who also served as assistant to Dorothy Patterson during her time as first lady at Southwestern, was in one of the meetings where Patterson met with the female student and her family members.

"I personally sat in a meeting with Dr. Patterson and this female student and two of her family members," Finch recalled. "Dr. Patterson opened and closed the meeting with prayer for this young lady. He encouraged her in my presence to press criminal charges against the young man, but she said she wanted to think and pray about it more."

Finch said to her knowledge the woman has not pressed charges to date.

Accusation # 3: Patterson says an abused wife should return to an abusive husband.

Truth: Fifty-four years ago, a woman in Patterson's church told him she was feeling spiritually abused because her husband would not let her go to church or tithe. After the woman emphatically assured Patterson her husband had never hurt her physically and would never hurt

her, Patterson advised her to go home and pray for her husband. Surprisingly to the woman, the husband did hurt her. They both came to church, and the man was saved, about which Patterson said he was happy. Contrary to the narrative spun through social media, Patterson was not happy the woman was hurt. Patterson has apologized for not expressing himself clearly in the retelling of this story giving the impression he condones abuse. As one who has risked his life to remove wives from domestic violence, nothing could be further from the truth.

Many Southern Baptist leaders have condemned Patterson by explaining their stance on abuse and setting it up in juxtaposition to Patterson's portrayed beliefs. Patterson has offered multiple [statements](#) clarifying his [stance on abuse](#). "I utterly reject any form of abuse in demeaning or threatening talk, in physical blows, or in forced sexual acts," Patterson stated in "[An Apology to God's People](#)," posted on Southwestern's website on May 10, 2018. "There is no excuse for anyone to use intemperate language or to attempt to injure another person." For Patterson, those are not just hollow words; they are strong beliefs which he has demonstrated by physically removing women from abusive husbands on more than one occasion.

"I was the one being hit and Dr. Patterson never suggested to 'stick around and get smacked.'" [tweeted](#) Angie Brock on May 4. "What he did was bring the authorities, remove my violent husband and encourage me in the Word. Not recommending divorce does not mean approval of abuse."



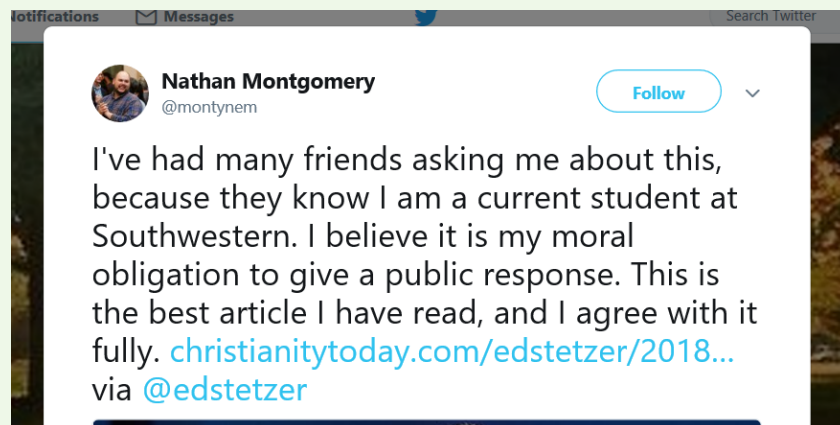
Accusation # 4: Patterson objectified a 16-year-old girl in conversation with a woman and her son.

Truth: Patterson, upon hearing a teenage boy say to his friend that a girl passing by was “built,” commented to the boy’s mother that the boy was just being biblical, meaning that he was using the same language the Bible uses to describe Eve in the creation account. In the retelling of this story during a sermon illustration while preaching on Genesis 2, Patterson said that the “young co-ed” who had passed by the boys, was “nice.”

Patterson has issued a [statement](#) saying he regrets any hurt his words have caused.

“[A] sermon illustration used to try to explain a Hebrew word (Heb. *banah* “build or construct,” Gen. 2:22) [has] obviously been hurtful to women in several possible ways,” Patterson said in his May 10 statement “An Apology to God’s People.” “I wish to apologize to every woman who has been wounded by anything I have said that was inappropriate or that lacked clarity. We live in a world of hurt and sorrow, and the last thing that I need to do is add to anyone’s heartache. Please forgive the failure to be as thoughtful and careful in my extemporaneous expression as I should have been.”

Accusation # 5: Patterson fired student employee Nathan Montgomery in retaliation for Tweeting an [article](#) calling for his retirement.



Truth: When Montgomery's [Tweet](#) was shown to Patterson, he instructed that the employee not be fired. Vice President of Communications Charles Patrick, however, had already fired Montgomery. The matter was taken out of Patterson's hands when Montgomery appealed directly to the board of trustees instead of appealing to Patterson.

From: "Patrick, Charles" <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Date: May 2, 2018 at 10:54:49 AM CDT
To: "Finch, Candi" <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Subject: Re: FYI

Too late. I already did it [REDACTED]. Not the first issue we've had. I did inform him that he could appeal to Dr. P.

From: Candi Finch <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Date: Wednesday, May 2, 2018 at 10:52 AM
To: "Charles Patrick Jr." <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Cc: Dorothy Patterson <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Subject: Re: FYI

Hey Dr. Patrick,

I was around Dr. P and showed him this email, and he suggested that you not fire Nathan but that you schedule a meeting with him, you, and Dr.P.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Patrick, Charles
Sent: Wednesday, May 2, 2018 10:16 AM
To: Patterson, Dorothy <[REDACTED]@swbts.edu>
Subject: FYI

FYI since you and I have discussed this employee in the recent past. I am terminating him this morning. He broke 5 employee polices with this tweet.

10:16 AM 100% BATTERY

← Tweet

13 100% BATTERY

 Nathan Montgomery
@monty1988

I've had many friends asking me about this, because they know I am a current student at Southwestern. I believe it is my moral obligation to give a public response. This is the best article I have read, and I agree with it fully. christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2018... via @edstetzer

Remaining truths

The last few remaining truths that Southern Baptists should know is the way in which the Southwestern board of trustees has handled the social media crisis and ensuing termination of Patterson. While many godly men and women comprise the board of trustees, the manner in which the matter was handled was disappointing at best, especially in light of the many bylaw infractions and violations of trustee confidentiality.

Trustee violations

The executive committee of the board of trustees worked outside the bounds of its bylaws by not giving the required 10-day notice before holding meetings.

Trustee confidentiality was violated by the release of information from the executive session of the board's May 22 meeting to people outside the room and not on the board during the 13-hour meeting. Confidential seminary information which was only shared with the trustees appeared both on Twitter (@eyesonSBC) and in a [blog](#).

May 22, 2018 meeting of the board of trustees

Despite the fact that Patterson requested the meeting to have a hearing from the full board, only a fraction of the time was allotted by the trustees for him to address the group. His time was limited and he was only allowed to answer specific questions posed by the board. On the second brief occasion when he was summoned to speak to the board, he was not allowed to bring his cabinet with him, as he desired.

Then, after waiting into the wee hours of the morning while the board met in executive session and upon offering Patterson the position of president emeritus, Patterson returned to a side room down the hall from the trustees' meeting room to discuss the board's solution with his cabinet. After about 20 minutes, when Patterson was nearly ready to return to the board's meeting room

in reply, a Southwestern employee noticed the trustees were returning to open session and rushed down the hall to let Patterson and his cabinet know so that they could return to the meeting.

I personally walked down the hall to hear what the board would announce in open session, since they had not waited for Patterson to return. When I arrived at the room, trustees and media were pouring out, having already ended the meeting after only a couple of minutes, if that, in open session. I had to ask a reporter what the board had announced and then returned immediately to deliver the news to Patterson that they had removed him as president and named him president emeritus.

May 30, 2018 action of the executive committee of the board of trustees

After midnight in Germany, while Patterson was sleeping, the chairman of the board of trustees, Kevin Ueckert, ordered Scott Colter to wake Patterson for a phone call. On the call, Ueckert told Patterson he was fired effective immediately, with no salary, no health insurance and no home. He then relayed that Patterson would receive instructions for vacating Pecan Manor upon returning to Fort Worth.

Before the phone call, both Pattersons' and Colter's email accounts, including personal contacts and calendar, were shut down without notice and while the three were traveling in Germany on behalf of Southwestern, leaving them without access to itineraries, train tickets, local contact information, hotel confirmation and flight boarding passes.

Also at some point before the phone call, the locks were changed without notice to the room on Southwestern's campus housing Patterson's private and personal archives containing ministry materials and documents from Criswell College and the Conservative Resurgence. No notice was given, and the Pattersons had no knowledge that this was being done and had not given permission for such. Despite accusations that the archives were mishandled, the attached correspondence from 2004 from Patterson to Southeastern's librarian and president indicate he believes all was handled properly.

It is regrettable that the trustees did not contact Patterson during their May 30 executive committee meeting to hear any explanation of these accusations before his immediate termination. I wish to reiterate that the purpose of sharing the details of what has transpired over the past month is the hope that Southern Baptists, who own Southwestern Seminary and control its work, have a fuller picture of what actually occurred.

So why was Paige Patterson actually terminated? Was it for ...

- *encouraging a female student not to report to police an alleged rape at Southeastern?*

We now know that he does not recall meeting with her and that she thanked him and sang his praises.

- *not handling appropriately an alleged case of sexual assault against a SWBTS student?*

We now know that he called the police, urged the woman to press charges and expelled the male student.

- *telling an abused wife to return to an abusive husband?*

We now know the wife assured him that her husband had not and would never physically harm her.

- *objectified a 16-year-old girl in conversation with a woman and her son?*

We now know Patterson has apologized for using a sermon illustration that misconstrued his heart and beliefs.

- *fired student employee Nathan Montgomery?*

We now know Patterson did not fire Montgomery and instructed that he not be fired.

We serve a God of truth. I have written in the spirit of that truth, and I pray you will receive it in that spirit as well.

Carroll instructed Scarborough, “Lee, keep the Seminary lashed to the cross. If heresy ever comes in the teaching, take it to the faculty. If they will not hear you and take prompt action, take it to the trustees of the Seminary. If they will not hear you, take it to the Convention that appoints the Board of Trustees, and if they will not hear you, take it to the great common people of our churches. You will not fail to get a hearing then.”

- *B.H. Carroll – Founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

December 10, 2004

Dr. Shawn Madden
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 1889
Wake Forest, NC 27588

Dear Shawn:

It is my understanding that you have inquired about my correspondence during the years that I was President at Southeastern Seminary. I am growing somewhat weary of dealing with all of this, so let me see if I cannot bring the matter to a conclusion that will be satisfactory to all. First, we left behind the collection of archival material from Judge Paul Pressler and from Russell Kaemmerling, which had been recruited specifically for the library. Second, we also left behind all of the materials of the President that regarded the life of the institution, curriculum, etc. that were not particularly germane to my own life situation.

Third, I had indicated that we would leave behind the Gipsy Smith collection, but that was prior to my being aware of the fact that my wife had previously given a letter indicating a loan of the material to the library. This was her prerogative, since the material was, in fact, given to her by Gipsy Smith's wife and did, in fact, therefore belong to her. I was unaware of the letter and the agreement that had taken place but have since been made aware of it. The result of that was that while we kept the originals, we allowed Brother Lutzweiler to make a copy for the library there. We have kept my father's papers, our long collected archives of the Southern Baptist Convention, and my correspondence and travel documents. The keeping of the travel and correspondence documents are essential to me until such time as I do retire in part for legal reasons.

Now, Shawn, I have made no final determination about where those will be deposited. I am not close to retirement at the moment. I continue to have the greatest interest in the success and progress of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary just as much so as I do of Southwestern Seminary. My particular assignment at the moment is Southwestern, and I want to do the very best that I can here. But, I have a heart firmly planted in both places now, and I intend to do all that I can for both schools. However, I know that you will understand when I say that there are dozens of factors that could influence where exactly the archive and my correspondence are permanently placed.

Furthermore, my correspondence (I say with a twitch of fear that I may be about to indulge in chutzpah of unbelievable variety) will probably be of great interest to some folks working on some dissertations in the future. For such to be openly available at the moment would not be advisable because of the possibility of bringing hurt to others. So, the ultimate disposition of those will be made at a later time. Consequently, I ask you at this point just to be sweet to me and let us see what happens. Again, I repeat for what it is worth that although I am devoted to doing the best I know how to do at Southwestern and make this as great a seminary as I can, I remain equally deeply devoted to Southeastern and rejoice over every success.

Until He Comes,

Paige Patterson

PP:cv

CC: Mr. Jim Lutzweiler
Dr. Danny Akin
Mr. Ryan Hutchinson



Thread



SBC Watchdog
@eyesonSBC



The first (internal) audit was engineered by [@CW_Patrick](#), [@ScottColter](#), and [@WesBMiller](#) to shift blame for financial irregularities away from Patterson.

The second (external) audit-- conducted by people actual accounting experience--revealed the problems and the blame-shifting.

5/24/18, 3:33 PM

1 Like



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