



The huge press was just getting cranked up to its full speed. It was printing a special section that listed the names of donors who had recently contributed to the university. That section would be included in *La Louisiane*.

I picked up a copy and my heart sank. The pages were supposed to have a subtle background, ghost-like images of clouds that were almost imperceptible. But something was terribly wrong. The background resembled the hide of a Holstein cow. Big dark blotches made it difficult to read a few of the donors' names.

I had two choices. I could allow the press to continue spitting out mottled pages. Or, I could ask the foreman to shut down the press so we could determine why the pages had this unexpected look and then reprint them correctly.

This might seem like a no-brainer. But when a press is halted during a run, it's sort of like a taxi idling at a red light. It's not moving but the meter keeps running. And trust me, an idling press costs much more than an idling taxi.

This was in the mid-1990s, when our budget was especially tight. So, which would be worse – bovine-like pages or a substantial extra expense? I had not been working for the university long, so I didn't know what to expect. Would I have to pay for the mistake personally? Would I lose my job?

I quickly called my boss, Julie Simon-Dronet. She tried to help by asking me to fax a copy of one of the pages. But it was impossible to gauge the severity of the situation by looking at the fax. She had not been working at the university for long either. So, she wanted some guidance.

"Let me ask T-Joe," she said, referring to Joseph "T-Joe" Savoie, who was then vice president for University Advancement.

By then I was sweating profusely.

Julie called back a couple of minutes later. "T-Joe said to tell you that he trusts your judgment. Make the absolute best decision you can and, no matter what, he will back you 100 percent."

In a sense, it was not the answer I had hoped to hear. And yet, it was a great answer because it was empowering. He probably doesn't remember the incident. I will never forget it.

Dr. Joseph Savoie is the university's new president. When someone who doesn't know him asks me what he's like, I am reminded of how he responded to my dilemma. It says a lot about how he treats others.

By the way, I stopped the press that day. It turned out that the paper was defective; we didn't have to pay an extra charge.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *La Louisiane*.

— Kathleen Thames