

Gimelstob: FAU Foundation didn't approve purchase of Corvette for Catanese

Foundation vice-chair pledges to cooperate with investigation

By BRIAN BANDELL
STAFF WRITER

Herb Gimelstob, vice chairman of Florida Atlantic University's fund-raising foundation, said Thursday that the organization didn't approve buying a red Corvette as a going-away present for former university President Anthony Catanese.

"There's never been a car or any kind of a major gift that was approved by the foundation board to Catanese," Gimelstob said. "Anything that's given out of our money that's not approved by the executive board is improper, and that's why there's a state investigation."

Gimelstob also responded to previous statements by Catanese's lawyer, Phillip Nohr of Melbourne, who said this week that Catanese believed his car was a gift approved by the foundation.

"I don't know where he gets his information," Gimelstob said.



Gimelstob

According to sources familiar with the weeklong criminal investigation of the FAU fundraising office, the foundation issued an invoice on July 11 for Stephen Lloyd Interior Design of Boca Raton to pay Sara Catanese, the wife of the former president, \$42,000 for "consulting services" rendered during the design of the university's presidential mansion. Carla Coleman, FAU's fund-raising chief, attached a memo promising the designer that the foundation would reimburse the firm for the payment, which it did.

State records show that Anthony Catanese purchased a red Corvette, which would have cost close to \$40,000, on July 24.

It's not clear whether Coleman's offer to reimburse the designer was approved by the foundation's board. Kenneth Lipman, Coleman's attorney, wouldn't comment on the Corvette matter, but said she "always acted properly."

State law considers it stealing to give a nonprofit organization's money to an outside party without approval from the organization.

Questions about Catanese's Corvette prompted FAU to close the Department of University Advancement late last week, send Coleman and other workers