

members of the academic community and of the Southeastern Conference we have no choice other than to go. Accordingly, as President of Mississippi State University I have decided that unless hindered by competent authority I shall send our basketball team to the NCAA competition.

I arrive at this decision freely and independently. I make it public with highest respect for the Board of Trustees and deepest regard for the members of the Legislature. As one who has lived in the midst of Mississippians for less than three years, I am cognizant of the hazard of this action and am fully reconciled to the possible consequences of it upon my professional career.

By Coach McCarthy and through my own personal knowledge of the players, I am firmly convinced that Mississippi State University and the State of Mississippi will have reason to be proud of their representation in this national competition, that these are splendid young gentlemen as well as splendid athletes.

My conviction is that the well-trained young people of Mississippi can compete on a favorable basis, athletically and intellectually, with the best in other parts of the country and that our champions are entitled to the opportunity to compete. I am further convinced that the spirit of fair play on the part of all concerned at the scene of the NCAA play-offs will transcend whatever prejudice or bias may obtain and transmute all participants into their essential roles as champions competing for the crown.

My feeling and my faith are that the reception of our team, in recognition of their conduct and spirit, will serve to allay the concern of those who question the wisdom of the participation. My hope for the team is an enjoyable time, good, clean competition, and victory.