

Mississippi Law Journal

UNIVERSITY, MISSISSIPPI

INDEX AND REVIEW EDITOR

March 2, 1963

Dr. D.W. Colvard, President
Mississippi State University
State College, Mississippi

Dear Dr. Colvard,

Coach Simmons informed me at the Ole Miss gym tonight of your NCAA decision prior to the public release and all of the Mississippi State Alumni along with me received the news as the greatest decision of the 20th Century. I need not tell you the alumni in the law school are behind you 100% because to do so would be mere repetition of what we have said earlier.

The interest and leadership exhibited by you, as President of Mississippi State University, in your short tenure has been in my judgment unparalleled in the school's history. It is my sincere hope that this is just the beginning of the brightest years of Mississippi State. With you at its helm I am assured that State will not only continue to be the "unmatched University" but will soar to unconceivable heights.

This letter was written on behalf of the alumni whose signatures appeared on our original petition and if any of these individuals can be of any service to you or the University for any reason please let us know.

I am with fond good wishes for success,

Thomas L. Stennis, II
MSU '61

1 enclosure; a copy of the original petition by the Alumni presently in the law school at Ole Miss.

Box 2362
University, Mississippi
December 8, 1962

Gentlemen,

This letter will deal specifically with Mississippi State University Basketball, more generally with Mississippi State athletics, and we think ultimately will concern and benefit Mississippi State University as a whole.

The purpose of this letter is to send the next Southeastern Conference Basketball Champion from Mississippi State (which we confidently hope will be 1963) to the NCAA Tournament in quest of the NCAA Basketball title.

In the opinion of these writers, which we hope is the overwhelming opinion of Mississippi State Alumni, the refusal to allow the Southeastern Conference Champions of Mississippi State University in 1959, 1961, and 1962 to participate in the NCAA Tournament was nothing short of a tragedy. It may not have been tragic to the average Mississippian, perhaps not even to the alumni or the college students, but surely it was to the basketball team and their coaches who were directly involved.

We are now at the turning point of Mississippi State basketball. As Coach McCarthy pointed out last week to the Tupelo Touchdown Club, the recruiting of top highschool basketball players is becoming more difficult. We think even the most rabid supporters of Mississippi high school basketball will admit that even if you procure the best boys within the state the possibilities of producing SEC Champions year in and year out is practically impossible. In other words, we have to recruit from other states to compete with Kentucky, other SEC powers, and especially other national powers. It all comes down to this rather frightening fact; the top boys are leaving this year. Mississippi State University has a good name in collegiate basketball. If they went to the NCAA Tournament, their chances of recruiting would be at a peak. If Mississippi State is to continue to produce top basketball teams we must give them an equal chance. They certainly don't have it now.

We come now to the reason, or at least the reason given, for the gross violation of a basketball team's rights. The reasons, of course, were to preserve segregation. This letter will not try to show that the people who advocated such a policy were always wrong. Perhaps they were correct in trying to avoid any possible compromising of the state's position. At one time they may have been correct. Some of the writers of this letter thought at one time they were correct; others did not. The question, as it seems to us, is just how much do you want to sacrifice and for what reason. As already noted, we have heretofore sacrificed quite a bit. Gentlemen, what have we sacrificed for? It seems that we have sacrificed for nothing. One of the most poignant examples of the opposite course that has not lead to a weakening of position is vividly pointed out in the likewise segregation bastion of Alabama. They have yet to integrate one public school, but the University of Alabama played Penn State two years ago in Philadelphia; Auburn represented the SEC in the NCAA Basketball Tournament in 1960; and the 1962 University of Alabama football team will engage an integrated University of Oklahoma team in Miami's

Orange Bowl. Would anybody say the Alabama is any less adamant towards segregation than Mississippi is within its own state lines!!!

The purpose of this letter is not, however, to criticize one way or the other. The segregation issue is just not involved in the matter at hand. If it would interest any of the recipients of this letter, the writers opinions vary from one who shouted pro-Barnett slogans from rooftops during the recent Ole Miss incident, to another who thought Barnett was doing it the wrong way.

It is therefore respectfully requested that each President of the Alumni chapter call a special meeting in the local chapters to discuss this vital matter. It is also requested that your acceptance or nonacceptance be forwarded as soon as conveniently possible to the Alumni Secretary Mr. Bob Williams, State College, Mississippi.

The Mississippi State Alumni Association is a power ful organization. An endorsement by it, we think, will be sufficient to cope with any possible protest. If we should see that this is not true, we will then solicit additional support from our "Friends", The University of Mississippi and the University of Southern Mississippi. Your prompt attention to this gravest of matters will be greatly appreciated. We waited since the beginning of the Southeastern Conference for the first basketball championship in 1959. On the strength of the first champion ship, State recruited the boys that have now produced two additional titles, but we have not been able to recruit with any great success since then. This may be our last chance. We must now rally behind Mississippi State University!!!

Very respectfully,

H. Stennis Little, Jr., '56

John Coalter, '61

Hunter S. Neubert, '59

Earnest R. Schroeder, '60

Thomas Laurance Stennis, II, '61

Joseph D. Gordon, ex '60

Donald H. Roth, '60

A. R. Sanders, '60

Cary Beane "M" Club, '61

Charles R. Ashford, Jr., '57

Donald E. Walsh, '61

George H. Lipscomb, Jr., '54

Hugh V. Smith, Jr., '56

Thomas Victor Bishop, '61

Robert E. McHaney, Jr., '62

John A. Eaves, '59

Walter E. Grantham II, '61

The above named individuals have signed this letter and represeht the MSU Alumni in the Law School of the University of Mississippi.