

Chapter No. 2194
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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 647***

Originated in Senate

L. Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 647

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING NATIONALLY RESPECTED TRACK AND FIELD HEAD COACH JOE WALKER ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 30 SEASONS AT OLE MISS.

WHEREAS, after three decades of developing national champions for the Ole Miss Track and Field program, Head Coach Joe Walker will step away following the 2012 season with plans to join his oldest son, Joe III; and

WHEREAS, one of the most well-respected coaches in the country, Joe Walker is in his 30th season as Head Coach of the Ole Miss Track and Field Team. Joe is a native of Utica, Mississippi, and a 1969 graduate from Mississippi College. A veteran with more than four decades of coaching experience, Walker has routinely produced SEC champions, NCAA champions and olympians throughout his coaching career. It is that attitude of excellence that Walker exudes that has lifted Ole Miss among the elite track and field programs in the country; and

WHEREAS, as the Rebels' Head Coach, he has guided his teams to 11 top-20 national finishes, including six times in the last five seasons. His pupils have earned All-America recognition 115 times, including 12 NCAA individual championships; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi native has mentored NCAA Champions during each of his head coaching stops at Ole Miss, Florida and Mississippi College. At least one of his athletes or former athletes participated in every Olympic Game from 1976-2000 and then again in 2008. His love for teaching and mentoring young people to excel on the track and in all areas of life was rewarded in 2002 when he was named the USOC National Track and Field Coach

of the Year. Needless to say, Walker has compiled quite the coaching resumé; and

WHEREAS, Walker has coached athletes to 71 SEC individual championships (58 at Ole Miss and 13 at Florida) and eight SEC relay championships. Twice his relay teams have broken the SEC record. He coached the high scorer at the SEC Championships six times in his career at Ole Miss, including 2012 SEC Indoor Championships high scorer Ricky Robertson. A long-jump specialist, Walker coached the famous Larry Myricks, who made four Olympic teams; Ralph Spry, the first-ever Ole Miss Track and Field NCAA Champion; Tisha Parker, who at the time held the SEC Outdoor Record and was the first Ole Miss female to win an SEC title; Savante' Stringfellow, who won three NCAA titles and had a great international career while making the 2000 Olympic Team; Shantel Glass and Charles Bailey, who won SEC titles; and Marquita Aldridge, who was also on the USA World Junior Team; and

WHEREAS, most recently, Walker coached quite possibly the greatest Rebel female athlete, as he helped Brittney Reese become the most decorated women's track athlete in school history. As a sophomore in 2007, Reese won both Indoor and Outdoor SEC titles in the long jump, was the NCAA runner-up in the long jump, and finished eighth at the USA World Championships. In her final season at Ole Miss in 2008 before turning pro, Reese captured the SEC titles in the long jump and high jump en route to winning the SEC Commissioner's Trophy for accumulating the most points during the course of the meet. Her 31 points scored were the most by any athlete in school history. Reese went on to become the first female in school history to win an individual NCAA Championship, as she accomplished the feat in the long jump at the NCAA Indoor Championships. She also finished third in the high jump and was named as NCAA All-American in both events. Reese continued her dominance under Walker at the SEC Outdoor Championships as she was crowned the SEC Champion in the long jump. With that distinction,

Reese became just the third athlete in school history to win back-to-back SEC Championships; and

WHEREAS, Walker has also seen success in the hurdles. Early in his career, Walker coached Tony Dees, who won the 1992 Olympic Silver Medal. Antwon Hicks won two NCAA Indoor 60 Hurdle Titles and one NCAA 110-Meter Runner-up finish, was a World Junior Champion, and a semifinalist in the 2004 Olympic Trials. John Yarbrough won the SEC Indoor 60-Meter Hurdle Title in 2007 and was the MidEast NCAA 110-Meter Hurdle Champion en route to a runner-up finish at the NCAA Outdoor Championships. More recently, Lee Ellis Moore was a two-time All-American and the 2011 SEC Champion in the 400-Meter Hurdles; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Walker's teams have traditionally been outstanding in the classroom as well as on the track. Calvin Thigpen was a Rhodes Scholar and a GTE Academic All-American. Kirui was named to the Academic All-American Team in 2007 and 2011, and Moore earned Academic All-American accolades in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Sofie Persson joined that group in 2011; and

WHEREAS, it is hard to imagine Ole Miss without Joe Walker, who has been a model of consistency and a mentor for many coaches and athletes, and it is with great pride that we note the record of achievement and legacy of leadership and excellence of this respected Mississippi Coach:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend nationally respected Track and Field Head Coach Joe Walker on the occasion of his retirement after 30 seasons with the University of Mississippi, and extend our best wishes to Coach Walker and his family in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Coach Walker, forwarded to the Chancellor of the University of

Mississippi and the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of
Higher Learning, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
April 18, 2012



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
April 23, 2012



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES