

*Remarks for the
Lanier High School Dedication and Banquet
August 25, 2001*

Good evening, and thank you for the invitation to be a part of this special evening. I'm pleased to be here to help recognize the career of Coach L. T. Smith and the amazing impact he has had on so many young people.

Sports play an important part in the lives of students, and always have. I have played sports, and also officiated high school basketball teams at one time. I love the competitiveness of high school athletics and still follow several teams today.

Chief Justice Earl Warren of the United States Supreme Court once commented that he always liked to read the sports page in the paper first, because it recorded people's accomplishments – the front page had nothing but news about people's failures.

Coach Smith was in the sports section a lot over the years with his accomplishments. He coached Lanier to the state championship in basketball in 1951, 1952, 1956, 1957, and 1958.

I would have loved to see those teams in action.

Now, tonight, we are here not only to honor the accomplishments of Coach Smith over his 38-year career as a coach and educator – we are here to honor him as a man who has made a difference in his city, his state, and in the lives of so many people.

It is only fitting that the new gymnasium here at Lanier is named after Coach Smith. His time here as a student, as a coach, and as a teacher will be remembered as a time of excellence.

Coach Smith, congratulations on this special evening and all the great work that made this night possible. On behalf of the people of Mississippi, I am proud to say “well done.”