

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame Induction Banquet
April 4, 2003*

■ Recognize A. M. Zeidman

It is great to be here with you this evening; as a life-long sports fan, I have watched these individuals we honor here tonight contribute so much to the world of athletics and the spirit of competition.

The great Chicago Bears linebacker Mike Singletary once commented that his favorite part of the game was the opportunity to play. I believe it would be safe to say, the same thought was probably shared by tonight's inductees.

And, for those of us who sat in the stands, our favorite part of the game was the opportunity to watch them play.

Beyond the field of play, tonight's inductees have also taught us lessons to be applied in life – lessons of desire, determination, and dedication to being the best.

Those lessons have stood the test of time, and our work should focus on passing them on to our children and those who will lead us in years to come. That is part of our work in education, to teach the lessons of competition in the classroom.

John Wooden, the legendary basketball coach at UCLA, summed it all up. “Sports do not build character,” he said, “they reveal it.”

Tonight we honor eight men and women whose character – individually and collectively – stands as a model for us all. Warner Alford, Mildrette Graves, James Ray Carpenter, Kent Hull, Jackie Slater, Bob Stevens and Sue Gunter – they teach and inspire us still. And the path paved by Bill Foster continues to widen as generations follow his lead and remember his legacy.

To each of you, my congratulations and my thanks.