

The University of Southern Mississippi  
**The Aquila Digital Community**

---

Dissertations

---

Spring 5-2011

## **Full Court Press: How Mississippi Newspapers Helped Keep State College Basketball Segregated, 1955-1973**

Jason Ashley Peterson  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Peterson, Jason Ashley, "Full Court Press: How Mississippi Newspapers Helped Keep State College Basketball Segregated, 1955-1973" (2011). *Dissertations*. 736.  
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/736>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact [Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu](mailto:Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu).

The University of Southern Mississippi

FULL COURT PRESS: HOW MISSISSIPPI NEWSPAPERS HELPED KEEP STATE

COLLEGE BASKETBALL SEGREGATED, 1955-1973

by

Jason Ashley Peterson

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

---

Director

---

Dean of the Graduate School

May 2011

The University of Southern Mississippi

FULL COURT PRESS: HOW MISSISSIPPI NEWSPAPERS HELPED KEEP STATE

COLLEGE BASKETBALL SEGREGATED, 1955-1973

by

Jason Ashley Peterson

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011

## ABSTRACT

### FULL COURT PRESS: HOW MISSISSIPPI NEWSPAPERS HELPED KEEP STATE COLLEGE BASKETBALL SEGREGATED, 1955-1973

by Jason Ashley Peterson

May 2011

During the civil rights era, Mississippi was cloaked in the hateful embrace of the Closed Society, historian James Silver's description of the white caste systems that used State's Rights to enforce segregation and promote the subservient treatment of blacks. Surprisingly, challenges from Mississippi's college basketball courts brought into question the validity of the Closed Society and its unwritten law, a gentleman's agreement that prevented college teams in the Magnolia State from playing against integrated foes. Led by Mississippi State University's (MSU) basketball team, which won four Southeastern Conference championships in a five-year span, the newspapers in Mississippi often debated the legitimacy of MSU's claims to a trip to the integrated NCAA national championship tournament with some reporters, namely Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, damning the Starkville-five for their attempted violation of the state's white-dominated social structure. Others, such as Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times*, emerged from the sports desk as a bold and progressive voice in the annals of Mississippi journalism. By the time MSU added its first black basketball players in 1971, the Closed Society had loosened its grip on Mississippi's newspapers as evident in the absence of race-based descriptions and identifications of these brave athletes. This dissertation examines the role Mississippi's journalists played, from 1955 through 1973, in maintaining segregated college basketball in the state and its reaction to the integration of basketball teams at University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University. In total, the press

either condemned any efforts to introduce social equality in Mississippi's athletic avenues, remained silent, or supported such efforts in the name of national basketball dominance.

COPYRIGHT BY  
JASON ASHLEY PETERSON

2011

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you, Dr. David R. Davies, and my other committee members Dr. Gene Wiggins, Dr. Kim LeDuff, Dr. Cheryl Jenkins, and Dr. Christopher Campbell. Without the guidance and mentorship of Dr. Davies, I would not be able to finish this project. I consider Dr. Davies both a mentor and a friend, and I am honored that he chose to help me achieve this monumental goal. I would also like to thank Dr. Art Kaul, a former committee member who passed away during the work on this dissertation.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Communication department at Berry College, especially Dr. Brian Carroll, who was a steadying influence on my work during the course of this dissertation. His mentoring, critical thinking, and knowledge of sports reporting during the civil rights era helped me maintain my focus over the past five years and, without him, I doubt I would have completed this task. I would also like to thank Dr. Bob Frank and Dean Thomas Kennedy for their faith in my efforts. A person could not ask for more supportive administrators than Dr. Frank and Dean Kennedy, and the patience demonstrated by both made this endeavor that much easier. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to Diane Land for her diligent efforts in editing the final product.

I would also like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, the individuals who participated in the dissertation. Wilbert Jordan, Jr., Perry Wallace, Joe Dan Gold, Dr. Douglas Starr, Jimmie McDowell, Joe Mosby, Rick Cleveland, and Bob Hartley, all contributed to an overall understanding of the civil rights era, and the commentary offered by each validated my exploration into this topic.

Without the various library personnel at The University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, Jones County Junior College, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Berry College, my efforts would have been futile. In no particular order, I would like to thank Betty Self at MSU; Jennifer Ward

and John Wall at Ole Miss; Andrew Sharpe at Jones County Junior College; Pristina Armstrong, Jennifer Brannock, and Cindy Lawler at USM; and Xiaojing Zu at Berry College, for all of their hard work and assistance.

I would also like to thank the following individuals who influenced me in some shape or form during my graduate school education: Dr. Ginger Carter Miller, Dr. Mary Jean Land, Dr. William Griswold, Dr. Louis Benjamin, Dr. Mazharul Haque, Dr. Bradley Bond, Dr. Louis Kyriakoudes, and Dr. Willie Pierce.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my parents, William and Sandy Peterson, for fueling my thirst for knowledge over the years and my brother, Billy Peterson, who jokingly doubted my sanity during my years as a journalist, yet never questioned my dreams and aspirations. He has remained a steady and supportive influence on my life and, for that, I will always be grateful.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my wife and my two children. An endeavor of this magnitude would not be possible without their unconditional love, support, and encouragement. My wife has never questioned my desires to achieve this goal and lovingly followed me on a trek through the southern United States. She is my best friend and my biggest fan. There is no doubt that I would have been unable to complete such an arduous task without her. Joy, Addison, and Connor, this dissertation is for you. I love you.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....		ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....		iv
CHAPTER		
I.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	A Brief History of Mississippi College Basketball and the Unwritten Law	
	Significance of the Study	
	Literature Review	
	Research Questions and Methodology	
	Chapter-by-Chapter Organization	
II.	THEY DESERVE A STINGING DEFEAT.....	33
	The Bobcats Prevail on the Field	
	Gartin’s Withdrawal	
	The Bobcats’ Exodus to California	
	The Game and Aftermath	
	Sullens Objects	
	Editorial Support, Then Discontent	
	Hometown Support	
	The Sports Writer Stays Silent	
	Conclusion	
III.	SOMETIMES, EVEN COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS ACT LIKE FRESHMEN.....	66
	Proposal and Silence	
	The Evansville Fiasco	
	The Compliant Rebels	
	Reaction from the Press	
	The Aftermath and Public Opinion	
	Jackson State College Falls to the Unwritten Law	
	The Mainstream Remains Silent	
	Editorial Commentary and Public Opinion	
	Conclusion	
IV.	WE’LL STAY AT HOME AND TELL EVERYBODY WE’RE THE BEST .....	107
	Conquering Kentucky	
	A NCAA Bid Becomes a Possibility	
	MSU Students Vote for the Team to Play	
	The Maroons Close in on the SEC Title	
	Hilbun Decides to Stay Home	

Starkville Remained Silent  
 Jimmy Ward Takes up the Fight  
 Editors in Jackson, Meridian Defend the Closed Society  
 Other Journalists Speak Out  
 McDowell Emerges as a Progressive Voice  
 The Sports Desk Speaks Up  
 Silence Again Rules in Starkville  
 Public Perception  
 Conclusion

V. THE LESS SAID, THE BETTER .....187

McCarthy’s Charges Dominate the SEC  
 The Press Assumes an NCAA bid for Second Place  
 State Suffers a Setback  
 The Maroons Rebound  
 MSU Wins the SEC Title, Stays Home  
 Silence Comes from Mississippi’s News Desks  
 McDowell Battles the Unwritten Law  
 A Mixed Reaction from Mississippi’s Sports Desk  
 Hederman’s Sports Scribes Toe the Segregationist Line  
 Harris Takes Over in Starkville as Quiet Reigns  
 The “Golden Giants” Take their Place Among Small College Elite  
 The Southerners Taste Success  
 Editors Ignore the “Golden Giants”  
 Conclusion

VI. IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH FIVE WHITE BOYS WINNING  
 THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP? .....267

The Bulldogs March Toward Lexington  
 The Hederman Empire Holds the Segregated Line  
 The Long Shadow Cast by Jimmie McDowell  
 Robertson, the *Daily Mississippian* Oppose the Closed Society  
 The Press Fails to Represent Public Opinion  
 Conclusion

VII. THIS IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO OUR WAY OF LIFE SINCE  
 THE RECONSTRUCTION.....337

The Ghosts of Championships Past  
 Colvard, McCarthy Forgo the Unwritten Law  
 Roberts and the State College Board Intervene  
 MSU Granted Permission to Play in NCAA  
 The Bulldogs Escape Starkville  
 “The Color Didn’t Make Any Difference”  
 State Returns to Starkville and Silence  
 The End of the Unwritten Law  
 The Journalistic Battlelines Are Drawn  
 The Hederman Empire, the *Meridian Star* Loses Their United Front

	Sports Writers Unite Against the Unwritten Law	
	Support Grows for the Bulldogs From Mississippi’s Editors	
	The Surprising Views of Starkville	
	Members of the Black Press Speak Up	
	Taking the Familiar Route	
	The Public Takes to the Printed Press	
	Conclusion	
VIII.	I’VE MADE MY LAST TRIP TO PLACES LIKE MISSISSIPPI.....	443
	Integrated Sports Comes to the Magnolia State	
	Jordan Walks On and Over Mississippi’s Color Line	
	Jordan Makes the Varsity	
	Jordan Goes Unnoticed Outside of Hattiesburg	
	“Mr. Cool” Comes to Oxford	
	Ball Adds Color to the Ole Miss Varsity	
	Fry and Jenkins Follow Dowsing to Starkville	
	Jenkins and Fry Dominate the Bulldog Varsity	
	Conclusion	
IX.	CONCLUSION.....	517
	REFERENCES .....	525

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The civil rights era in Mississippi marked a dark and violent time in our country's history. While the rest of the Southern states moved on from the heated debate concerning the extent of states' rights and began to catch up with their northern brethren, Mississippi held firm in its believed right to segregate. Notions like equality and the integration into the traditionally white customs and social structure of the Magnolia State were cast aside with vigor and rage. While the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision was supposed to alleviate some of the dominance of Mississippi's white elite, the groundbreaking legal precedent only helped build the foundation on which the Closed Society was built. Governor Hugh White responded to what has been called Mississippi's Second Reconstruction by continuing with his plan to develop segregated educational outlets rather than integrating existing white-only establishments.<sup>1</sup>

From the mid-1950s through the late 1960s, Mississippi's white-dominated caste system, dubbed the Closed Society by historian James Silver, influenced every segment of society and, for better or worse, had a profound influence on how whites and blacks in the state lived. The sociological and political atmosphere emphasized a belief in white supremacy through segregation and was justified and rationalized by a claim to states' rights.<sup>2</sup> Historians have paid considerable attention to events that occurred during the civil rights era that either opposed the Closed Society or pointed out the horrific extent some would go to protect it, and ultimately, would lead to a collapse of that white-dominated way of life. A key component in the Closed Society was the role of journalism, which acted as an arm of organizations like the Citizens' Council and the state Sovereignty Commission in an effort to protect the way of life that segregation had built. Journalists and editors, like the colorful yet spiteful Frederick Sullens and his protégé Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, and fellow segregationist James Skewes of the *Meridian Star*, opposed any and all threats to the Closed Society.

Others, such as Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, respected the notion of civil rights and would attempt to balance any debate with logic and reasoning. While these journalists and others addressed historical events like *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the integration of the University of Mississippi, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, Freedom Summer, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., there were sports-based occurrences that fostered considerable debate within the press that would demonstrate the slow but progressive change in Mississippi journalism during the civil rights era and assist in the deconstruction of the Closed Society.

Within the confines of the Closed Society, it was assumed that all segments of life in the Magnolia State would and should be segregated, including sports. In 1955, the small town of Ellisville, home of Jones County Junior College, would become ground zero of Mississippi's battle to keep the white-dominated borders of Mississippi free from integration. The JCJC football team accepted an invitation to play against Compton Junior College in the Junior Rose Bowl to crown a junior college national champion. Unknown to the majority of Mississippians, the California-based junior college fielded an integrated team, igniting weeks of debate within the press as one of the taboos of the Closed Society was soon to be violated. Despite warnings from purveyors of Mississippi's white elite, specifically Sullens, Jones County played and lost to the integrated Tartars, 22-13. Enraged and embarrassed by the perceived lack of respect for their way of life, the state's political elite banded together with the State College Board to create the "unwritten law," a gentleman's agreement that would keep Mississippi's athletic venues segregated and in compliance with the Closed Society.<sup>3</sup> The agreement, which never had any legitimate legal power, was treated as law and was punishable by the loss of state funding and scholarships.<sup>4</sup> After the creation of the unwritten law, a number of southern states attempted to institute some sort of legal standard that prevented integrated athletic competition, specifically in their home venues. In 1956, the state of Louisiana successfully passed a bill making it illegal for "black and white players to

compete against each other in the same state” while in Georgia, a similar bill passed the state Senate in 1957, but it failed to make it through the state’s House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, on May 25, 1959, the Supreme Court ruled that the Louisiana bill was unconstitutional, nullifying the law. Despite the legal precedent, the unwritten law preserved and was the only one of its kind in the South, as other schools such as the University of Kentucky and the Georgia Institute of Technology were often the beneficiaries of the state’s refusal to play integrated foes.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the state’s twelve junior colleges were limited in terms of their ability to recruit athletes as schools were allocated by the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges geographical regions within the state where they could recruit and were prohibited from signing out-of-state athletes.<sup>7</sup> However, there was no evidence if these rules were observed as a means of preventing integrated athletics. During the next eight years, the hardwood of Mississippi’s college basketball courts evoked multiple challenges to the unwritten law, all of which were debated with fervor and spite in the pages of Mississippi’s newspapers. The basketball teams from Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, The University of Southern Mississippi, and Jackson State College all experienced the repercussions of the unwritten law. In total, Mississippi’s editors and journalists expressed polarizing opinions on the merit of integrated athletics that ultimately damaged the Closed Society’s race-based united front. As time marched on, opposition to the unwritten law grew, culminating in Mississippi State University’s participation in the integrated 1963 National Collegiate Athletic Association’s National Championship basketball tournament.

While James Meredith would become the first black to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1962, thus signaling in the integration of Mississippi’s colleges and universities, the Magnolia State would not welcome blacks as basketball adversaries until 1967 with Vanderbilt University’s Perry Wallace’s integration of the SEC. A season later, Wilber Jordan, Jr., became the first black athlete at Mississippi State University, the

University of Mississippi, or The University of Southern Mississippi when he walked on to the Southerners' freshman basketball squad in 1968. With the passing of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, a new political ideology swept through Mississippi, and the shackles of the Closed Society began to slowly loosen. Editors from across the state denounced the act, which would guarantee that blacks and other minorities would have equal access to all public facilities, including institutions of higher learning.<sup>8</sup> While the state's journalists verbally lambasted the act, it also signaled a change in the way in which matters of race were covered in the press. The act "served as an exclamation point for the state of Mississippi, signaling that the days of segregation, when blacks were treated like second class citizens, were now over in the eyes of the law."<sup>9</sup> Over time, the principles of the Civil Rights Act were accepted and integration had arrived in Mississippi. The press reflected those ideological changes even in the area of sports as Jordan's addition to the Southern Miss roster went unnoticed by the local *Hattiesburg American*. While the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision of 1954, the 1962 integration of Ole Miss, the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, Freedom Summer, the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Act of 1968 are often viewed by media historians as major disruptions in the southern way of life and damning blows to the eventual dissipation of the persona that was the Closed Society, cracks in the racial armor began to appear with every challenge to the unwritten law.<sup>10</sup>

This dissertation demonstrates that per an examination of news articles, editorials, and columns published in Mississippi's newspapers during the eight-year existence of the unwritten law, the various challenges placed before the gentleman's agreement generated three primary responses from Mississippi's journalists. Reporters and editors either condemned and/or were dismissive of any threats to the unwritten law, voiced no sort of opinion on the possibility of integrated competition and published little to no original material on the matter, or supported a venture into integrated play, more often than not, for the betterment of Mississippi and the chance at a championship. For each expression of outrage,

the press gave the unwritten law a degree of credibility as a vital and crucial part of Mississippi's white way of life and helped enforce the segregationist standard in an almost legal fashion. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the unwritten law was perpetuated by the silence exhibited from Mississippi's sports writers, who would typically hide in the comfortable confines of athletics and would rarely address the racial controversy surrounding each of these challenges. As the years and the challenges mounted against the state's athletic segregationist standard, more and more journalists began to question the validity of the unwritten law and advocated integrated competition, culminating in Mississippi State's 1963 entry into the NCAA national championship tournament where they would lose to the integrated team from Loyola of Chicago. After the elimination of the unwritten law in 1963, Mississippi's press returned to their conservative habits only to face various social changes from Freedom Summer, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., signaling the waning of the powerful Closed Society and ushering in a new era of equality in the Magnolia State. Little was written in the pages of Mississippi's newspapers when the SEC integrated in 1966 and only one reporter acknowledged Perry Wallace's first trek through the state as the conference's first black basketball player at Vanderbilt in 1967. By the time Wilbert Jordan, Jr., became the first black athlete at Southern Miss, Mississippi State, or Ole Miss, the press had begun to show signs of change from an ideological perspective. Issues of race, at least in sports, did not generate the same level of reaction from journalists. Rather, the sports scribes of the state found little news value in the pioneering presence of Jordan, Coolidge Ball at Ole Miss in 1970, and Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins at Mississippi State in 1971, rarely identifying the athletes' skin color. The integration of sports was no longer a source of polarizing opinions from reporters and editors, demonstrating the social progress made by Mississippi's journalists.



The first major challenge came in 1956 when both Mississippi State and the University of Mississippi were to play in separate basketball tournaments during the same week. The MSU Maroons were forced to leave the Evansville (Indiana) College Invitational basketball tournament on December 28, 1956, after school officials in Starkville discovered that the team played and defeated the integrated University of Denver squad.<sup>11</sup> Evansville Mayor Vance Hartke, upset over MSU's withdrawal from the tournament, told United Press International, "Basketball is a prime example of judging a man by his ability — not the color of his skin. Someday, perhaps, we all will come before one great judge. I hope our Southern friends then learn what justice really is."<sup>12</sup> *Jackson State Times* editor Paul Tiblier wrote that playing the integrated Denver team and the subsequent withdrawal would be viewed from the segregated masses in Mississippi as a hypocritical move by MSU and called for consistent rules and regulations from the State College Board to be put in place.<sup>13</sup> The University of Mississippi was faced with the unwritten law only a day later, with its December 30, 1956, appearance in the All-American City basketball tournament in Owensboro, Kentucky. The Rebels were scheduled to play Iona College of New Rochelle, New York; however, Iona guard Stanley Hill was black, leading the Oxford contingent to withdraw from the tournament before playing a single game.<sup>14</sup> Athletic director C. M. Smith told the Associated Press that it was his understanding the tournament was not integrated.<sup>15</sup> Longtime Mississippi sports writer Carl Walters of the Jackson-based *Clarion-Ledger* blamed the administration at both Ole Miss and Mississippi State for not knowing that the tournaments were integrated.<sup>16</sup> *Jackson Daily News* editor Sullens wrote that "ignorance is not a valid excuse" for the teams' initial participation in the tournament.<sup>17</sup>

Jackson State College, a historically black institution, fell victim to the rule only months later when, in March 1957, it was forced by the State College Board to withdraw from the NCAA small college national championship basketball tournament for fear that the team would face white-only or integrated foes.<sup>18</sup> JSC President Jacob Reddix said in his

announcement that “under present conditions, our basketball team will not compete further in the NCAA.”<sup>19</sup> *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Harold Foreman wrote that the school’s withdrawal was “a closed incident” and that JSC knew that integrated competition was forbidden.<sup>20</sup> Mississippi’s most prominent black newspaper, the *Jackson Advocate* of Percy Greene, wrote that while Reddix did not say so, “it was obvious that the state’s board advice came because Jackson State College would have to play a white team.”<sup>21</sup>

Over time, Mississippi State University’s basketball team proved to be a repeat offender of the unwritten law. After the Evansville fiasco, MSU again challenged the unwritten law in 1959 after it won the Southeastern Conference basketball championship. Soon after its February 9, 1959, victory over the University of Kentucky, questions began to arise concerning the possibility of MSU receiving an NCAA invitation to play in the integrated national basketball championship tournament. A public forum of debate emerged in the state’s newspapers over whether or not the Maroons should accept the opportunity to play in the postseason. Journalists such as Walters, Arnold Hederman of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Billy “Sunshine” Rainey of the *Meridian Star*, Fitz McCoy of the *Hattiesburg American*, and Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* wrote of the bid as a pipe dream that would never happen because of the unwritten law.<sup>22</sup> Others, such as the *Clarion-Ledger*’s Tom Ethridge and Charles Hills, and *Jackson Daily News*’ Jimmy Ward and Sullens, defended the ideals of the Closed Society and questioned why the issue was up for debate in the first place.<sup>23</sup> While the state’s journalistic ranks took a combative position against the Maroons, the *Jackson State Times*’ Jimmie “Mississippi Red” McDowell emerged as a new, progressive voice in Mississippi journalism, advocating a postseason berth for MSU.

Public opinion, in this case, was open to debate. Letters to the editor swamped the opinion sections of most major Mississippi newspapers both in support of MSU and in defense of the pro-segregation policy. When the Associated Press reported that MSU’s student body voted for the team to accept the bid, the *Clarion-Ledger* responded with a

sidebar questioning the validity of the poll.<sup>24</sup> Once the Maroons clinched the SEC title on February 28, 1959, MSU President Ben Hilbun announced that the team would not accept the bid. Walters egregiously wrote that the decision was not a news story, supplying legitimacy to the unwritten law.<sup>25</sup> Later that year, the University of Mississippi won the SEC championship in baseball and made its intentions clear: It would abide by the unwritten law. Ward praised Ole Miss for its quiet and dignified decision, adding that the Rebels “refused to get a phantom million dollars worthy of publicity by abandoning the long-standing policy of segregation.”<sup>26</sup>

This debate continued during the 1960-61 season as Mississippi State won its second SEC basketball championship. As in 1959, speculation of an NCAA bid for MSU was met with a degree of skepticism from state journalists. In 1961, after the Maroons defeated Tulane University to clinch a share of the SEC basketball title, Governor Ross Barnett told United Press International that he would oppose the Maroons’ entry in the NCAA tournament.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the 1959 season, many journalists treated the potential NCAA bid as an afterthought.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the *Jackson Daily News*’s Baker called MSU’s absence from the tournament “nothing new.”<sup>29</sup> Again, with the exception of McDowell, the majority of Mississippi’s press either condemned MSU or voiced no opinion on the matter. In addition to the 1961 Maroons, another basketball-based challenge to the unwritten law appeared in the Magnolia State, this time from Mississippi Southern College, now known as The University of Southern Mississippi. During the 1961 season, head coach Fred Lewis and his Hattiesburg-based Southerners compiled a 23-3 record but were denied an invitation to NCAA small-college national tournament despite its ranking as the third best small college team in the country because tournament officials did not think MSC would accept a berth due to the unwritten law.<sup>30</sup> Newspapers, as a whole, did not cover the MSC contingent to the extent they covered and scrutinized MSU and ignored the success of Lewis’ “Golden Giants.”

The conclusion of the 1961-62 season brought much of the same for Mississippi State's basketball team as the renamed Bulldogs again won the SEC championship yet were denied a chance to play in the NCAA tournament. While the press continued to defend the Closed Society, there was growing support for MSU as reporters posed more questions concerning the legitimacy of the unwritten law. On February 13, 1962, after MSU defeated Kentucky 49-44, Baker wrote that MSU head coach and future SEC Hall of Famer James "Babe" McCarthy and his team were going to Louisville for the NCAA tournament, but as spectators. "Mississippi State's basketball team has shown the world just how good it is," Baker wrote, dismissing any legitimacy offered to the team by a postseason appearance and offering validity to the unwritten law.<sup>31</sup> In subsequent articles, the NCAA tournament was often mentioned, but it was quickly pointed out MSU would likely reject a bid.<sup>32</sup> However, in late February, the Associated Press reported that the Bulldogs and the university's administration, led by President Dean Colvard, favored participating in the tournament.<sup>33</sup> The mere thought of playing in the NCAA tournament led James Skewes of the *Meridian Star* to tastelessly suggest that MSU's participation in the tournament would lead to "after game social affairs."<sup>34</sup> After their 63-58 title-clinching victory over Ole Miss, McCarthy told Baker that he favored participating in the tournament, but the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor clarified that the team would not play in the postseason.<sup>35</sup> Similar accounts appeared in other state newspapers; however, most articles only noted McCarthy's announcement of MSU's decision.<sup>36</sup> "The accuracy of Babe's belief about what the majority of the people might favor can hardly be determined for it is one thing sure never to be placed on a ballot," Baker wrote in response to the coach's claim that most people wanted to see MSU in the tournament.<sup>37</sup>

The unwritten law faced its most difficult test from Mississippi State in the winter of 1963. After McCarthy and his basketball team won their fourth SEC championship in 1963, they once again challenged the segregated rules of the state, this time with the support of Colvard. Despite objections from the political elite, such as Barnett, Hattiesburg attorney M.

M. Roberts, and State Representative Billy Mitts of Enterprise, the Bulldogs played in the 1963 NCAA tournament.<sup>38</sup> Roberts called the MSU debate of 1963, “the biggest challenge to the Southern way of life since the Reconstruction.”<sup>39</sup> Mitts said of MSU’s 1963 attempt to play in the NCAA tournament, “I advocate a substantial decrease in the financial appropriations for every university of this great state that encourages integration.”<sup>40</sup> Stalwarts of the Closed Society such as Ward and Skewes continued to write crass criticisms of Mississippi State. Ward wrote in the *Jackson Daily News* that “the glitter of another basketball trophy can blind rabid basketball fans or over-eager sports writers, but it should not be so dazzling as to prompt grown men of grave responsibility to dash off into an experiment that has failed before.”<sup>41</sup> Skewes followed suit, writing that MSU’s appearance would lead to all-out integration in Mississippi.

However, there was a change of opinion in Mississippi’s journalists, leaving Ward and Skewes in the minority. Led by sports editors such as Dick Lightsey of the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, Robert “Steamboat” Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger*, and Billy “Sunshine” Rainey of the *Meridian Star*, journalists in the Magnolia State began to support MSU’s efforts to enter the integrated NCAA tournament and questioned the legitimacy of the unwritten law. Rainey wrote that the Bulldogs’ success should lead to the abandonment of the unwritten law.<sup>42</sup> Other writers and editors, such as Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* and J. Oliver Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal*, began to voice their approval of the NCAA appearance and identified the social implications of such a move. The successful entry of MSU into the NCAA tournament led to the death of the unwritten law. On March 21, 1963, the State College Board rejected a proposal that would have required the trustees to grant permission to teams wishing to participate in integrated competition.<sup>43</sup> Mississippi athletics remained segregated until Jordan walked on as a guard on the basketball team at Southern Miss in the fall of 1968, becoming the first black athlete at Southern Miss, Mississippi State, or Ole Miss.

### Significance of the Study

There is no known scholarly literature that deals specifically with Mississippi journalists and their role in enforcing the unwritten law in Mississippi. An examination of newspapers offers a glimpse into the mindset of the journalists as they dealt with an unknown at the time: the integration of athletic competition in Mississippi. While the world covered the integration of professional sports, specifically the Brooklyn Dodgers' 1945 signing of Jackie Robinson, Mississippi had yet to deal with issues involving both race and athletics.<sup>44</sup> Although journalists in the Magnolia State identified the social significance of JCJC's participation in the game, the press contextualized the contest as a negative threat to white Mississippi and thus negated any potentially positive outcomes that may have evolved from the Bobcats' participation in the Junior Rose Bowl.<sup>45</sup> Other historians, such as David R. Davies and Susan Weill, have viewed this time period as one of, if not the, most turbulent times in the history of Mississippi journalism.<sup>46</sup> Weill added that newspapers in Mississippi during the civil rights era were a fundamental mode of racial stereotypes and attitudes and that they rejected equal rights for blacks. Any challenge to the white social structure resulted in an "us against them mentality."<sup>47</sup> Newspapers that did not conform were targeted and ridiculed by fellow publications, specifically the Hederman family-owned *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger* in Jackson, Mississippi.<sup>48</sup> Proponents of integration were met with a barrage of outrage, usually fueled by coverage in the mainstream press. With few exceptions, the news media in the state of Mississippi were biased in media accounts concerning race because newspapers reflected white viewpoints and thus offered little support for integration.<sup>49</sup>

Sociologists such as David Zirin have often cited sports as "keeping the average person from worrying about the things that matter in their lives" and serving as an area in which the ideas of our society are presented and challenged. Sports, in essence, can reflect both the dominant ideas of a society and the struggles that lie beneath the surface.<sup>50</sup> In this

theoretical vein, it is logical to conclude that the sports of Mississippi reflected the social ills of the time.

Basketball served as a convenient lens through which to look at the world of sports in Mississippi and the musings of its journalists. Challenges to the unwritten law only revealed themselves when Mississippi collegiate teams were having a degree of success. While the University of Mississippi won three football national championships in 1959, 1960, and 1962 under head coach John Vaught and quarterback Archie Manning, it played in the segregated Sugar Bowl in New Orleans, Louisiana, at the conclusion of each season, thus maintaining its all-white competition.<sup>51</sup> While Ole Miss' baseball team proved to be equally successful, winning the SEC championship in 1959 and 1960, it typically ruled out in advance any thought of playing in the national title tournament.<sup>52</sup> While making history on the hardwood, Mississippi State was equally inept in football and baseball. The Maroons, later renamed the Bulldogs, did not win the SEC conference championship in football until 1965, almost two years after the demise of the unwritten law and a year before the SEC integrated.<sup>53</sup> MSU's football teams under head coaches Darrell Royal, Wade Walker, and Paul Davis went a combined 42-50-4 during this time period and made only one appearance in a bowl game, a 1963 berth in the Liberty Bowl in Philadelphia. The game, a 16-12 victory over North Carolina State, was overshadowed by threats of protests from the National Association for Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, because of the state's unwritten law.<sup>54</sup> MSU's baseball team won the SEC championship in 1949 but did not win again until 1965, well after the elimination of the unwritten law.<sup>55</sup> Mississippi Southern College, now The University of Southern Mississippi, had similar success on the gridiron as the Southerners of Thad "Pie" Vann won two United Press International college division national championships, the equivalent of the modern Division II national championship. Much like Ole Miss and MSU, however, the Southerners played a segregated schedule.<sup>56</sup> Because of the success of

Mississippi's universities on the hardwood, collegiate basketball in Mississippi was the sport more likely to produce conflict as it pertained to the unwritten law.

#### Literature Review

Though there are a number of credible and useful sources that deal with the press and its coverage of the issue of race and the social impact and justification of the segregation of sports, the literature that deals specifically with the press and its coverage of college sports in Mississippi is thin. The creation of the unwritten law and the subsequent challenges to the Closed Society from Mississippi's college basketball ranks occurred after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* and before the Voting Rights Act of 1964. Peter Levy wrote that, from a political standpoint, rather than moving forward with the integration of schools after *Brown*, the "citadel of segregation and white supremacy" did the opposite.<sup>57</sup> Governor Hugh White went forth with plans to solidify the dual school system in the state and focused on enhancing black-only institutions.<sup>58</sup> Historian David Sansing wrote that there was such a need for unity, unanimity, and conformity in Mississippi's Closed Society that the College Board and college officials deferred to the state's power structure on matters that threatened white Mississippi's way of life.<sup>59</sup>

Despite *Brown*, Mississippi was gripped by the segregation rules of Jim Crow through the mid-1960s, and the mythical law enforced the segregation of athletics.<sup>60</sup> The press in Mississippi mirrored the political structure of the state with exceptions. Mississippi did not resort to censorship or violence to influence the press; rather the majority of the state's newspaper editors were white supremacists.<sup>61</sup> The press has been viewed by historian Julius Eric Thompson as falling into three predominant categories: The first was made up of the extremely conservative papers, such as the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, both of which were owned by the segregationist Hederman family, and other papers such as the *Natchez Democrat*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Fayette Chronicle*, the *Tunica Times-Democrat*, and the *Pike County Summit Sun*.<sup>62</sup> According to Thompson, these papers have



been labeled as some of the worst in the United States at the time because of their “dishonest treatment” of blacks and issues involving race.<sup>63</sup> The Hederman papers, in particular, often took the role of segregation protagonists. According to a *Time* article in 1966, “the morning *Clarion-Ledger* and the afternoon *Daily News* indulge in more Yankee-baiting and race-baiting than any other paper in the South.”<sup>64</sup> Bob Hederman published both the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, and his cousin Tom Hederman served as the editor of the *Clarion-Ledger*. With a combined circulation of about 90,000, the Hederman newspapers were the only dailies available statewide. According to historian John Dittmer, most Mississippians saw the world through the eyes of the Hedermans, who were extremely influential in other sectors of Mississippi society and “poured out a steady stream of invective against black activities and their white allies.”<sup>65</sup> The Hedermans were unquestioning supporters of Barnett, had nothing but praise of the Citizens’ Council, and, in turn, were Mississippi’s primary voice for segregation.<sup>66</sup> The tone of newspaper coverage in the state was set with the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>67</sup> While the work of known segregationist Jimmy Ward in the pages of the *Jackson Daily News* seemed to epitomize the racial outlook of the Hederman empire, some found the tone and content of these publications to be a reflection of the audience rather than the personal views of the Hederman family.<sup>68</sup> While the Hedermans also owned the *Hattiesburg American*, the openly segregationist publication was not considered “a white sheet” because it lacked the blatantly racist materials of its Jackson-based brethren.<sup>69</sup>

A direct and more moderate competitor for the Hederman papers could be found in the *Jackson State Times*, which opened in 1954 and closed in 1962.<sup>70</sup> The *State Times* led a crusade against the Hederman empire, often speaking out against segregation and calling for temperance and logic when it came to issues of race, including the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision.<sup>71</sup> According to James T. Sellers, the paper promoted “good, honest and responsible government.”<sup>72</sup> However, over time, the paper yielded to public pressure and

began to mirror their Jackson-based journalistic brethren in its views on race.<sup>73</sup> Many historians have indicated that the only aspect that kept the *State Times* from becoming a mirror image of the Hederman papers was the presence of J. Oliver Emmerich, editor of the McComb-based *Enterprise-Journal* and one of the few journalists who openly challenged the ideals of the Closed Society.<sup>74</sup> Although in the minority, some newspapers in Mississippi took a more moderate stance on race issues within the state. Editors such as Carter and Emmerich challenged the ideals and principles of the Closed Society.<sup>75</sup> Frequently pressured by other journalists and readers, these publications at times spoke out on race-related issues.<sup>76</sup>

Black newspapers also had remarkably different positions from their white brethren on race. Conservative black newspapers in Mississippi, including the *Jackson Advocate* and the *Mississippi Enterprise*, were silent on many of the controversial issues involving race, fearing a backlash from the white segregationist power structure.<sup>77</sup> The most prominent black newspaper, the *Jackson Advocate*, was edited by Percy Greene, who advocated the right to vote for blacks, yet was on the payroll of the state's Sovereignty Commission, a government agency responsible for the monitoring of black activism in the state, and advocated equal education rather than all-out integration.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the presence of Carter and Emmerich, in total, Mississippi's newspapers and journalists worked for the good of the Closed Society. According to historian Joseph Atkins, journalists in the state were often selective on what they covered, choosing to print materials straight from the Citizens' Council rather than cover issues of racial strife.<sup>79</sup> Former Associated Press correspondent Douglas Starr validated Atkins' contention in a 2009 interview, saying that newspapers in the Magnolia State stayed away from topics that did not complement the Closed Society and would publish wire-based accounts on controversial issues to give the publication and its editors another journalistic outlet to blame in case there were any public objections to the coverage of a particular topic.<sup>80</sup> The same sort of approach

was evident in the various challenges to the unwritten law and the segregation of Mississippi's collegiate sports.

The political and social fervor brought forth by the *Brown* decision could also be seen on the playing fields of Mississippi. During the 1950s, the white South firmly resisted any racial change. Conservative southern whites adamantly resisted efforts to eliminate discrimination including in the areas of higher education and athletics.<sup>81</sup> At the time of the *Brown* decision, no university or college in the Atlantic Coast Conference or in the Southeastern Conference had integrated either its undergraduate student body or its athletic programs.<sup>82</sup> According to political scientist Renford Reese, the loss of the Civil War led to years of resentment on behalf of the South. Rivalries developed between the northern and southern teams, to the point that these battles were of a more passionate nature than their in-conference games. The South was slow to react to the *Brown* decision and often responded by enacting state laws prohibiting integrated competition.<sup>83</sup> The *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision caused many segregationists to see the playing fields as a vulnerable outlet to race mixing. Once athletic venues began to welcome integration, there was a period of unrest as there was no accepted method for discussing, understanding, and bridging racial divides, let alone agreement that such efforts were desirable. According to author Barry Jacobs, the weight of habit and custom worked against African Americans, as did an older generation of athletic officials in a position to ease their transition.<sup>84</sup>

Things began to change during the early 1960s with the federally enforced enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi. After the U.S. Supreme Court ordered Meredith's enrollment in September 1962, Barnett went on state television and vowed that "no school will be integrated in Mississippi while I am your governor . . . we will not drink from the cup of genocide."<sup>85</sup> Despite changes in the calendar, advancement in the area of race was non-existent in Mississippi. Charles M. Payne wrote that, during the 1960s, "Everything that took place in Mississippi took place against the state's long tradition of

systematic racial terrorism. Without some minimal protection for the lives of potential activists, no real opposition to the system of white supremacy was possible.”<sup>86</sup>

In the aftermath of Meredith’s enrollment, the use of violence against blacks was replaced with the threat of economic reprisals, a tactic used throughout the duration of the unwritten law’s existence.<sup>87</sup> Despite such racial landmarks like the integration of the University of Mississippi and the emergence of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Payne wrote that there was still “a more or less tacit understanding in Mississippi that public officials would do all in their power to stop integration.”<sup>88</sup> Not surprisingly, strategies used by whites to resist the civil rights movement changed as well. Historian Kenneth Andrews wrote that the local variation in white resistance corresponded partially to the characteristics of the local social structure. White strategies developed through a process of tactical interaction responding to black mobilization, real or anticipated, and to the perceived successes of the civil rights movement.<sup>89</sup>

From the standpoint of colleges and universities, the State College Board was unwilling to accept many of the changes that were going on around them, despite the impending integration of the state’s predominantly white institutions.<sup>90</sup> State College Board member Verner Smith Holmes told historian David Sansing, “I look back now, and I am ashamed of the way I voted sometimes, you know you make so many mistakes. I think back in those days we all, in our hearts, were a little racist.”<sup>91</sup> Because of the College Board’s control over athletic-based decisions as it pertained to the college and universities in the state, that sort of regret also existed in terms of the unwritten law. Despite the presence of the Civil Rights Act, social problems still existed in Mississippi. New York-based journalist Tom Johnson, who covered the July 1964 disappearance of three civil rights workers in Philadelphia, described his experience in Mississippi in a chilling sentence: “I saw the hatred on their faces (whites) and knew they wanted to kill us.”<sup>92</sup> Only time changed things in the South. By the late 1960s, more avenues opened for blacks in the southern states, and by 1968,

almost 60 percent of blacks in Mississippi were registered to vote, signaling in a new and almost alien era of equality in the state.<sup>93</sup>

While the work of the Mississippi press during the civil rights era has been examined in detail by the aforementioned authors, the coverage of sports and integration from within the Magnolia State has not been the subject of a major historical query. The integration of sports and the work of the press has been examined in great detail, specifically, the emergence of Jackie Robinson through baseball's colorline with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Glen Bleske and Chris Lamb, who examined Robinson's debut in the major leagues from the perspectives of the white press and black press, found that the black press was much more aware of the social significance of Robinson's appearance in Major League Baseball while white journalists failed to identify the historical context of the event.<sup>94</sup> William Simmons, who also examined the press coverage of Robinson's groundbreaking introduction, noted the underwhelming nature of the white press and concluded that most Americans were unaware of how much racism was a part of the country's social and cultural values.<sup>95</sup> David K. Wiggins, who has written a number of books and scholarly articles on issues of race in athletics, expressed a similar sentiment, arguing that with the exception of "crime and scandal," white owned and operated newspapers traditionally gave limited coverage to activities that involved black Americans, specifically in the realm of sports.<sup>96</sup> Kathryn Jay concurred, pointing out that while the national press covered the exploits of Robinson, journalists also ignored that the majority of avenues in sports remained segregated and assisted with the continued segregation of both professional and college sports.<sup>97</sup> John Carroll and Charles K. Rogers had similar observations on the integration of the National Football League as both authors argued that the white press ignored the presence and social significance of black athletes in the sport, specifically Fritz Pollard, who was one of the first blacks to play professional football.<sup>98</sup> Even in Mississippi, the coverage of sports and the emergence of African Americans on the previous all-white playing fields before 1955 was an

anomaly. For example, Hodding Carter, editor of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, was one of the few editors in Mississippi who published a photo of Olympic legend Jesse Owens on the front page of the paper, citing the newsworthy nature of Owens' accomplishments.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the bevy of authors who have examined the journalistic reaction of the integration of sports, little to no attention has been paid to the athletic ventures of civil rights-era Mississippi, creating an opportunity to contribute to the cannon of historical literature on both the work of the press in the Magnolia State during the civil rights era and the coverage of the integration of sports. Many historians have argued that proponents of integration were typically met with a barrage of discontent and anger in the Magnolia State, usually fueled by coverage in the mainstream press. Historian Maryanne Vollers added that, with few exceptions, the news media in the state of Mississippi were biased in media accounts concerning race because newspapers reflected white viewpoints and thus offered little support for integration.<sup>100</sup> Along those lines, the idea of playing against an integrated team was a disturbing thought for many white southerners who grew up in the Closed Society.<sup>101</sup> From those historical perspectives, logically, the coverage of the unwritten law and the integration of college basketball in Mississippi demonstrated the power of the white-dominated press and mirrored the ebb and flow of the political climate in the state. The work of the press as it pertained to the potential integration of Mississippi athletics was no different from the journalistic reaction to the threat of social integration as stalwarts of the Closed Society, such as Sullens and Ward, attacked the offending colleges and universities with spite and contempt while others, including Mississippi's sports press, sat in silence, ignoring the issue thus enforcing the unwritten law. As an agent in the socially tumultuous environment of the Magnolia State, the press helped protect the Closed Society and even extended its considerable influence and power into the realm of athletics. With the social changes discussed in the literature review and the press reaction to the integration of sports, the

coverage of athletics and, specifically, the aforementioned challenges to the unwritten law reflected the cultural changes that occurred in Mississippi from 1955 until the early 1970s.

### Research Questions and Methodology

This dissertation addresses the following questions:

1. How did the work of Mississippi journalists lend credibility to the unwritten law, which forbade interracial athletic competition in the state? How did they help enforce the ban on integrated athletics? How did they help perpetuate segregationist principles in social and political contexts?
2. How did sports writers called upon to chronicle these athletic contests deal with questions and controversies about race? Did they merely reflect the ideals of the Closed Society or did their work mirror that of their news desk brethren? How did the coverage change over time? Did it reflect the changing society in Mississippi?
3. How did the work of journalists in Mississippi influence public opinion? Did published letters to the editor during this time reflect that of the journalists who worked at these individual publications?

The events examined in this dissertation includes newspaper accounts on Jones County Junior College's 1955 participation in the Junior Rose Bowl; Mississippi State and the University of Mississippi's 1956 withdrawals from segregated basketball holiday tournaments; Jackson State College's 1957 withdrawal from the small NCAA National Championship Tournament; Mississippi State basketball challenges of the unwritten law in 1959, 1960, and 1962; Mississippi Southern's omission from the small NCAA National Championship Tournament; and Mississippi State basketball's 1963 acceptance and appearance in the NCAA National Championship Tournament. Also detailed in this dissertation is the athletic integration of The University of Southern Mississippi basketball with Jordan, the integration of Mississippi State basketball with Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins, and the integration of Ole Miss basketball with Coolidge Ball. While some of the articles and

work examined looked at other sports, specifically Jones County Junior College's football game with Compton Junior College, basketball was the primary sport of interest because the majority of incidents that challenged the unwritten law involved Mississippi college basketball teams.

The newspapers used include the Jackson-based *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson State Times*, and the black *Jackson Advocate*. The *Meridian Star*, which politically fell into the same vein as the Jackson-based Hederman publications, was also examined. Other newspapers, such as the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi were consulted to offer a counterpoint to the work of the Hederman empire. Hometown newspapers were also included in this examination, depending on the home base of each of the challenging colleges and universities. Those publications included the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the *Starkville Daily News*, and the *Hattiesburg American*. Each of the aforementioned newspapers offered a distinct local perspective on the challenge to the unwritten law. Student newspapers at the University of Mississippi, Mississippi State University, The University of Southern Mississippi, Jackson State University, and Jones County Junior College were also consulted for a student-based perspective.

Each of these publications were examined for news-based content, which would include articles on the aforementioned incidents in both the news and sports sections, and articles written by staff writers, editors, and those from wire-based journalists. While it is conceivable that a number of publications would turn to wire articles for their coverage of these incidents, a number of these accounts were edited by local editors and thus varied in terms of content, length, headlines, and placement within the confines of the newspaper. Those cosmetic differences, at times, offered significant information per the editors' opinions and attitudes on issues of race. Much like the use of wire material, letters to the editor also provided useful material about both the opinion of the editor at each newspaper and the local



audience. Editorials and columns from editors, daily columnists, and sports reporters were also examined and offered some of the more significant evidence used in this dissertation as the opinion-based articles addressed, more accurately, the personal feelings of the editor or the reporter.

A segment of prominent Mississippi sports journalists were included in this dissertation, including Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame Members Jimmie McDowell, sports editor of the *Jackson State Times*; Carl Walters of the *Jackson State Times* and the *Clarion-Ledger*; Lee Baker, sports editor and writer for the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Jackson State Times*, and the *Clarion-Ledger*; Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*; Billy “Sunshine” Rainey of the *Meridian Star*; Dick Lightsey of the *Daily Herald*; Bill Ross of the Tupelo-based *Daily Journal*, Harold Foreman and Arnold Hederman of the *Clarion-Ledger*; and Robert “Steamboat” Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Meridian Star*. The bulk of the sports writers selected were based on their individual views on the aforementioned challenges to the unwritten law or the overall views of their publications. While most of the writers listed, such as Baker and Walters, wrote in a conservative fashion when it came to these violations, others such as McDowell were outspoken and advocated the elimination of the unwritten law. News-based journalists and editors, including Frederick Sullens and Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, columnist Tom Ethridge of the *Clarion-Ledger*, and James Skews of the *Meridian Star* were also selected because of their affiliation with the Citizens’ Council or support of the Closed Society.<sup>102</sup> Other journalists who took a more moderate stance on issues of race, such as Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* and Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal* and the *Jackson State Times*, were also selected.<sup>103</sup>

#### Chapter-by-Chapter Organization

In this dissertation, each chapter serves as a detailed examination of the journalistic coverage and reaction to the challenges posed by Mississippi’s college basketball teams to the unwritten law. The 1955 venture of the Jones County Junior College football team into the

integrated Junior Rose Bowl is examined in Chapter II. As the first integrated athletic contest in Mississippi's athletic history, the Bobcats' bid for the 1955 junior college national championship was met with scorn and ridicule from the majority of Mississippi's editors and reporters. Led by Sullens of the *Jackson Daily News*, the JCJC team spent two weeks under a constant barrage of objection from the journalistic masses who viewed the game as a direct threat to their white way of life. It was JCJC's venture into integrated competition that served as the antagonist for the creation of the unwritten law.

Chapter III focuses on the press coverage of State Representative and Itawamba County native R. C. McCarver's 1956 proposed legal ban on integrated competition, which was met with a degree of journalistic neglect as few publications published an article on the matter and even fewer expressed any sort of opinion, either in support or opposition. The self-inflicted muting of Mississippi's press on the issue appeared as an accepting nod for the proposed law, thus offering support for the Closed Society. Furthermore, the chapter also examined the coverage of the first challenges to the unwritten law, which were brought forth from Mississippi State University and the University of Mississippi in a one-week period during the final days of December 1956 and January 1957 and the March 1957 exit of Jackson State College from the small NCAA national championship tournament. Like Jones County in 1955, noteworthy journalists such as Sullens, Carter, and Carl Walters of the *Clarion-Ledger*, criticized the powers that be at Mississippi State for failing to stop the Maroons before they played an integrated University of Denver squad, thus violating the unwritten law. Meanwhile, the press spared the Rebels of Ole Miss as the Oxford-based team left its tournament before a schedule game against integrated Iona College. The 1957 Jackson State College basketball team was the only minority college or university to challenge the gentleman's agreement and, like in other issues of race, the press in the Magnolia State neglected the budding challenge of the JSC contingent. While a few tones of discontent were present, silence reigned in Mississippi, even from the offices of the *Jackson Advocate*,

Mississippi's foremost minority publication, once again reinforcing the state's white status quo.

Chapter IV analyzes the press coverage of Mississippi State's 1958-59 SEC championship season and the subsequent debate surrounding the team's possible entry into the integrated NCAA tournament. From the team's February 9, 1959, victory over basketball juggernaut the University of Kentucky until Hilburn's February 28, 1959, announcement that the Maroons would decline the invitation to the NCAA tournament, journalists and editors in the Magnolia State debated the merits of MSU entry into college basketball's postseason. The Maroons' first conference championship came at the height of the powerful reign of the Closed Society and the mere notion of MSU's possible participation in the integrated postseason was met primarily with opposition from Mississippi's journalist elite, including the almost sour musings of *Jackson Daily News* editor Jimmy Ward. Other reporters, especially sports journalists, remained silent on the matter and offered little to no support to the Maroon contingent or integrated athletics. However, the debate surrounding the 1958-59 season saw the emergence of *Jackson State Times* sports editor Jimmie McDowell as a surprisingly progressive voice in Mississippi journalism despite his public contention that the school's participation in the tournament would do little to Mississippi's way of life.

Chapter V details the press coverage of the 1960-61 Mississippi State basketball team, which won its second SEC championship and spurred another press-based argument over integrated athletic competition, and the successful season of Mississippi Southern College, which despite a 23-3 record was denied a chance to play in the integrated NCAA small national championship tournament because tournament officials assumed the college would reject the invitation due to the unwritten law. Like the previous season, a degree of debate appeared in the pages of Mississippi's newspapers from the team's February 13, 1961, loss to Kentucky until the decision to again reject the tournament invitation roughly one month later. Unlike its previous efforts, the Maroons did not receive the same sort of attention

from local columnists and journalists as they had in 1959, and most sports reporters in the state remained silent on the issue of integrated athletics or openly assumed that the unwritten law would supersede any hopes for a national championship opportunity. However, a degree of social progress could be found in Mississippi's sports sections as Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Daily News* and Dick Lightsey of the Biloxi-based *Daily Herald*, joined McDowell's crusade against the unwritten law, albeit for the chance at postseason glory. Nevertheless, support for the socially radical proposal of Mississippi State's participation in the NCAA tournament began to garner support from a journalistic minority led by "Mississippi Red," who solidified his place as one of Mississippi's more progressive journalists during the civil rights era.

Chapter VI examines Mississippi State's third consecutive SEC championship winning season in a row and the onslaught of debate from Mississippi's press surrounding the merits of integrated competition. Like its past championship seasons, the 24-1 Bulldogs of head coach James "Babe" McCarthy were once denied entry into the NCAA tournament, but support for MSU began to grow well beyond the desk of McDowell, who left Mississippi after the *Jackson State Times* closed its doors in January 1962. While a segment of Mississippi's journalists continued with their silent support of the unwritten law, more sports reporters began to question the validity of the gentleman's agreement with some, like Robert "Steamboat" Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger* and Herb Phillips of the *Commercial Dispatch*, even calling for the outright elimination of the segregationist standard. The reporters in Mississippi were slowly changing and social process in athletics was soon to appear on the state's doorstep.

Chapter VII looks at Mississippi State's fourth straight SEC championship and the team's first appearance in the integrated NCAA tournament and violation of Mississippi's unwritten law, which was dissolved by the State College Board weeks after the tournament. The journalistic debate surrounding the 1963 Bulldogs demonstrated a discontent for the

unwritten law by Mississippi's sports scribes, which was unveiled in the pages of the press, thus offering President Dean Colvard the necessary support to send the team to the integrated tournament, where MSU lost to Loyola of Chicago. While a number of historians have argued that the integration of the University of Mississippi in late 1962 created a united front in the press despite various opinions on civil rights issues, MSU's efforts months later only demonstrated that chasm-like ideological differences still existed in the press, in particular between Ward and James Skewes of the *Meridian Star* and virtually everyone else. For the first time, those who supported the bid seemingly outnumbered those who openly opposed integrated athletics or who offered no opinion on the matter. In the eight years the unwritten law existed, the press in the Magnolia State went from opposing and damning any and all colleges and universities who would consider violating the unwritten law to a fraternity that supported Mississippi State's efforts and advocated the elimination of the gentleman's agreement.

Chapter VIII in the dissertation takes a closer look at the decision by the State College Board to eliminate the unwritten law, which was only opposed by Ward in the pages of the *Jackson Daily News*, the first appearance of integrated basketball in the Magnolia State with the addition of Perry Wallace at the University of Vanderbilt, and the integration of The University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State, and the University of Mississippi's college basketball programs. While the various debates surrounding the unwritten law generated a robust amount of material in Mississippi's newspapers, only one journalist, Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News*, addressed Wallace's first game at Mississippi State and did so in a snide way. Wilbert Jordan's 1968 integration of the team at Southern Miss went unnoted in Hattiesburg as the local *Hattiesburg American* and the student-based *Student Printz* never identified Jordan's ethnicity. By the time Mississippi State integrated its basketball team in 1972 with the additions of Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins, the press found their presence of little news value as few publications identified Fry and Jenkins as black.

With the socially and politically historic implication of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, journalists in Mississippi, ultimate and begrudgingly, accepted integration. Thus, a change occurred in the coverage and reporting of the integration of these basketball teams that lacked the social outrage present in other accounts. For the most part, the integration of these basketball teams was minimized and ignored but less as a means of protecting the Closed Society and more in the vein of social progress.

In total, the press in Mississippi was reflective of the society in which it served. From the violent treatment of blacks in the 1950s, the threats of financial loss in the early 1960s, to the questionable climate of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act, Mississippi journalism went through a ideological metamorphosis, slowly transforming from an organ that minimized the rights of blacks and advocated, more or less, outright racism, to an industry that weighted the plight of blacks on equal footing with their white brethren.

---

<sup>1</sup> Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 15; and David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 4.

<sup>2</sup> James Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1964), 3-10.

<sup>3</sup> "Seeks Racial Ban in College Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Russell J Henderson, "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: 'Something more than the game will be lost,'" *The Journal of Southern History* 63, No. 4 (1997): 830.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick B. Miller and David Kenneth Wiggins, *Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Rutledge, 2004), 279-283.

<sup>6</sup> "Move Is Started Here To Send MSU to NCAA," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1962, 1. During Mississippi State's numerous basketball-based challenges to the unwritten law, the University of Kentucky was selected to replace the Maroons/Bulldogs in the NCAA tournament in 1959, 1961, and 1962. Then-SEC member Georgia Tech was in consideration for the NCAA basketball tournament bid in 1963 and replaced SEC baseball champion the University of Mississippi in the NCAA baseball tournament in 1959.

---

<sup>7</sup> Herb Phillips, “N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 22 February 1962, 9. For more information on the recruitment rules, see Ronnie Musgrove, *The Mississippi Public Community and Junior College Story: 1972-2002* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 11.

<sup>8</sup> Davies, 38-41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 228.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> “Mississippi State’s Basketball Team Quits Integrated Meet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 30 December 1956, 9.

<sup>12</sup> “State Maroons Cage Squad Leaves North Tournament,” *Jackson State Times*, 30 December 1956, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Bad Publicity Showers Mississippi Because of Apparent Team Hypocrisy,” *Jackson State Times*, 2 January 1957, 6A.

<sup>14</sup> “Mississippi Cagers Balk at Integration,” *Jackson Daily News*, 31 December 1956, 1, 14.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December 1956, 7.

<sup>17</sup> “Ignorance is Not an Excuse,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 January 1957, 4; and “Hinny,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 January 1957, 1.

<sup>18</sup> “Jackson College Quits Integrated NCAA Tourney,” *Jackson State Times*, 5 March 1957, 3.

<sup>19</sup> “Jackson State Withdraws From Small College Meet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1957, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Harold Foreman, “Harold Foreman, Daily News Sports Editor,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1957, 11.

<sup>21</sup> “Jackson College Five Leaves Cage Tourney,” *Jackson Advocate*, 9 March 1957, 7. While the *Advocate* had an article on the JSC withdrawal and “disappointed” commentary from the students, the *Advocate* did not run an editorial, column, or letters to the editor commenting on the withdrawal. Subsequent issues of the *Advocate* were devoid of any content pertaining to JSC and the unwritten law.

<sup>22</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1959, 17; Arnold Hederman, “Highlight on Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1959, 27; Billy Rainey, “Sunshine on Sports,” *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1959, 9; Fitz McCoy, “Giving ‘em Fitz,” *Hattiesburg American*, 12 February 1959, 9; and Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1959, 11.

---

<sup>23</sup> Tom Ethridge, "Mississippi Notebook," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1959, 3; "Charles M. Hills, "Affairs of State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1959, 6; and Jimmy Ward, "Covering the Crossroads," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1959, 1.

<sup>24</sup>"Mississippi State Student Vote Could Be Misleading," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1959, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's" *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1959, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Jimmy Ward, "Covering the Crossroads," *Jackson Daily News*, 22 May 1959.

<sup>27</sup> "No NCAA Meet for State," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1961, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Ed Tunstall, "Success Story for Babe, State," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 February 1961, 9; Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1961, 4B; and "Hinny," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 1. While congratulating McCarthy for winning the SEC and Coach of the Year in a Hinny cartoon, the dialog indicated that the upcoming game against Ole Miss was the biggest test of the season. Ole Miss finished a less than stellar 10-14.

<sup>29</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 10. Baker also wrote that the conference's two second place teams, the University of Kentucky and Vanderbilt University, which would replace MSU in the tournament if the Maroons would win the SEC "did not respect our way of life."

<sup>30</sup> "Southern Snubbed by NCAA Tourney," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1961, 11; and "Southern Hates Being Ignored," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1961, 8D. NCAA Chairman Harvey Chrouser told United Press International, "I didn't know if they would accept it (the bid) or not."

<sup>31</sup> Lee Baker, "Maroons Down Mighty Wildcats," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 11.

<sup>32</sup> "SEC Ends Cage Season Saturday," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1962, 9.

<sup>33</sup> "Will State Go to NCAA," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1962, 1F.

<sup>34</sup> Frank Fitzpatrick, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game that Changed American Sports* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999), 44.

<sup>35</sup> Lee Baker, "State Coach for Relaxed Ruling," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1962, 1.

<sup>36</sup> "State Turns Down Bid to Tourney After Win," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 5 March 1962, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1962, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Randy Roberts and James Stuart Olson, *Winning is the Only Thing: Sports in America since 1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 44-45.

<sup>39</sup> "Board to Decide State's Future," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 March 1963, 14; "Full Board Expected at Tournament Talks," *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1963, 1; "Controversy



---

Continues over NCAA,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 1; and “College Board Member Hints NCAA Rejection,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 8 March 1963, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Silver, 62.

<sup>41</sup> Jimmy Ward, “The Trustees to Reconsider Breach in ‘Unwritten Law,’” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Bill Rainey, “Mixed Emotions,” *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 8.

<sup>43</sup> “Mixing Proposal Refused by State’s College Board,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 March 1963, 1; “College Board Defies Policy,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 March 1963, 1; and “State College Rejects Motion,” *Natchez Democrat*, 22 March 1963, 12; and Dana Brooks and Ronald Althouse, *Racism in College Athletics: The African American Athlete’s Experience*. (Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 1993), 35-36.

<sup>44</sup> Miller and Wiggins, 247-248.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Davies, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse’s Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi’s Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 247-248.

<sup>48</sup> Weill, 10-11.

<sup>49</sup> Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 99; and Davies, 8-9.

<sup>50</sup> Dave Zirin, *What’s my Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005), 20-21.

<sup>51</sup> Renford Reese, “The Socio-Political Context of the Integration of Sport in America.” *Journal of African American Men* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 6-7; *The Washington Post*, 27 November 2006; David Medina, “Opening Doors,” *Sallyport: The Magazine of Rice University* 61, No. 1, (Fall 2004); and Miller and Wiggins, 248. In late 1955, it was announced that the Georgia Institute of Technology was to play the University of Pittsburg in the 1956 Sugar Bowl in January. However, Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin ordered Tech to reject the bowl bid because of the presence of black Pitt fullback Bobby Grier. President Blake R. Van Leer left the decision to Coach Bobby Dodd, who allowed his players to vote. Tech went on to accept the bowl bid and win 7-0. In 1956, Louisiana state legislators went on to initiate a bill that would prohibit any integrated athletic contests in the state. During Ole Miss’s multiple appearances in the Sugar Bowl during the 1960s, its foes Louisiana State University, Rice University, and the University of Arkansas had yet to integrate their athletics at the time of those contests. LSU’s first black athlete, Collins Temple, Jr., enrolled in 1971; Rice did not integrate its student body until 1964 with the admittance of Raymond Johnson, and Arkansas’ first black athlete, basketball player, Thomas Johnson, began varsity play in 1968.

---

<sup>52</sup> Charles W. Eagles, *The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 2009), 111.

<sup>53</sup> MSU's athletic teams were known as the Maroons from 1932 until 1961, when the school adopted Bulldogs as the team name when MSU received university status. However, the name was slowly adopted and most media accounts still referred to the team as the Maroons.

<sup>54</sup>“No Social Problem: Paul Davis,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1963 December 14, 2.

<sup>55</sup>MSU Athletic Media Relations, *2007 Mississippi State Baseball Media Guide* (Starkville, MS.: University Publishing, 2007), 104.

<sup>56</sup> Chester Morgan, *Dearly Bought, Deeply Treasured: The University of Southern Mississippi, 1912-1987* (Jackson, Miss: The University of Mississippi Press, 1987), 102-103.

<sup>57</sup> Peter B. Levy, *The Civil Rights Movement: Greenwood Press Guides to Historic Events of the Twentieth Century* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1998), 62.

<sup>58</sup> Charles Bolton, *The Hardest Deal of All: The Battle Over School Integration in Mississippi, 1870-1980* (Jackson, Miss: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 65.

<sup>59</sup> David Sansing, *Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi* (Jackson, Miss: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 154.

<sup>60</sup> Russell Thomas Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete: African Americans and Sports* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2006), 95 and Levy, 83.

<sup>61</sup> John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 65.

<sup>62</sup> Julius Eric Thompson, *The Black Press in Mississippi, 1865-1985* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 64-66.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Unknown author. “Dixie Flamethrowers,” *Time Magazine*, 4 March 1966, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Dittmer, 65.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 271.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Dittmer, 179.

<sup>70</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 84-85.

- 
- <sup>71</sup> James T. Sellers, *A History of the Jackson State Times: An Agent of Change in a Closed Society*. Thesis (Ph. D.), University of Southern Mississippi, 1992, 244-247.
- <sup>72</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>73</sup> Thompson, 66-67.
- <sup>74</sup> Erle Johnston, *Mississippi's Defiant Years, 1953-1973* (Forest, Miss.: Lake Harbor Publishers, 1990), 396.
- <sup>75</sup> Dittmer, 66.
- <sup>76</sup> Johnston, 395.
- <sup>77</sup> Thompson, 69-71.
- <sup>78</sup> Davies, 62-64, 81.
- <sup>79</sup> Joseph B. Atkins, *The Mission Journalism: Ethics and the World* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 2000), 52-53.
- <sup>80</sup> Douglas Starr, interview with author, 30 July 2009.
- <sup>81</sup> Miller and Wiggins, 248.
- <sup>82</sup> Barry Jacobs, *Across the Line: Profiles in Basketball Courage: Tales of the First Black Players in the ACC and SEC* (Guilford, Conn: Lyons Press, 2008), xiii.
- <sup>83</sup> Reese, 9.
- <sup>84</sup> Jacobs, xxi-xxii.
- <sup>85</sup> Dittmer, 139.
- <sup>86</sup> Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 7.
- <sup>87</sup> Dittmer, 143-144.
- <sup>88</sup> Payne, 153.
- <sup>89</sup> Kenneth Andrews, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 9.
- <sup>90</sup> Sansing, 199.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid., 213.

---

<sup>92</sup> Wallace Terry, *Missing Pages: Black Journalists of Modern America: An Oral History* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 94.

<sup>93</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, 405-406.

<sup>94</sup> Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, "Covering the Integration of Baseball — A Look Back," *Editor & Publisher* 130, no. 4 (27 January 1996): 48-50; and Chris Lamb, *Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training* (Omaha, Neb.: Bison Books, 2006), 46-47.

<sup>95</sup> William Simmons, "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball," *Journal of Sport History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 62.

<sup>96</sup> David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 61.

<sup>97</sup> Kathryn Jay, *More Than Just a Game: Sports in American Life Since 1945* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), 36.

<sup>98</sup> Charles K. Ross, *Outside the Lines: African Americans and the Integration of the National Football League* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2001), 51, 96; and John Carroll, *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 215.

<sup>99</sup> Davies, 271.

<sup>100</sup> Vollers, 99; and Davies, 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> Miller and Wiggins, 235.

<sup>102</sup> Silver, 30; McMillen, 258; Davies, 31, 42-43; and Weill, 145. Both Ethridge and Skewes spoke out against any and all threats to white supremacy during the civil rights movement. Ethridge supported Barnett's objection to James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi and Skewes was critical of Freedom Summer.

<sup>103</sup> McMillen, 328; Weill, 89; and Davies, 27. Carter has been cited by the aforementioned historians as speaking out for racial equality in Mississippi. While Emmerich is viewed as a more moderate voice in Mississippi journalism history, his commentary was considered liberal for the time.

## CHAPTER II

## THEY DESERVE A STINGING DEFEAT

In the December twilight of 1955, the football Bobcats of Jones County Junior College, a small, two-year school in Ellisville, Mississippi, had an impressive record of 9-1 and was considered by many to be the second-best junior college squad in the nation. Led by All-American quarterback Ken Schulte and head coach “Big” Jim Clark, the Bobcats were rewarded with a trip to the tenth annual Junior Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, and a chance at the junior college national football championship against undefeated and integrated Compton (California) Junior College. While officials at JCJC, including President J. B. Young and Board of Trustees President Fred Bynum, said they were initially unaware of the Tartars’ integrated status, few in Mississippi’s white society took comfort.<sup>1</sup> Despite what seemed like an innocent quest for national gridiron dominance, what soon followed for the JCJC contingent was a barrage of racially based verbal attacks from Mississippi’s journalistic elite led by *Jackson Daily News* editor Frederick Sullens. After the Tartars 22-13 victory over the Bobcats, the state’s white political infrastructure attempted to institute a law prohibiting Mississippi colleges and universities from participating in integrated athletic contests, thus preserving segregation on the playing field.

The 1955 Junior Rose Bowl was a direct challenge to white Mississippi, and reporters and editors across the state either used their newspapers to express their own personal outrage over the issue in an attempt to stop JCJC from playing in the game or failed to express an opinion on the matter, offering no support to the Ellisville-based Bobcats. The thought of an all-white football team from the Magnolia State participating in integrated competition was an insult to the state’s journalists, specifically Sullens. To combat the efforts of JCJC, the journalistic proprietors of the Closed Society used whatever literary devices at their disposal to stop the Bobcats’ venture into integration.<sup>2</sup> The negative reaction from Mississippi’s press to the JCJC-Compton contest demonstrated the power wielded by many

of Mississippi's journalists during the civil rights era. With the aftermath of the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision still fresh in the minds of Mississippi's political elite, Mississippi editors and journalists either protected the Closed Society and damned the JCJC contingent for its violation of Mississippi's traditions and way of life for a chance at championship glory or turned a blind eye to the issue, expressing no opinion on the matter, seemingly supporting the segregated elite in the Magnolia State and the opposition to JCJC's championship efforts. Only *Laurel Leader-Call* editor Harriet Gibbons offered some support to the JCJC team through her criticisms of the State College Board's lack of a definitive policy on segregation and athletics. Despite JCJC's participation in the game, the work of individuals such as Sullens had a profound influence on the eventual creation of the unwritten law months later, which was an agreement between the State College Board and Mississippi politicians that would forbid college teams in Mississippi from playing integrated competition.

The newspaper accounts examined in this chapter were published from November 28, 1955, after the Bobcats agreed to play in the game, through December 13, 1955, the final day any newspaper in the state of Mississippi published an article on the game. The newspapers examined include the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Meridian Star*, and the *Jackson State Times*, all of which advocated segregation. Some of the more prominent journalists from these newspapers included Sullens, *Clarion-Ledger* columnist Tom Ethridge, and *Meridian Star* editor James Skewes, all of whom spoke out against any and all threats to white supremacy during the Civil Rights movement. Ethridge supported segregationist Governor Ross Barnett's objection to James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi and wrote for the Citizens' Council's self-titled newspaper. Skewes, also a segregationist, advocated membership in the local Citizens' Council and was critical of Freedom Summer.<sup>3</sup> Other newspapers examined include the more moderate *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Enterprise-Journal*,

the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Daily Times Leader*, and the black *Jackson Advocate*. These publications were selected based on their individual social views on integration. Historians have cited editors such as Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* and J. Oliver Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal* for speaking out for racial equality in Mississippi, and both were considered liberal for the time.<sup>4</sup> Other considerations included prominence within the state and the individual papers' proximity to Ellisville, the hometown of the JCJC Bobcats.

#### The Bobcats Prevail on the Field

The Junior Rose Bowl and the state of Mississippi had become familiar foes by 1955 when it came to issues of race. Viewed as the junior college national championship game since its inception in 1946, the 1954 edition of the contest pitted the Hinds Junior College Eagles from Raymond, Mississippi, against El Camino Junior College of California. Unknown to the Eagles and school officials was the presence of a "third-string Negro" on the El Camino roster.<sup>5</sup> The representatives from the Magnolia State avoided any sort of controversy because the black player, Harold Yauncy, logged little game time during the season and was held out of the championship game. Hinds won the game 13-7 and claimed the 1954 junior college national championship.<sup>6</sup> Whether El Camino coaches intended to keep Yauncy on the bench was unknown, but his third-string status would indicate that the decision was based on Yauncy's ability, or lack thereof, and not his race.

Prior to the controversy that erupted after the Bobcats' integrated opponent was identified, the majority of newspaper coverage on the plight of the Ellisville contingent was reported in either wire material or in the local *Laurel Leader-Call*. The Bobcats clinched the junior college state title with a 34-12 victory over Decatur East Central (Mississippi) on November 19, 1955, behind the play of the aforementioned Schulte, who scored four touchdowns.<sup>7</sup> The victory also spawned hopes of a national championship opportunity in Pasadena, as the *Laurel Leader-Call* reported that school officials had signed a contract to

play in the game if invited and Clark suspended all team activities until the Junior Rose Bowl Committee made a final decision.<sup>8</sup> *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Lee Baker declared the JCJC team “the second best junior college football team in the nation” although the possibility of playing in Pasadena was never mentioned.<sup>9</sup>

The *Laurel Leader-Call* reported on November 26, 1955, that JCJC had finalized a formal commitment to play in the Junior Rose Bowl after the committee extended an invitation to the Ellisville-based college. In the article, Compton Junior College was cited as a possible opponent for the Bobcats, but the school was never referenced as being integrated.<sup>10</sup> A formal announcement of the Bobcats’ commitment to the Junior Rose Bowl came from JCJC publicity director B. F. Ogletree on November 27, 1955. The United Press account of the team’s acceptance, which was published in the *Meridian Star*, quoted Young as saying, “We hope to uphold the tradition of outstanding Mississippi junior college football.”<sup>11</sup> While both the *Leader-Call* and the *Clarion-Ledger* did mention the undefeated Compton Junior College Tartars as a potential foe for the Bobcats, the integrated status of the school was never referenced.<sup>12</sup> Associated Press articles on the bid found in the *Hattiesburg American*, *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Greenwood Commonwealth* did not discuss any potential opponents for the Bobcats.<sup>13</sup> The same could also be said for United Press articles found in the *Delta Democrat-Times* and the *Meridian Star*.<sup>14</sup>

The success of Jones County’s football team and invitation to the Junior Rose Bowl was front-page news in JCJC’s home base of Ellisville, and the *Laurel Leader-Call* of editor Harriett Gibbons led the way in reporting on the Bobcats. The *Leader-Call*’s coverage of the invitation began with the acceptance of the bid and the team’s subsequent efforts to prepare for the game. While Compton was mentioned as a possible opponent, its integrated status was not discussed. Rather, the article broke down the Bobcats’ successful 1955 campaign and concluded with the student body’s joyous reaction to the invitation.<sup>15</sup>



News of the Junior Rose Bowl bid occupied the front pages in Laurel for days. The *Leader-Call* spent considerable space updating the community on the Jones County Junior College band's fundraising efforts to go to Pasadena.<sup>16</sup> When Junior Rose Bowl committee members Don Judson and George Throop came to Laurel to meet with JCJC officials, the only publication to have an article on the meeting was the *Leader-Call*. The visit, which was set up to sign the official contracts, was met with "a red carpet welcome" featuring Laurel-based state Representative John Neil and Mayor Andy Scott.<sup>17</sup> The *Leader-Call* published an article on December 14, 1955, on the selection of the Tartars as the Bobcats' opponent, but the interracial status of the team from Compton was not mentioned.<sup>18</sup> No other Mississippi newspapers included in this chapter published content on the selection of Compton Junior College.

In the December 3, 1955, edition of the *Leader-Call*, news of Compton's integrated status was first reported on the fifth page of the paper. In an effort to "confirm rumors," the *Leader-Call* published information obtained from the AP bureau in New Orleans that had Pasadena Jaycees publicity chairman Hank Jones on record as saying, "Compton will definitely play Negroes."<sup>19</sup> The article attributed the story to Bill Simmons, president of the Mississippi Citizens' Council, who told the paper, "Moves of this nature are the opening wedge bringing on integration."<sup>20</sup> Judson was also quoted in the article, claiming that JCJC signed the Junior Rose Bowl contract knowing that Compton had black students on its team. Schulte and Hathcock both told the *Leader-Call* that the presence of blacks on Compton's team was not an issue. Time would have little effect on the views of the racist leader of the Citizens' Council. Simmons stated in an interview 24 years later that blacks were genetically superior to their white counterparts if "you want to dunk a basketball."<sup>21</sup> When later asked if people of color had the mental acumen to govern, Simmons respond, "Intelligence is a hard thing to define; and it probably takes many forms."<sup>22</sup>

The issue quickly spread to Mississippi's front pages, but more often than not, the newspapers examined utilized wire-based material for their coverage. An article in the December 3, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* stated, "Mississippi apparently faces a segregation puzzle like that of Georgia in a postseason football bowl game," a reference to the Sugar Bowl debate that was to pit all-white Georgia Tech against a University of Pittsburgh squad that featured black fullback Bobby Grier in January 1956.<sup>23</sup> The page one article, which did not have a byline, cited an Associated Press account that claimed it was "practically a leadpipe cinch Compton will play its Negroes."<sup>24</sup> Mississippi Governor Hugh White told the AP, "So far as I am concerned, there will be no action taken. It is strictly a county affair."<sup>25</sup> Governor-elect J. P. Coleman added, "As far as the law is concerned, it is handled by the state in which the game is played. If the game were played in Mississippi, there would be a definite violation of public policy of this state," although Mississippi, as of 1955, had no law, statute, or agreement in place prohibiting state college teams from playing integrated squads.<sup>26</sup> Simmons was also quoted in the AP article as saying, "This is your typical example how integration starts in small doses. We are sure the officials at Jones Junior College will take whatever action in the best judgment will protect the vital interest of Mississippi."<sup>27</sup>

The United Press, which discussed the Citizens' Council's objections to the Bobcats' appearance in the game, wrote that the Junior Rose Bowl committee "admitted, in effect, yielding to Southern Prejudice when it agreed not to emphasize the fact that Western team attack is led by five first string Negro players," potentially excusing the omission of Compton's integrated status by other news outlets.<sup>28</sup> Junior Rose Bowl publicist Hank Ives told the anonymous author that Young assured him the game would go on as planned and that the presence of the black players was deemphasized because of the fear that Jones would refuse to play.<sup>29</sup> The same article was published in the *Leader-Call*; however, the article included comments from Judson, who allegedly told Ives that West Coast newspapers "had

agreed not to 'exploit the talents of Compton's Negro stars' and that southern papers had agreed with the plan."<sup>30</sup>

The *Leader-Call* followed its breaking report with an article the next day that was mixed with news that the school's band had raised enough money to make the trip to California. In the fifth paragraph, the integrated status of Compton was discussed. The December 5, 1955, account indicated that there were eight blacks on the team and that "despite the fact that Compton is 'loaded' with Negro players, original plans for the game with the Bobcats were never changed."<sup>31</sup> The article also stated that, at the time of the Junior Rose Bowl contract signing, the integrated status of Compton was a mystery in the Magnolia State to all except JCJC officials. In what could be viewed as a nod to the closed nature of Mississippi's social borders, the article explained, "California schools are integrated and the white and Negro races are allowed to mix and mingle together on the athletic field and socially."<sup>32</sup>

The *Jackson State Times* followed suit on December 5, 1955. Fred Bynum, president of the Jones County Junior College Board of Trustees, openly opposed the JCJC venture in the Junior Rose Bowl but said "it was too late to do anything about it." Bynum added that policy would be put into place in case such a situation were to happen again, a possible precursor for a proposed legal sanction against integrated play.<sup>33</sup> The *Jackson Daily News* published a front-page article on the same day, detailing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's response to the Citizens' Council's objections to a JCJC Junior Rose Bowl appearance. Governor Hugh White was quoted in the article saying he received a telegram from the NAACP chapter in Compton, which asked that he publicly condemn the Citizens' Council. The last line of the brief article claimed, "The Governor scoffed at the NAACP objection."<sup>34</sup>

Clark left for Pasadena to begin preparations for his team's arrival on December 5, 1955. The *Clarion-Ledger*, courtesy of an International News Services article, reported that

Judson, after a meeting with officials from JCJC, was confident that any issues pertaining to the game and Compton's integrated status were non-existent. Judson also told the anonymous author that he attributed any perceived controversy to the on-going Sugar Bowl debate in Georgia.<sup>35</sup> Despite the best efforts of segregationist and Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin, who publicly lobbied the state's Board of Regents to prevent Tech from playing in the game, the Yellow Jackets did play, defeating Pitt 7-0. Grier's participation in the contest made him the first black athlete to play in the Sugar Bowl.<sup>36</sup>

The Bobcats left for California the following day. Again, many versions of the Associated Press article failed to mention the controversy surrounding the game or the integrated status of Compton's football team.<sup>37</sup> In the *Jackson Daily News* version of the story, Simmons was quoted as saying that the decision to play the game "will be interpreted by the NAACP and other 'Mixicrats' as furthering the cause of integration."<sup>38</sup> In other state newspapers, such as the *Leader-Call* and the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, accounts of the JCJC contingent's exit for California did not mention the obvious issue of race surrounding the contest.<sup>39</sup> The same could be said for the *Meridian Star*'s article on December 6, 1955, which called the Bobcats "the finest Jaycee elevens to come out of the Deep South" but never referenced the strife in Mississippi.<sup>40</sup>

#### Gartin's Withdrawal

The United Press reported on December 7, 1955, that Lieutenant Governor Carroll Gartin, "one of its (JCJC) most prominent alumni and backers," had cancelled his plans to attend the game. The decision was attributed to Compton's integrated status; however, Gartin refused to publicly explain or justify his decision.<sup>41</sup> The AP account of Gartin's decision said, "Officials of Mississippi's pro-segregation Citizens' Council have objected to Jones taking part in the post season game because Compton has several Negro players."<sup>42</sup> Only the *Enterprise-Journal* and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* published news of Gartin's withdrawal on the front page.

Following Gartin's announcement, radio station WJDX of Jackson backed out of plans to broadcast the game because the station deemed the contest too controversial due to "the use of five negroes on Compton's team."<sup>43</sup> Other radio stations, such as WLAU and WAML in Laurel, WCOC in Meridian, and WJQS in Jackson, continued with their plans to carry the game, although sponsors for the radio stations were not identified. WCOC and WJQS owner Withers Gavin told the AP, "There is so much agitation on it that I don't know whether it's wise to take it or not."<sup>44</sup> WJDX station manager Fred Beard told reporter Lamar Falkner of the *Jackson Daily News*, "This is just a normal change in programming."<sup>45</sup>

#### The Bobcats' Exodus to California

In the December 7, 1955, edition of the *Jackson State Times*, the Bobcats' arrival in Pasadena was detailed in an account from United Press. The article noted JCJC's plans to "go forward and play racially-integrated Compton College" and that state officials were considering implementing a policy to prevent future integrated contests. Bynum told UP, "The boys themselves say they want to play and I imagine they're going to give that California bunch a rough time."<sup>46</sup>

The political elite in Mississippi also began to take note of the controversy surrounding the game. State Representative Walter Hester of Natchez made his opinion known in a United Press account found in the December 7, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>47</sup> Hester called the JCJC decision "a blow to the entire South."<sup>48</sup> The United Press also published an article on Hester's comments; however, its account included commentary from White, who said he had no comment on JCJC because "only a portion of the school's support comes from the state."<sup>49</sup> On the same day, it was reported that the Covington County (Mississippi) Board of Supervisors called off a \$250 donation to help finance the JCJC band's trip to California. A *Jackson Daily News* article on the decision cited a Covington County resolution that stated, "The board has no desire to contribute to the integration of the

races, either socially or educationally.”<sup>50</sup> JCJC band director James A. Ball later told the United Press that the band could do without the \$250.<sup>51</sup>

The Hederman-owned and historically conservative *Hattiesburg American* did not publish an article on the Junior Rose Bowl until December 6, 1955.<sup>52</sup> More so than any other newspaper in Mississippi, the *Hattiesburg American* turned a blind eye to the JCJC controversy. The paper published only Associated Press wire accounts on the Bobcats and the Junior Rose Bowl, despite being less than 30 minutes from the Ellisville campus. While reporting on JCJC’s exit to California and the team’s preparations going into the game, the *Hattiesburg American* did not discuss the objections from Mississippi’s political elite.<sup>53</sup> As previously noted, while many of the newspapers in Mississippi depended on wire material for coverage of the JCJC issue, the *Hattiesburg American*’s proximity to the junior college demonstrated a degree of journalistic neglect on behalf of the Hederman-owned newspaper.

Despite the issues surrounding the game, some news outlets simply focused on other aspects of the Junior Rose Bowl. An AP account found in a number of Mississippi newspapers indicated that the weather in Pasadena was sunny and featured clear skies for the game, yet never referenced the racial aspects of the contest. The selection and publication of this material as opposed to other wire articles that actually dealt with the integrated aspect of the game demonstrated that editors chose to ignore the contest.<sup>54</sup>

In the following days, some journalists continued to focus on both the racial overtones and the athletic aspects of the impending game. The *Clarion-Ledger* reported, through an International News Service account, that Clark had “ignored the racial issue reported brewing back home” as he conducted practice with his recently arrived football team.<sup>55</sup> The article cited “Mississippians who frown at the idea of Jones playing against a California Junior College because it has eight Negroes on its squad” as the source of controversy. The *Clarion-Ledger* also published an article on December 8, 1955, that noted the increased interest in ticket sales for the game and called said interest “the only noticeable

effect of the race question.”<sup>56</sup> While the article also referenced Clark’s refusal to comment on any questions dealing with the race issue, the anonymous author editorialized, claiming, “Any answer would be sure to get these Mississippians in deep trouble — either in non-segregated California or in their home state.”<sup>57</sup>

Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* offered a rare Mississippi-based report from California just days before the game and wrote that Compton Head Coach Tay Brown predicted a three-touchdown victory for his Tartars. Baker called Brown’s prediction galling and wrote that the Bobcats, while constantly questioned about the political and social objections in the Magnolia State over their presence, have “maintained a discreet silence, changing the conversation to other channels.”<sup>58</sup>

A subsequent account from the Associated Press detailed specific information on the contest yet neglected the racial connotation of the game. The article, which appeared in a number of Mississippi newspapers on December 8, 1955, focused on Clark’s prediction of a 26-21 victory for the Bobcats. The article mentioned that the Bobcats avoided “any comment regarding the racial turmoil in Georgia and to a lesser extent, their own state. There are eight Negroes on the Compton squad.”<sup>59</sup> The AP also reported that Schulte and six of his teammates were named to the Mississippi Junior College Conference All-Star team.<sup>60</sup>

The *Clarion-Ledger*’s December 9, 1955, account of JCJC’s preparations for the game painted the Ellisville-based football team as an underdog. “California folks are so high on Compton that the Bobcats don’t know whether to laugh or tremble,” the anonymous author wrote while discussing the lofty statistics compiled by the Tartars.<sup>61</sup> The race issue was never mentioned in the story. The Associated Press followed suit and failed to reference the controversy surrounding the game, thus focusing more on the athletic aspects of the topic, a pattern found throughout this article.<sup>62</sup> Rather than focusing on issues of race, many sports writers hid in the comfortable confines of the sports beat and were hesitant to write on any issue that may bring attention on a social and political issue.

In the December 10, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Baker and sports writer Paul Atkinson previewed the upcoming game. Baker's work failed to discuss the presence of blacks on the Compton squad, while Atkinson only mentioned the Tartars' integrated status in passing.<sup>63</sup> Atkinson began his article by irrelevantly defining a Tartar as "a member of any of numerous tribes or hordes, mostly Turkic, inhabiting parts of Russia and of central and western Siberia."<sup>64</sup> Atkinson added that the Bobcats were "seemingly unwanted at home and an underdog on the road," a vague reference to the racial controversy surrounding the game. Baker and Atkinson were the only Mississippi-based sports writers to report on the contest from Pasadena. Accompanying the work of Baker and Atkinson was a cartoon by Bob Howie depicting an actual "Tartar" complete with shield and sword, battling a Jones County "Red Wrecker" over a football labeled "Jr. Rose Bowl 1955."<sup>65</sup> Howie, who did not reference the racial controversy in the cartoon, was a segregationist and part-time cartoonist for the Citizens' Council's newspaper, although he never left his signature on his work for the white-only organization.<sup>66</sup>

A separate AP account, published on December 10, 1955, and written by an anonymous author, called the 1955 edition of the game, "The first in which a racial controversy was raised."<sup>67</sup> One version of this article, which appeared in the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, featured a misleading headline that focused on the Pomona Chamber of Commerce decision to donate \$250 to the JCJC band as a replacement for the one withdrawn by the Covington County Chamber of Commerce. The donation was not discussed until the fifth paragraph of the article. On the same day, the *Clarion-Ledger* published a preview of the game; however, the racial controversy was not mentioned.<sup>68</sup> In separate sidebars, the news of WJDX's and Mississippi Power's decision to not broadcast the game was detailed, followed by the coverage of the \$250 donation to the JCJC band. Harry Fauli, the chamber president, was quoted in the article as calling the donation a "good will gesture."<sup>69</sup>

#### The Game and Aftermath



News of the Bobcats' 22-13 loss to the Tartars hit Mississippi newspapers on December 11, 1955. Despite occupying primary space on front pages across the state during the previous two weeks, the JCJC team and its loss was relegated to the sports section. Baker wrote in his account for the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, "It was a defeat, accomplished by a superb team against a battling band of Bobcats who gave it their best. They just couldn't quite perform the miracle necessary to beat the great Tartars."<sup>70</sup> Baker never mentioned the controversy that surrounded the game. A sidebar included with each version of the account detailed injuries to black Compton running back Jim Waddell, who suffered a broken nose. As if it was expected, the sidebar noted the absence of "racial bitterness" during the course of the game, adding, "There were no fisticuffs and personal fouls called."<sup>71</sup>

The *Jackson State Times* concluded its coverage of the JCJC-Compton issue with a United Press article on the game. While material found in the account was similar to other UP and Associated Press articles, an accompanying sidebar claimed the paper was "swamped with phone calls for information on the game," despite the various objections to JCJC's appearance in the contest.<sup>72</sup> The United Press account of the Junior Rose Bowl appeared in the *Meridian Star* and, while significant details about the game were discussed, the controversy surrounding the contest was not present.<sup>73</sup>

In the December 12, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Baker covered the team's return to Ellisville and wrote on the integrated aspect of the game more extensively than in any of his previous efforts. While he noted the controversy, he said that enough interest was generated to draw a record 57,132 fans to the game. Baker directed some criticism towards California-based journalists, who in his mind were fixated on the race issue and only turned their attention to the football game when the Bobcats refused to answer race-driven questions. In reference to Waddell's injury, Baker wrote, "It was apparent that some folks on the coast would like to have built the injury into something but no charge of 'dirty

football' could be sustained, so the matter simply faded as just one of those things that happen in football."<sup>74</sup> Baker added that the running back's broken nose was "the only near 'incident' of the game" and that none of the Bobcats "had any misgivings about playing Negroes."<sup>75</sup> In a corresponding article in the same issue, Baker wrote that the performance of the Bobcats was "worth all of the hullabaloo stirred in Mississippi and along the West Coast."<sup>76</sup>

Milburn Price wrote an article for the *Laurel Leader-Call* on not just the game, but the California experience for both the team and the band. While most of the information in the article was comparable to other accounts that covered the game, Price concluded his story by identifying the Bobcats as the first team in Mississippi to play an integrated football team and called the JCJC team a fine representative of the Magnolia State.<sup>77</sup> Although Price's work did not appear regularly in the *Laurel Leader-Call*, he was the only writer to note the historic significance of the contest.

From a journalistic perspective, the aftermath of such a passionate and debated event went relatively unnoticed. A number of publications devoted little to no space to accounts of the game. The *Daily Times Leader* in West Point, the *Vicksburg Evening Post* in Vicksburg, the *Commercial Dispatch* in Columbus, and the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, each published a three-paragraph account on the groundbreaking game that mentioned the 22-13 victory for Compton and little else.<sup>78</sup> The *Evening Post* published the account on page 13, typically the last page of the paper's sports section, below the fold and on the inside of the local television schedule. Because of JCJC's defeat, it seemed as if Mississippi newspapers wanted to quickly erase the game from the public's collective memory.

Mississippi's most prominent black newspaper, the *Jackson Advocate*, failed to publish an article on the JCJC-Compton controversy, although the paper, run by editor Percy Greene, did feature a December 10, 1955, article on the Rose Bowl match-up between the University of Southern California and Michigan State University and the number of black

starters each team featured.<sup>79</sup> Greene, who had a reputation for being a conservative editor, solidified this status by neglecting one of the more prominent race issues in Mississippi for an article on teams that had no direct tie to his primary audience.

#### Sullens Objects

Throughout the JCJC controversy, a number of journalists and editors made their feelings known on the Bobcats' presence in the integrated football game. Perhaps no newspaper and/or journalist voiced more vehement objections than *Jackson Daily News* editor Frederick Sullens. One of the more racist representatives of Mississippi's journalistic past, Sullens often looked at issues of race as a personal vendetta and was an ardent supporter of the Citizens' Council.<sup>80</sup> The work of Sullens and the *Jackson Daily News* epitomized the ideals and characteristics of Silver's Closed Society.

Sullens' first column to tackle the issue of race and sports was published on December 4, 1955. While writing about the potential Georgia Tech bowl ban, Sullens said the Sugar Bowl committee was "acting in accordance with the NAACP's mongrelization scheme," with its invitation of integrated University of Pittsburgh squad.<sup>81</sup> "It's only one Negro' you say. Being a little bit integrated is like being a little bit pregnant," Sullens wrote. "A few short years ago only one Negro was in the National Baseball League!"<sup>82</sup> While this column did not deal directly with the JCJC-Compton controversy, it set the stage for Sullens' opinion on issues of race and the participation of traditional all-white teams in integrated contests.

On December 6, 1955, Sullens published his first of five editorials that referenced the Junior Rose Bowl. Sullens wrote that if Jones County were to go through with its plans of playing Compton, then it was "within equal reason to permit the team to play with Tougaloo College or Alcorn A&M in the home state."<sup>83</sup> Sullens went on to write that Mississippi, with its stringent policy on segregation, would "look glaringly inconsistent" if it allowed the team to play in California. Sullens explained that by playing the Compton squad the game "would

not only be a violation of the ban we have declared on social equality but would be an acceptance of social equality. Argue until you are black in the face but there is no way to escape that conclusion. Self respect demands that we do not temporize or compromise in dealing with this problem.”<sup>84</sup> Sullens concluded his editorial by threatening a “determined effort” to eliminate state funds from the Ellisville-based junior college.<sup>85</sup>

Sullens’ threats garnered state and national attention for the segregationist editor. The majority of newspapers used in the study published a wire article detailing the demands of the Jackson-based Sullens. In response, the United Press reported that the JCJC football team would play in the game despite the possible loss of appropriations, although Sullens’ threat was not a warning from the State College Board. The article referenced Sullens’ comments from his December 6, 1955, editorial and quoted Bynum, who said “he didn’t like the idea of Negroes playing against the Mississippi team, but it’s too late to do anything about it now.”<sup>86</sup> The mass reporting of Sullens’ commentary illustrated the power and influence the segregationist editor had on his fellow Mississippi-based journalists.

Sullens again addressed the issue on December 8, 1955, when it was clear that the Bobcats were going to play in the game. Sullens called the school’s decision “the most unfortunate thing to happen in connection with the segregation question since that infamous ruling of the United States Supreme Court was rendered,” a reference to the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision.<sup>87</sup> Sullens claimed that “cold-blooded greed for a share of the gate receipts” led to the Bobcats’ participation in the game and called JCJC’s presence “a flagrant violation of the Southern way of life, a spineless surrender of the principles all true white Mississippians hold near and dear and all those responsible deserve the sharpest rebuke it is possible to administer.”<sup>88</sup> Sullens closed his column by writing that the team deserved a “stinging defeat.”<sup>89</sup> Sullens’ venomous opinion made headlines of its own, as it was reported by the Associated Press and published in every newspaper consulted in this study.<sup>90</sup>

In the December 9, 1955, edition of his “The Low Down on the Higher Ups” column, Sullens wrote about JCJC Head Coach Jim Clark, who was quoted as saying, “We all think it is better not to say anything” in reference to the issue. Sullens added that Clark could not say anything to rectify the situation, but “is going to need some fast talking when the legislature meets in January. The college faces a stern reprisal.”<sup>91</sup>

In a front-page editorial in the December 10, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Sullens lashed out at JCJC for its desecration of state tradition by deciding to play a “Negro-infiltrated team in California.”<sup>92</sup> He again claimed that JCJC was “governed by a greed for gate receipts and a little fleeting fame, the college authorities flagrantly violated the fixed policy of this state,” even though there was not a state law or statute preventing Mississippi colleges and universities from playing integrated foes.<sup>93</sup> He added that it was “the purpose of the white people in this state to fight against mixing white and Negro pupils in our public schools and colleges” and “oppose any form of social equality.”<sup>94</sup> Sullens closed by writing, “If you belong to the white race then stand up and be counted or buy yourself a membership in the NAACP and help carry out its sinister purpose.”<sup>95</sup>

Sullens’ final editorial on the JCJC game was published in the December 14, 1955, edition of “The Low Down on the Higher Ups.” In musing about the number of college football postseason bowl games, Sullens made the suggestion that “it is high time to change the name of that Junior Rose Bowl to the Black and White Bowl,” a crass final reference on behalf of the racist editor.<sup>96</sup>

The *Jackson Daily News* also used letters to the editor to voice its support for segregated sports. Publishing a letter from an unknown student at Georgia Tech, Sullens commended the student, who wrote that the ultimate goal of the NAACP was “white women for Negro men.”<sup>97</sup> Sullens added, “Any young white boy or girl who does not understand the importance of maintaining white supremacy is surely in need of an awakening.”<sup>98</sup>

In another letter to the editor in the December 13, 1955, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Ellisville Pastor Bryan Simmons questioned Sullens' criticisms of the Bobcats. Simmons, a self-professed segregationist, wrote that Sullens' claim that JCJC played for the money was unfounded, and if those within the state were as critical when Hinds Junior College played in the 1954 Junior Rose Bowl, perhaps the situation would not have occurred.<sup>99</sup> Simmons concluded by asking for forgiveness and mercy for JCJC. Although Sullens professed his respect for Simmons, he wrote that the pastor's defense of the JCJC team was "weak, impotent and devoid of any sense of logic" and cited "the greed for gold and cheap glory" for the team's participation in the game.<sup>100</sup> "Mr. Simmons is a better preacher than a framer of alibis. He struck out before getting to bat," Sullens concluded.<sup>101</sup> In the same edition, Representative Walter Hester of Natchez commended the *Daily News* for its views on the JCJC issue. "I trust you will continue in your endeavor to enlighten the citizens of this state who are maintaining a mediocre attitude on segregation," Hester wrote.<sup>102</sup>

By 1956, Sullens' words would come to fruition, as the political elite in Mississippi would adopt the unwritten law. Despite Sullens' status within the Closed Society, Douglas Starr, an Associated Press correspondent in Mississippi during the 1950s, said in a 2009 interview that the outspoken segregationist editor's use of fear and degradation in his columns only served as a source of humor for his journalistic brethren.

"Most of us laughed," Starr said of Sullens' frequent threats in the *Jackson Daily News*. "He had some influence, sure, but he was a blow hard. He had no real power."<sup>103</sup>

#### Editorial Support, Then Discontent

While the racist and negative tones disseminated by Sullens stood out, other Mississippi journalists objected to the JCJC trip, calling it a gross violation of their way of life. Tom Ethridge, a supporter and contributor to the Citizens' Council's newspaper, published a number of letters to the editor in his "Mississippi Notebook" feature in the December 9, 1955, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*.<sup>104</sup> One letter, from a segregationist known

as “R.W.B.” in Jackson, pleaded for “Mississippians to show better judgment than Georgians and not make an issue of Negroes participating in a football game . . . we can’t force our customs on others in their own states, when we play on their soil.”<sup>105</sup> Another letter in Ethridge's section, titled “Raps Sugar Bowl” from Edwin Lofton in State College, sarcastically called the controversy over the Sugar Bowl “outrageous” and likened Sugar Bowl Chairman Fred Digby to Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. Lofton went on to write that Nikita Khrushchev sent his regards. “Comrade Digby, it is my ardent desire that you take a journey to a warmer climate than is found in this country,” he wrote. While Ethridge voiced no opinion on the letters, it was likely that he had a hand in the selection process as a gatekeeper. Because of his staunch segregationist views Ethridge was more likely to select letters that coincided with his own personal views.

Following JCJC’s loss to Compton, *Commercial Dispatch* editor Birney Imes, Jr., wrote that, by allowing their football team to play in the game, school officials within the state and at JCJC betrayed a public trust. Imes said that the majority of Mississippi’s citizens would have objected to the trip if asked and that ultimately “a grave error had been committed.”<sup>106</sup> Imes concluded that “there is no room in our state for public officials of this type.”<sup>107</sup> Imes later objected to the integration of Ole Miss by James Meredith, writing, “Our freedom is in great danger” and called the State College Board “gutless.”<sup>108</sup> Imes also opposed the 1964 approval of the Civil Rights Act, yet chose not to publish an editorial or column from one of his own writers about the subject.<sup>109</sup>

The *Meridian Star*, another traditional segregationist publication, published only one column on the Junior Rose Bowl from sports editor Dick Smith. In his daily “Highlites in Sports” column on December 6, 1955, Smith wrote that most of the discontent surrounding the Junior Rose Bowl had “quieted down.”<sup>110</sup> However, he did question the officials at JCJC for participating in the contest, writing, “if they knew there was going to be all the disharmony, why wait until AFTER they signed to start the big fusses?”<sup>111</sup>

Editor Henry Harris of the *Daily Times Leader* in West Point, while not writing specifically on the JCJC-Compton issue, expressed his feelings on integrated sports by writing an editorial damning the possible appearance of a black player in the Sugar Bowl.<sup>112</sup> In total, Harris' *Daily Times Leader* published seven articles on the game and only once mentioned the race issue.<sup>113</sup>

#### Hometown Support

While a number of mainstream journalists opposed Jones County's presence in the Junior Rose Bowl, one editor refused to lay blame on the Bobcats. The hometown *Laurel Leader-Call* offered the most supportive voice during the JCJC controversy. Editor Harriet Gibbons advocated equal rights in Jones County, where the population was about 30 percent black in 1954.<sup>114</sup> Gibbons was also the only female editor of a daily newspaper in Mississippi at the time.<sup>115</sup>

Gibbons reported in the November 22, 1955, edition of her column "Atoms" that the local Jaycees passed a resolution endorsing the Jones County Junior College football team as a contender in the Junior Rose Bowl game and sent a telegram urging the Pasadena Jaycees to select the Mississippi contingent.<sup>116</sup> In that same edition, Gartin told the *Leader-Call* that he would attend the game in California if the Bobcats were selected.<sup>117</sup>

In an effort to help raise money for the team's trip to California, Gibbons followed with an editorial in the November 30, 1955, edition of the *Laurel Leader-Call* that asked local citizens to help out and give money to the cause. Gibbons wrote, "These honors do not come ready paid for. The public will have to help — and will want to help."<sup>118</sup> Gibbons also wrote a December 1, 1955, editorial on what to do while in Pasadena.<sup>119</sup> Gibbons' early work, while exuding excitement for JCJC and Ellisville, did not address the potential controversy.

After it was discovered that Compton was integrated, Gibbons wrote that the omission of the integrated status of Compton was "vital information," an identification of the social and historical significance of the contest.<sup>120</sup> "This, to our knowledge, is the first time



that a Mississippi football team has played a game with a mixed line. Strict segregation has been, up to this time, the rule in sports as in all school matters,” Gibbons added.<sup>121</sup> Rather than putting JCJC in the place of decision maker, Gibbons argued that state officials should have made a decision and that some sort of universal policy dealing with such situations should be in place. She called the political pressure placed on JCJC unfair and wrote, “Much is at stake — good race relations, yes; integrity of a contract, yes; the disappointment that would be suffered by the students, if they were defeated on this trip.” Gibbons concluded by asking what policies would be adopted in the future and what kind of effect would the game have on integration. “Shall we have a well-informed public policy or stumble through each incident as it arises?” she asked her audience. Unlike other journalists, Gibbons did not denounce the team’s participation in the game and placed the blame on the state.

She went on to write in her December 8, 1955, editorial that the situation was an “embarrassment” and placed the blame elsewhere, citing “a prevailing trend, nation-wide, which has played up sports, and especially football, to an absurd place of importance in school life.”<sup>122</sup> Gibbons absolved Young of all responsibility and, despite the objections to JCJC’s appearance in the game, she said that most people contributed funds to send the team to Pasadena “even after all the facts had come out.”<sup>123</sup> Gibbons also defended JCJC from the attacks by the *Daily News* and Sullens. She wrote that if JCJC was going to be investigated for a possible economic reprisal, then Hinds Junior College should also be examined for its participation in the previously referenced 1954 Junior Rose Bowl. “We have heard that mixed teams have been encountered in basketball games for a couple of years in cage circuits,” Gibbons wrote, adding that the entire state of Mississippi should be subjected to a wide spread investigation.<sup>124</sup>

#### The Sports Writer Stays Silent

While controversy over the game occupied Mississippi’s front pages, sports sections, and editorials, many of the Magnolia State’s sports editors and reporters ignored the racial

controversy surrounding the contest. *Jackson Daily News* sports editor and Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer Jimmie McDowell never directly referred to the racial angle of Junior Rose Bowl. In his December 8, 1955, column, McDowell chose not to discuss the game itself; rather, he focused on the accolades given to Bobcat stars Schulte, halfback Eddie Gebara, fullback Jerry Johnson, Hathcock, guard John Perkins and tackle Connie Boykin, all of which had been selected to the Mississippi Junior College Conference All-Star team.<sup>125</sup> McDowell wrote about the game on December 9, 1955; however, he did not directly address the racial issue associated with the contest. Rather, “Mississippi Red” simply referred to Bobcats as the team “from the Free State of Jones,” a phrase coined during the Civil War to describe the independent nature of the Jones County area.<sup>126</sup> McDowell then wrote of the Bobcats’ defeat and its failure to win the “mythical national championship” on December 12, 1955, but he focused more on the four-year college prospects of the team’s standout players.<sup>127</sup> McDowell later emerged as the unwritten law’s foremost critic, but his work for Sullens during the 1955 debate did little to impact the Closed Society.

Arnold Hederman, son of segregationist T. H. Hederman and a sports writer and columnist for the *Clarion-Ledger*, also failed to address the racial implications of the contest. In his “Highlight on Sports” column in the November 29, 1955, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Hederman heaped accolades on the JCJC football contingent. Hederman called the Bobcats “the best junior college team outside of California.” He added, “We wouldn’t be surprised if the Magnolia State doesn’t register the second victory in a row at the Junior Rose Bowl.”<sup>128</sup> After news of Compton’s integrated status was reported, Hederman wrote two more columns referencing the JCJC squad. In the December 9, 1955, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Hederman focused on JCJC head coach Clark, but did not address Compton’s integrated status.<sup>129</sup> The *Clarion-Ledger* columnist again discussed the game in his daily musings on December 10, 1955. After a conversation with Odell McRae, the sports editor at the *Laurel Leader-Call* who called JCJC “the best team he had ever seen in junior college

competition,” Hederman wrote that he was looking for the Bobcats “to make quite a showing out there.”<sup>130</sup> The content of his editorial as it pertained to the game ended there, surprising for a Citizens’ Council supporter and a Hederman. Despite the reputation associated with his last name, McDowell said in an August 2010 interview that he considered Hederman a solid reporter.<sup>131</sup>

The *Jackson State Times* published only two editorials that dealt with the Junior Rose Bowl, both by sports editor and Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer Carl Walters. In Walters’ daily sports column, “Shavin’s,” he called the Tartars “one of the finest junior college squads ever” and picked Compton to defeat the Bobcats by two or more touchdowns.<sup>132</sup> Walters would again write about the JCJC-Compton battle in the December 12, 1955, edition of *Jackson State Times*, praising Clark’s ability to coach, especially when the team “confounded the ‘experts’ by refusing to wilt in the stretch.”<sup>133</sup> In both accounts, Walters failed to mention Compton’s integrated state. Rather than expressing an opinion on the matter, the *State Times* published a political cartoon in the opinion section of the December 10, 1955, edition, which featured a football game on a field labeled “Inter-Regional Athletics,” with a referee peering over the stadium, blowing a whistle wearing a hat labeled “Segregation Issue.” The cartoon was titled, “Stop the Play?”<sup>134</sup> By ignoring the controversy surrounding the Junior Rose Bowl, sports writers, in general, only helped the cause of the segregated elite in Mississippi. By failing to acknowledge the greater social implications of such a contest and failing to voice an opinion either way, the sports writers attempted to negate the event’s importance.

### Conclusion

The work of reporters, editors, and journalists during the JCJC-Compton controversy illustrated the power of the press in Mississippi and the extent to which the Closed Society had infiltrated the journalistic ranks of the Magnolia State. The majority of editors in the state viewed the Junior Rose Bowl as a potential threat to their way of life and did everything within its journalistic power to condemn the contest as a blight on the Closed Society. More

so than any other journalist in the Magnolia State, Sullens demonstrated this power. His damning criticisms of the JCJC contingent and his monetary threats towards the Ellisville-based junior college were taken seriously and reported by newspapers and journalists both within and outside of Mississippi. Due to Sullens' connections within the Closed Society, it was probable that his commentary, at least in part, led to the creation of the unwritten law. Because of the perceived threat of integration, Mississippi's journalists acted and, in turn, created a negative aura around the contest or depended on wire content and remained silent, negating the overall social importance of the issue to the news-reading audience. More often than not, the issue was overlooked or buried within the confines of newspapers in accordance with the protection of the Closed Society. While the aforementioned journalists spoke out against the game, the use of wire copy and the noncommittal efforts of the sports writers contributed to a neglectful and journalistically irresponsible way to report on the JCJC football team. Newspapers, in general, refused to commit staff writers to cover the story, thus demonstrating a degree of contempt, considering that a number of publications, including the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Jackson State Times*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, and the *Jackson Daily News*, were relatively close to the JCJC campus. By ignoring the issue, journalists ensured the audience's fleeting interest in the topic. It was this sort of varying journalistic approach that shaped the debates surrounding the unwritten law and subsequent challenges to Mississippi's segregationist athletic standard.

In the aftermath of the Bobcats' 22-13 defeat, Mississippi's segregated elite acted. Shocked and embarrassed by Jones County's participation in the game, Representative R. C. McCarver of Itawamba County proposed a bill to the Mississippi House of Representatives that would have legally solidified what had been understood in the Magnolia State for generations: It was unacceptable for Mississippi's collegiate teams to play against integrated competition.<sup>135</sup> If passed, any violation of the law would result in a one-year prison sentence for the offending school official, a fine of \$2,500, and the loss of state funding.<sup>136</sup> While the

bill was never formally introduced as a law on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the state Senate, the proposal was accepted after a meeting between college administrators and state politicians.<sup>137</sup> The state and its educational institutions began to acknowledge the ban as the unwritten law; a “gentleman’s agreement” that all-white teams in the South would not play integrated teams from the North.<sup>138</sup> While the “law” did not actually exist, Mississippi legislators and the State College Board otherwise enforced it, threatening to withdraw funds from schools that violated the state’s segregated athletic standard.<sup>139</sup> Weeks after the contest, Sullens’ commentary had come to fruition and the power of the segregationist editor and his cohorts was affirmed. The agreement remained in place for roughly eight years and was no longer recognized after the Mississippi State University played in the integrated NCAA tournament in 1963. Subsequent challenges to the unwritten law were met in much of the same manner and tone by Mississippi journalists, especially Sullens’ successor at the *Jackson Daily News*, Jimmy Ward. In total, the coverage of the JCJC debate and the Junior Rose Bowl drew the ideological lines in the sand and, for the next eight years, the press in the Magnolia State would enter into a constant debate over the merits of integrated competition, either damning the challenger to the unwritten law, writing little and offering silent support for the state’s white-dominated society, or supporting any and all efforts for the sake of championship glory

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Michael Kennedy, “A Return Engagement for Compton Players of ’55 Race Relations,” *Los Angeles Times*, 16 October 1994, 1B.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick B. Miller and David Kenneth Wiggins, *Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 235.

<sup>3</sup> James W. Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 30; Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens’ Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 258, 328; David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 27, 31, 42-43; and Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse’s Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi’s Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 45, 89.

---

<sup>4</sup> Davies, 27, 31, 42-43; and Weill, 45, 89.

<sup>5</sup> “State Citizens Council Head Protests But Jones JC All For Little Rose Bowl,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 December 1955, 1B.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; “Scoreboard,” *Sports Illustrated*, 20 December 1954, 57; and “Jones County Bobcats Will Play in Junior Rose Bowl at Pasadena,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 28 November 1955, 6.

<sup>7</sup> James Saggus, “Jones Eyes Little Rose Bowl Next,” *Daily Times Leader*, 21 November 1955, 2; James Saggus, “Jones Sews-Up Jr. College Title, Now Awaiting Bid to Little Rose Bowl,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 21 November 1955, 16; and James Saggus, “Jones Hoping For Bid To Little Rose Bowl Game,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 21 November 1955, 4.

<sup>8</sup> “Bobcats Sweat Out Invite To Junior Rose Bowl As Contract is Forward,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 21 November 1955, 12.

<sup>9</sup> Lee Baker, “Jones Defeats East Central 34-12 To Clinch State Title,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 November 1955, Sec. 2, 2.

<sup>10</sup> “J.C. Bobcats Abandon Practice Over Weekend, With Perfect Record to Date,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 26 November 1955, 8.

<sup>11</sup> “Jones Junior College Selected To Face Western Jaycee Champ In Little Rose Bowl Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>,” *Meridian Star*, 28 November 1955, 6.

<sup>12</sup> “Jones Junior College Gets Little Rose Bowl Invitation,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 November 1955, Sec. 2, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Jones Plays Compton In Little Rose Bowl,” *Hattiesburg American*, 28 November 1955, 6; “Jones Junior College To Play In Little Rose Bowl Against Unnamed Opponent,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 November, 1955, 16; and “Jones Jr. College Accepts Bowl Bid,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 28 November 1955, 8.

<sup>14</sup> “Jones Plans for Junior Rose Bowl,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 28 November 1955, 7; “Compton To Meet Jones in Little Rose Bowl,” *Meridian Star*, 29 November 1955, 6; and “Jones Juniors To Work For Game In Junior Rose Bowl,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 29 November 1955, 7.

<sup>15</sup> “Jones County Bobcats Will Play in Junior Rose Bowl at Pasadena,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 28 November 1955, 6.

<sup>16</sup> “Laurel Jaycees Start Band Cash Rolling With \$500 Gift,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 29 November 1955, 1, 2; “Liberal Response For Drive To Send JCJC Band To Little Rose Bowl; Teams are Busy,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 30 November 1955, 1; and “Decision To Give Gate Receipts To JCJC Band’s Pasadena Trip Expected To Fill Civic Center To Overflowing,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 29 November 1955, 6.

<sup>17</sup> “Red Carpet Is Rolled Out By Laurel And Ellisville To Two Visitors To Area Representing Little Rose Bowl,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 30 November 1955, 9.

- 
- <sup>18</sup> “Bobcats Are To Face Tough Foe In Pasadena Game,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 1 December 1955, 14.
- <sup>19</sup> “Report Compton To Play Negroes In Pasadena Game,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 3 December 1955, 5.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> Orley B. Caudill, Interview with William J. Simmons, Mississippi Oral History Program of the University of Southern Mississippi, vol. 372, 26 June 1979.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> “Jones Team Will Oppose Negroes In Junior Rose Bowl Game in California,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 December 1955, 1.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> “Seeks Racial Ban in College Sports,” *Jackson Daily News*, 19 January 1956, 1. The law was first proposed during the January 1956 legislative sessions by R. C. McCarver of Itawamba County weeks after the Junior Rose Bowl. The proposal is cited by the account in the *Jackson Daily News* as a direct response to the racial controversy surrounding both the Sugar Bowl and the Junior Rose Bowl.
- <sup>27</sup> “Junior Rose Bowl Will Break Segregation Ban,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 December 1955, 4; and “School Will Decide On Junior Rose Bowl,” *Natchez Democrat*, 4 December 1955, 13.
- <sup>28</sup> “State Citizens Council Head Protests But Jones JC All For Little Rose Bowl,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 December 1955, 1B.
- <sup>29</sup> “Little Rose Bowl To Again Have Negro Players,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 December 1955, 2.
- <sup>30</sup> “Jones Raises No Objections,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 4 December 1955, 1, 4; and “Race Issue Pops Up In Jones County Jr. Rose Bowl Game,” *Meridian Star*, 4 December 1955, 1, 2.
- <sup>31</sup> “Band Assured California Trip As Jaycees State Pledges And Cash Secured To Pay Expenses,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 4 December 1955, 1, 2.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> “Tech, Jones J.C. Bowl Bids Okayed,” *Jackson State Times*, 5 December 1955, 1.
- <sup>34</sup> “NAACP Enters Little Rose Bowl Dispute,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 December 1955, 1.
- <sup>35</sup> “Jones Coach Arrives in California,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 December 1955, 2B.

<sup>36</sup> Jan Thomas, "Georgia Governor Asking Tech To Shun Sugar Bowl," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 December 1955, 1; Jan Thomas, "Tech Students Riot Over Bowl Ban Idea," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 December 1955, 1, 14; and Nicholas C. Chriss, "Regents Rule Tech Can Play in Bowl," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 December 1955, 1. In his letter to the Board of Regents, Griffin claimed that the South stood at Armageddon on the racial issue and that "it (Georgia) must not budge from its rules against racial integration." In response, an estimated 2,000 Georgia Tech students stormed the capital building and governor's mansion in Atlanta in protest. Once the board made their decision on December 4, 1955, Griffin told the Associated Press, "I call upon all Georgians who wish to see the Georgia way of life continued to rally with me and to help me beat back the insidious propaganda and the relentless efforts of our enemies to destroy us."

<sup>37</sup> "JCJC Leaves For Jr. Bowl Competition," *Daily Times Leader*, 6 December 1955, 2; "Jones Leaves Today For Pasadena and Little Rose Bowl," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 December 1955, 15; "Jones Team Leaves For Bowl," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 6 December 1955, 5; "Ellisville Bobcats Leaving By Plane For Pasadena," *Enterprise-Journal*, 6 December 1955, 6; and "Jones Departs For Junior Rose Bowl Grid Date," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 December 1955, 22.

<sup>38</sup> "Jones Band Board Buses Here For Bowl Trip," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 December 1955, 1; and "Jones JC Bobcats Departing Today," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 December 1955, 11.

<sup>39</sup> "Bobcats Airlifted To Pasadena For Little Rose Bowl Game; California Team Favored On Basis Of Records," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 6 December 1955, 6; and "Jones Team Leaves For Bowl," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 6 December 1955, 5.

<sup>40</sup> "Underdog Jones Team Arrives For Little Rose Bowl Game Tonight; To Take on Compton Team Saturday," *Meridian Star*, 6 December 1955, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Lamar Falkner, "Cancel Plans To Broadcast Junior Rose Bowl Game," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 1; "Gartin Cancels Trip To Little Rose Bowl Game," *Meridian Star*, 7 December 1955, 1; and "Gartin Cancels Trip To Jr. Bowl Game," *Jackson State Times*, 7 December 1955, 12A.

<sup>42</sup> "Gartin Cancels Trip To Jr. Bowl," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 7 December 1955, 4; "Gartin Decides He Doesn't Want To Attend Game," *Daily Herald*, 7 December 1955, 22; and "Gartin Abandons Plans To Attend Little Rose Bowl," *Enterprise-Journal*, 7 December 1955, 1.

<sup>43</sup> "Radio Stations Lay Off Game," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 9 December 1955, 4; "Jackson Radio Station Won't Broadcast Game," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 December 1955, 12; and "Broadcast Plans For Little Rose Bowl Cancelled," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 December 1955, 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Lamar Falkner, "Cancel Plans To Broadcast Junior Rose Bowl Game," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 1.

<sup>46</sup> "Jones Bobcats Arrive," *Jackson State Times*, 7 December 1955, 12B.



---

<sup>47</sup> “Jones Playing In Bowl Called ‘Blow To South,’” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 December 1955, 7; and “Legislator Hits At Jones Outfit For Little Rose,” *Meridian Star*, 7 December 1955, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> “Jones College To Bowl, Legislator Gives Warning,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 7 December 1955, 1; and “Gartin Cancels Trip To Jr. Bowl Game,” *Jackson State Times*, 7 December 1955, 12A.

<sup>50</sup> “Supervisors Cancel Gift To The Jones County Band,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 December 1955, 1.

<sup>51</sup> “Jones Director Says Band Can Do Without Donation,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 1.

<sup>52</sup> “Jones Jr. College May Lose State Funds, Paper Says,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 December 1955, 9.

<sup>53</sup> “Jones Team Leaves For Bowl Game,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 December 1966, 1B; “Bobcats Workout In Rose Bowl,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 December 1955, 2B; and “High Scoring Game Expected in Junior Bowl,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 December 1955, 11A.

<sup>54</sup> “Jones Continues Work Out Under Sunshiny Skies,” *Daily Times Leader*, 7 December 1955, 2; “Jones Jr. College Arrives In Calif., Plane Workout Today,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 December 1955, 14; “Jones Jr. College Team At Pasadena,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 7 December 1955, 5; and “Jones Bobcats Plan Practice For Bowl Clash,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 December 1955, 23.

<sup>55</sup> “Jones Coach Ignores Furor At Bowl Game, Refuses To Comment,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 December 1955, 1.

<sup>56</sup> “Tickets To Rose Bowl Now Selling,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 December 1955, 2B.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Lee Baker, “Compton Coach Calls 3-TD Win In Jr. Rose Bowl,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1955, 16.

<sup>59</sup> “Close Contest Seen as Jones Meets Compton,” *Daily Times Leader*, 8 December 1955, 2; “Clark Predicting High Score In Little Rose Bowl,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 December 1955, 13; “Sees High Scoring In Jr. College Tilt,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 8 December 1955, 8; “Rival Coaches Looking For Free Scoring Grid Contest,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 December 1955, 34; and “Little Rose Bowl Foresees Another Action Filled Tilt,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 8 December 1955, 8.

<sup>60</sup> “Ex-Greenie Is All-Star,” *Daily Times Leader*, 8 December 1955, 2; “Jones Junior College Has Six Players On Star Team; Hinds Settles For 2 Spots,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 December 1955, 13; “SJC Places Four On All Star Team,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 8 December 1955, 5; “Jones Places Six Players on All-Star Selection,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8

---

December 1955, 34; and “Jones Quarterback Leads Junior College Conference Grids All Stars,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 8 December 1955, 13.

<sup>61</sup> “Jones Junior Gets Down To Serious Work; Play Out Now,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 December 1955, 1C.

<sup>62</sup> “Californians Picked Over Jones Team,” *Daily Times Leader*, 9 December 1955, 2; “Compton Favored Over Jones Junior College In Little Rose Bowl Game,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 December 1955, 12; “Compton Favored Against Bobcats In Little Rose,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 9 December 1955, 8; “Compton Favored Over Jones In Little Rose Bowl,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 December 1955, 30; and “Little Rose Bowl Tilt Set Tomorrow Afternoon,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 9 December 1955, 12.

<sup>63</sup> Lee Baker, “Magnolia State Champs Rated w/ Underdog,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 10.

<sup>64</sup> Paul Atkinson, “Jones County Bobcats Battle Tartars Saturday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 10.

<sup>65</sup> Bob Howie, “An Honor To Defend,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 10.

<sup>66</sup> McMillen, 258.

<sup>67</sup> “Junior Rose Thrills Loom,” *Daily Times Leader*, 10 December 1955, 2; “Chamber of Commerce In Calif. To Help Jones Band Expense,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 December 1955, 7; “Compton Rated Over Jones In Bowl Tilt Today,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 December 1955, 11; “Today’s Little Rose Bowl Game Will Provide Interesting Chapter in Series,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 10 December 1955, 6; “Compton Favored Today in Junior Rose Bowl Game,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 December 1955, 8; and “Good Will Is Note As Compton, Jones Players Convene,” *Natchez Democrat*, 10 December 1955, 10.

<sup>68</sup> “Jones Faces Californians In Junior Rose Bowl Today,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 December 1955, 1B.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Lee Baker, “Compton Wins Junior Rose Bowl Thriller 22-13,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 11 December 1955, 1B.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> “Record Crowd Watches Compton Top Jones,” *Jackson State Times*, 11 December 1955, 1D.

<sup>73</sup> “Compton Tops Bobcat 11 22 To 13 In Junior Rose Bowl; 57,000 See Game,” *Meridian Star*, 11 December 1955, 8.

<sup>74</sup> Lee Baker, “Chilly Weather Welcomes Bobcats Back To State From Sunny California,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1955, 15.

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Lee Baker, "Jones Bobcats Return After California Defeat," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1955, 15.

<sup>77</sup> Milburn Price, "It Was A Big Day, A Fine Show With Everyone Enjoying It; Bobcat Band Draws Favorable Pasadena Comment," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 13 December 1955, 9.

<sup>78</sup> "Crowd Sees Jones Yield to Compton," *Daily Times Leader*, 12 December 1955, 2; "Compton Beats Jones In Bowl," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 12 December 1955, 23; "57,132 See Jones Jr. College Lose To Compton 22-13," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 December 1955, 13; and "Compton Jr. Claims Title After Bowl," *Commercial Dispatch*, 12 December 1955, 10.

<sup>79</sup> "Negro Grid Stars To Play At Rose Bowl Festival," *Jackson Advocate*, 10 December 1955, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, The Civil Rights Struggle, and The Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Random House, 2007) 83-85; and McMillen, 258. William J. Simmons and the Citizens' Council presented Sullens with a plaque in 1955 in honor of his work and for his defense of "our Southern way of life."

<sup>81</sup> Frederick Sullens, "The Low Down On the Higher Ups," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 December 1955, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> "Cancel That California Trip," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 December 1955, 1.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> "Jones College To Bowl Over Newspaper Threat," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 December 1955, 1; "Jr. College Faces Cuts In Funds Because of Racially Mixed Game," *Meridian Star*, 6 December 1955, 1; and "Jones Leaves Today to Play in Bowl Game," *Jackson State Times*, 6 December 1955, 7B.

<sup>87</sup> "They Deserve Stinging Defeat," *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1955, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "Jones Deserving of Defeat, Paper Declares," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 December 1955, 1; "Bobcats Deserve Stinging Defeat At Pasadena, Paper Says," *Enterprise-Journal*, 8 December 1955, 1, 8; and "Daily News Says Ellisville Should Lose Grid Game," *Daily Herald*, (Biloxi) 8 December 1955, 35.

<sup>91</sup> Frederick Sullens, "The Low Down On the Higher Ups," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 1.

---

<sup>92</sup> “No Investigation Needed,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 December 1955, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Frederick Sullens, “The Low Down in the Higher Ups,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 December 1955, 1.

<sup>97</sup> “Our Thoughtless Youth,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 December 1955, 6.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Bryan Simmons, “Ellisville Pastor Believes College Justified In Game,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 December 1955, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Walter Hester, “Natchez Lawmaker Voices Approval,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 December 1955, 4.

<sup>103</sup> Dr. Douglas Starr, interview with author, 30 July 2009.

<sup>104</sup> McMillen, 207. Ethridge also submitted his “Mississippi Notebook” column to the Citizens’ Council for publication in its own self-titled publication.

<sup>105</sup> Tom Ethridge, “Mississippi Notebook,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 December 1955, 10.

<sup>106</sup> “Public Trust Betrayed,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 13 December 1955, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Weill, 81.

<sup>109</sup> Davies, 39.

<sup>110</sup> Dick Smith, “Highlites in Sports,” *Meridian Star*, 6 December 1955, 6.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> “The Sugar Bowl Squabble,” *Daily Times Leader*, 6 December 1955, 4.

<sup>113</sup> “Compton Favored Today in Junior Rose Bowl Game,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 December 1955, 8; “Junior Rose Thrills Loom,” *Daily Times Leader*, 10 December 1955, 2;

---

and “Chamber of Commerce in Calif. To Help Jones Band Expenses,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 December 1955, 7.

<sup>114</sup> Weill, 52.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>116</sup> “Atoms,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 22 November 1955, 1.

<sup>117</sup> “If Bobcats Get Bowl Bid Gartin Will Attend Game,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 22 November 1955, 8.

<sup>118</sup> “Let’s Dig In,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 30 November 1955, 6.

<sup>119</sup> “In Pasadena,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 1 December 1955, 6.

<sup>120</sup> “Vital decision,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 4 December 1955, 4.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> “The Whole Picture,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 8 December 1955, 6.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Jimmie McDowell, “Jimmie McDowell,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1955, 16.

<sup>126</sup> Jimmie McDowell, “Jimmie McDowell,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1955, 9. According to Rudy H. Leverett in his book *Legend of the Free State of Jones*, during the 1830s, Jones County’s population dropped to roughly 1,000, leading to anarchy of sorts in the county. Roughly 30 years later, the phrase was also used by Confederate Captain Newt Knight to perpetuate a rumor that Jones County succeeded from the Confederacy. For more on the topic, see Rudy H. Leverett, *Legend of the Free State of Jones* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), 8, 11.

<sup>127</sup> Jimmie McDowell, “Jimmie McDowell,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1955, 14.

<sup>128</sup> Arnold Hederman, “Highlight on Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 November 1955, 1B.

<sup>129</sup> Arnold Hederman, “Highlights on Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 December 1955, 8C.

<sup>130</sup> Arnold Hederman, “Highlights on Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 December 1955, 1B.

<sup>131</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.

<sup>132</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Jackson State Times*, 9 December 1955, 5B.

<sup>133</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Jackson State Times*, 12 December 1955, 5B.

---

<sup>134</sup> “Stop the Play?” *Jackson State Times*, 10 December 1955, 10B.

<sup>135</sup> “Seeks Racial Ban in College Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>136</sup> “Stiff Penalties Are Sought for Mixing Athletic Games,” *Jackson Daily News*, 19 January 1956, 1; “Sports Segregation Sought,” *The New York Times*, 19 January 1956, 22; “Senate-House Talks Today Work Out Coleman Recall Law Kinks,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 19 January 1956, 1; and “Introduce Bill to Halt Mixed Sports in State,” *Meridian Star*, 19 January 1956, 8.

<sup>137</sup> Russell J Henderson, “The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: ‘Something more than the game will be lost’,” *The Journal of Southern History* 63, No. 4 (1997): 830.

<sup>138</sup> Henderson, 828.

<sup>139</sup> Jan Paul, Richard McGee and Helen Fant, “The Arrival and Ascendance of the Black Athlete in the Southeastern Conference, 1966-1980,” *Phylon* 45, no. 4 (December 1984): 284.

## CHAPTER III

## SOMETIMES, EVEN COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS ACT LIKE FRESHMEN

After the Jones County Junior College football team lost 22-13 to integrated Compton Junior College in the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl, politicians moved to adopt legislation that would legally limit universities and colleges into white-only athletic ventures. This rule eventually became an agreement known as the unwritten law. During its eight years of existence, a number of colleges and universities challenged the binding power of the agreement and led the journalistic supporters of the Closed Society to condemn such progressive efforts. The first challenge to the unwritten law came in December 1956, when Mississippi State College accepted an invitation to play in the Evansville (Indiana) College Invitational Basketball Tournament on December 28, 1956.<sup>1</sup> Roughly 24 hours later, the University of Mississippi basketball team was scheduled to play in the All-American City Basketball Tournament in Owensboro, Kentucky. Both teams were forced by university officials to leave the respective tournaments, setting off a string of criticism from Mississippi's press that damned the two schools for their attempted violation of the gentleman's agreement. Roughly three months later, the Tigers of Jackson State College became the only minority school to challenge the unwritten law as its basketball team was forced to leave the small NCAA national championship tournament due to the probability that it would face integrated competition.

As detailed in this chapter, the press covered the birth of the unwritten law and the threatened violations of the state's segregationist athletic standard in an inconsistent manner. The attempted creation of a law that would ban integrated competition in Mississippi's gymnasiums was virtually ignored by the press as few newspapers published a story on the January 1956 legal proposal, and almost all of them depended on accounts from the Associated Press or United Press International. Despite the silence from reporters in the state on the unwritten law, scribes across Mississippi united in their criticism of the first violations

of the gentleman's agreement with the participation and withdrawal of Mississippi State and Ole Miss from the aforementioned holiday tournaments. While the Jackson State contingent challenged the unwritten law with its amazing 1956-57 season, the exit of the JSC team from the small NCAA tournament was virtually ignored by the white press in Mississippi, and the work of the black *Jackson Advocate* did little to champion the cause of the Tigers. Despite the varying amounts of journalistic attention paid to the occurrences, the paths taken in each instance by the press in the Magnolia State contributed to the enforcement of the principles and ideals of the Closed Society. In general, Mississippi's reporters and editors opposed any and all efforts to integrate the state's college-based opposition or expressed no opinion on the matter, allowing the segregationist status quo to remain unchallenged.

The newspapers examined in this chapter include the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Jackson State Times*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Daily Times Leader*, the *Natchez Democrat*, the *Starkville News*, and the black *Jackson Advocate*. These publications were selected based on their individual social views on integration. Other considerations included prominence within the state and the individual papers' proximity to Starkville, Oxford, and Jackson, the hometowns of Mississippi State, Ole Miss, and Jackson State College. The newspapers listed were examined from January 18, 1956, through January 20, 1956; from December 28, 1956, through January 3, 1957; and March 1957. All news articles, columns, and editorials that detailed the January 1956 presentation and implementation of the unwritten law, the appearance of the basketball teams from Mississippi State College and the University of Mississippi in integrated tournaments, and the withdrawal of Jackson State College basketball team from the small NCAA national championship tournament were included in this examination.



As demonstrated in Chapter II, Mississippi's press either reacted to issues of race with silence or disdain, and the events depicted in this chapter were covered in the same manner. The proposal of the unwritten law was almost treated as a non-story, as few papers in the state viewed the proposal as significant, despite coming on the heels of the Junior Rose Bowl, a social black eye to Mississippi in the eyes of the state's white elite. In much of the same fashion that Mississippi journalists covered the JCJC appearance in the Junior Rose Bowl, the actions of Mississippi State and Ole Miss were met with a discouraging tone because of the potential attack on the white way of life in the Magnolia State. Rather than see the participation of these schools in an integrated tournament as a progressive nod towards human and civil rights, the state's reporters attacked the two schools for the inconsistency in "state athletic policy" and a general lack of knowledge. Jackson State's forced exodus from the NCAA tournament was virtually ignored by the white press in Mississippi and yielded no sort of editorial commentary from the *Jackson Advocate*, Mississippi's pre-eminent black newspaper. In all instances, the white status quo remained in place and the journalists in Mississippi failed to acknowledge the potentially groundbreaking and socially significant actions of these three basketball teams.

#### Proposal and Silence

State Representative R. C. McCarver of Itawamba County wasted little time to take action in the wake of the Junior Rose Bowl. On January 19, 1956, Mississippi newspapers reported that McCarver proposed a bill to the Mississippi House of Representatives that would legally prohibit the state's collegiate teams from participating in integrated competition.<sup>2</sup> While the bill was introduced on the floor of the state House of Representatives, the proposed law made it no further. The segregated standard was later accepted after a private meeting between college administrators and state politicians.<sup>3</sup> The state and its educational institutions began to acknowledge the ban, which was referred to as the unwritten law, as a "gentleman's agreement" that all-white teams in the South would

abstain from playing integrated teams from the North.<sup>4</sup> Any violation of the agreement would result in a one-year prison sentence for the offending school official, a fine of \$2,500, and the loss of state funding.<sup>5</sup> While the law did not actually exist, Mississippi legislators and the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning otherwise enforced it, threatening to withdraw funds from schools that violated the agreement.<sup>6</sup>

The political climate in Mississippi favored McCarver's proposition and the unwritten law, as a new leader took the reins of the Magnolia State in 1956. Less than one month after JCJC's 22-13 defeat to Compton, Mississippi welcomed segregationist J. P. Coleman to the governorship. Coleman was a graduate of the University of Mississippi who ran for governor in 1955 on the platform that he wanted to quietly maintain segregation in the state's colleges and universities and personally opposed the admission of Medger Evers into the state-based university years later.<sup>7</sup> While the degree to which he was a sports fan was unclear, Coleman opposed any efforts to integrate colleges and universities in the Magnolia State.

The Hederman-owned *Clarion-Ledger's* account on the proposed law appeared on the front page of the January 19, 1956, edition, below the fold. The article, while it varied little from its counterparts in other newspapers, cited the Georgia Tech football team's appearance in the 1955 Sugar Bowl against the integrated squad from the University of Pittsburgh and Jones County Junior College's participation in the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl as justification for McCarver's proposal. The article, in reference to JCJC, claimed, "Despite public and editorial objection, the Mississippi team went to California and played but lost."<sup>8</sup> While appearing to be an impartial, news-based account of the proposed law, the reference comes across as an interjection of opinion. The article concluded by stating that the law would also apply to those of "Mongolian descent — Chinese or Japanese." The same article appeared in the *Meridian Star* on the same day with an Associated Press byline.<sup>9</sup> The *Star* also published a United Press account on the day's Senate and House briefs, with the news of

McCarver's suggested ban in the tenth paragraph.<sup>10</sup> Rather than publish an article on the proposed segregationist law, the *Daily News* in Biloxi also published an AP account of the legislative happenings in the state and did not reference McCarver's proposal until the last paragraph of the story, below the subhead "College Bill."<sup>11</sup>

The Hedermans' flagship paper, the *Jackson Daily News*, included a similar account to that found in the *Clarion-Ledger*. Absent from the article was any mention of editorial thought on the original Jones County Junior College controversy. However, the *Daily News* found greater news value in the potential segregation of college athletics than in the House's sheriff recall bill, which would have allowed the state to have a recall election for "derelict county officials."<sup>12</sup>

The account in the *Delta Democrat-Times* identified McCarver by name but did not get to the proposed law until paragraph 11 of a front-page article from United Press reporter John Herbers.<sup>13</sup> Herbers was the bureau chief for the United Press in Mississippi and has been credited by historians for his groundbreaking coverage of the civil rights movement through features and profiles of black leaders. Unlike his journalistic peers in the Magnolia State, Herbers never let race dictate whether or not an issue was covered. Rather, he made decisions based on the news value of the topic.<sup>14</sup> In the only article he authored on this topic, Herbers placed McCarver's proposed law ahead of other proposed segregated issues, such as the "implementation of segregated waiting rooms, facilities and accommodations for passengers during interstate travel," indicating that he saw a degree of newsworthiness in the proposed law.<sup>15</sup>

Other newspapers in Mississippi published a brief summary of the day's legislative happenings and identified the potential law only by its docket number, HB 47. The proposal was described in a straightforward fashion: "Prohibits Mississippi schools to play athletic games with teams having Negroes, Chinese or Japanese players on them."<sup>16</sup> Other noteworthy

newspapers, such as the *Jackson State Times*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, the *Jackson Advocate*, and the *Hattiesburg American* failed to publish anything on the potential law.

While the agreement was eventually adopted after a closed-door meeting between legislators and the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning, also known as the State College Board, the media seemed to be left out of the decision. None of the newspapers examined published an article on the acceptance of the unwritten law. The notion of journalistic opinion is also absent, as none of the newspapers consulted in this study editorialized about the unwritten law. However, one could justify this absence by the lack of coverage of the law itself. Furthermore, there is no record of the State College Board hearing the proposed gentleman's agreement and of its eventual acceptance. Plus, in its original incarnation, the rule only applied to junior colleges, a direct response toward the efforts of Jones County Junior College only months earlier. The first challenge to the unwritten law would emerge less than a year later.

#### The Evansville Fiasco

It has long been customary for college basketball teams to participate in holiday tournaments during the December months. In the case of both Mississippi State College and the University of Mississippi, the Evansville Invitational Basketball Tournament and the All-American Holiday Tournament were to be barometers for their upcoming Southeastern Conference schedule. Coverage of MSC's tournament venture from the newspapers in Mississippi began inconspicuously enough. Many publications did not even have an article on the Evansville Invitational. The weekly *Starkville News* of publishers Henry and Morris Meyer published a preview of the upcoming tournament for the Maroons, winners of six of their first seven games.<sup>17</sup> The article, which had no byline or wire identification, noted the school's opponent was a "strong" University of Denver squad in the first round. The article discussed the MSU standouts center Jim Ashmore, who averaged 27.4 points per game, and superstar Bailey Howell, who led the nation in rebounding with 138 in seven games and

averaged 26.4 points per game. The following week, a similar article was featured in the paper that, again, looked towards the upcoming tournament and highlighted the statistical accomplishments of the teams' individual players.<sup>18</sup>

Mississippi State began the Evansville, Indiana-based tournament by defeating the Pioneers 69-65 on December 28, 1956, behind the performance of Howell, who led MSC with 22 points while Ashmore chipped in with 20. MSC had as much as a 10-point lead, but Denver was able to stay in the game with "its slow style."<sup>19</sup> The Pioneers closed to 67-65 with 18 seconds left, but Ashmore scored on a dunk in the final seconds to give the representatives from the Magnolia State the win.

The following day, both the Associated Press and the *Jackson Daily News* reported that the Maroons were forced to withdraw from the tournament due to the presence of black players Billy Peay and Rocephus Silgh on the Pioneers roster.<sup>20</sup> Silgh scored two points while Peay did not play in the game.<sup>21</sup> News of State's historic contest hit the front page of the *Jackson Daily News* on December 29, 1956. The article led with the sentence, "Racial barriers broke down for a Southern school in athletic competition."<sup>22</sup> MSC president Bill Hilbun told the unknown reporter that he was surprised by the presence of blacks at the tournament and was under the impression that the teams were not integrated. "If we had known that the Denver team had Negroes, our team would not have been there to play the game."<sup>23</sup> Head coach James "Babe" McCarthy declined comment. On December 30, 1956, the *Jackson Daily News* published another article on the game by an anonymous reporter, who wrote that the Maroons won the contest "in spite of the presence of black players."<sup>24</sup> Bill Robertson of the *Evansville Press* told the anonymous author he saw no incident that occurred during the game that would warrant any sort of "unusual" response. "There was no advance word that the Denver team included Negro players," Robertson said. The article also stated that Mississippi had no law forbidding interracial athletics — "only traditions and customs of segregated Mississippi clamp down on such practices."<sup>25</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*

treated the game as a journalistic afterthought. While the Frederick Sullens-led paper featured five different articles on the front page addressing MSC's withdrawal from the holiday tournament, the paper never covered the contest with Denver as a sports event, focusing only on the race-based controversy surrounding the game.

Despite the work of the *Daily News*, a number of news outlets picked up on the results of the game but failed to mention or even realize that Denver was integrated. On December 29, 1956, the *Jackson State Times*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, and the *Meridian Star* all published articles on the team's victory over the University of Denver, yet none mentioned that the Pioneers were integrated.<sup>26</sup> The *Clarion-Ledger* even published a photograph of Howell from the MSC-Denver contest, seemingly unaware that two black players occupied Denver uniforms.<sup>27</sup>

The following day, on December 30, 1956, the *State Times* published a United Press article on MSC's exit from the Evansville Tournament, which led with Evansville Mayor Vance Hartke lashing out at MSC for leaving the tournament "because its opponents were starting a Negro." Hartke told the reporter, "Basketball is a prime example of judging a man by his ability — not the color of his skin. Someday, perhaps, we all will come before one great judge. I hope our Southern friends then learn what justice really is."<sup>28</sup> The article also stated that MSC was called home by the school's administration. No MSC sources were represented in the article. Hartke, a Democrat, was considered a liberal politician and would go on to serve three terms in the United States Senate before his death in 2003 at the age of 84.<sup>29</sup>

The *Clarion-Ledger* also published an Associated Press article on MSC's withdrawal from the tournament on its front page and, in the process, presented an interesting dichotomy of race issues in the South. The first part of the article went into detail about the MSC-Denver contest and the Maroons' subsequent exit from Evansville. Hilbun was quoted in the article and acknowledged that the unwritten law did not actually exist, saying that the withdrawal

came from athletic director C. R. Noble and that the college did not receive an order from the state Legislature. “We just want to play like we play here at home,” Hilbun told the AP.<sup>30</sup> In a stark topical switch, the article also discussed a dynamite explosion at the Citizen Council headquarters in Clinton, Tennessee, in which no one was hurt. The peaceful withdrawal of the MSC contingent was balanced with the violent incident at the Citizen Council headquarters, an organization to which both the editor and owners of the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger* belonged. From a journalistic perspective, it was clear that the two items had no business being in the same article. The same account appeared in the Hederman-owned *Jackson Daily News* on the same day.<sup>31</sup> A similar article, without the mentions of the bombing, could also be found in the *Natchez Democrat*.<sup>32</sup>

In the December 30, 1956, edition of the *Meridian Star*, the MSC tournament story was covered in an article with the headline, “Maroons Quit Tournament; Negroes Play.” The story, which included no byline, was in boldface type and stated, “The athletic director (Evansville College athletic director Don Ping) told the crowd that Mississippi State’s team was being called home because of colored players in the tournament.”<sup>33</sup> In an article on the front page of the December 30, 1956, edition of the *Vicksburg Evening Post* and the sports section of the *Clarion-Ledger*, much of the above-referenced information was repeated. However, Ping was quoted by the Associated Press as saying, “We feel that all of the teams accepted the bids in good faith,” insinuating that the integrated status of the tournament should not have been a surprise for the contingent from Starkville.<sup>34</sup>

Noble’s decision to withdraw MSC from the tournament was reported in the December 31, 1956, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger* and indicated that Hilbun acted after he read about the black players in the press.<sup>35</sup> “They (MSC) didn’t know there would be Negroes beforehand. It has always been our policy that our teams would not compete with Negroes,” Noble explained. “That’s tradition with our institution. There is no rule here; it is just a matter of policy and tradition. It is the way we have always operated.”<sup>36</sup> AP reporter and future pro

football pioneer Don Weiss wrote his only article in this study on the creation of the unwritten law and called the Mississippi State exit one of the surprises of the holiday basketball tournament season. Another article in the same issue of the *Clarion-Ledger* discussing the current state of SEC basketball failed to mention the tournament.<sup>37</sup>

Interestingly enough, Hilbun did not get along with Noble and eventually fired the former Maroon hero and replaced him in 1959 with football coach Wade Walker.<sup>38</sup> In terms of the racial climate at MSC during Hilbun's tenure as president, historian Michael B. Ballard wrote that the campus had "a stereotypical racial tinge to it," especially when it came to the treatment of black employees on campus, who were typically referred to as "uncles."<sup>39</sup> While Hilbun managed to avoid the discussion on integration with his retirement at the conclusion of the 1959-60 school year, Ballard wrote that, based on Hilbun's known views on issues of race, the former university president would not have handled the integration of Mississippi State very well.<sup>40</sup>

In the aftermath of the Maroons' withdrawal, the *Starkville News* failed to reference the incident in any subsequent coverage of the team. In a wrap-up article of the squad's Kentucky road trip, the game against Denver was discussed in detail, as was the team's contest against Murray State.<sup>41</sup> However, the integrated status of the Pioneers and the school's refusal to play Evansville College was never mentioned. Similarly, in the Associated Press's article on the team's surprising 91-80 loss to Murray State, the only reminder of the controversy of Evansville could be found in the article's lead: "In its first game since walking out of a basketball tournament, Mississippi State fell before a second half rally of Murray last night."<sup>42</sup> Other wire-based accounts made no mention of the Evansville walkout.<sup>43</sup>

### The Compliant Rebels

Soon after the events in Evansville, the University of Mississippi made front-page news of its own when it withdrew its basketball team from the All-American City Basketball



Tournament in Owensboro, Kentucky. The Rebels were scheduled to play Iona College of New Rochelle, New York; however, it was discovered that Iona guard Stanley Hill was black, and Ole Miss quickly withdrew from the tournament.<sup>44</sup> Athletic director C. M. “Tad” Smith told the Associated Press that it was his understanding the tournament was not integrated.<sup>45</sup> While it is difficult to determine, explicitly, Smith’s beliefs and/or views on integration, the Ole Miss alum was one of the individuals who met with Governor Ross Barnett and Chancellor J. D. Williams before James Meredith’s application for admission was denied on September 20, 1962.<sup>46</sup> Time and the need to compete may have softened Smith’s views on issues of race as the athletic director later helped recruit basketball star Coolidge Ball, the school’s first black athlete, in the 1970s.<sup>47</sup>

In the Associated Press account from the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, Ole Miss refused to play Iona College in a consultation game unless the team withheld Hill from the game. Russ Melvin of the *Owensboro Messenger* told the AP that Mississippi coach Bonnie Graham had informed tournament officials that they could not play the game unless Hill was removed from the Iona lineup.<sup>48</sup> “When we accepted the invitation to that tournament, it was with the understanding that there would be no Negroes in it,” the Ole Miss athletic director said to the AP.<sup>49</sup> While explaining the unwritten law to the anonymous AP writer, Smith acknowledged the non-existent legal nature of the gentleman’s agreement. “There is not a written rule, only policy,” he said.<sup>50</sup>

Like other state papers, the *Meridian Star* used a wire account to depict the Ole Miss exit from Kentucky. While much of the information found in the article has been discussed, the article did include a quote from Hilbun found in no other media account. Hilbun told the United Press in reference to playing mixed competition, “We’ve never done it before and we will never do it as long as I am in charge. The decision to withdrawal our team was automatic.”<sup>51</sup>

The University of Mississippi later claimed that it was guaranteed by officials that the tournament would be segregated and denied ever asking Iona College or tournament officials to prohibit Hill from playing. Smith told UP that he could not remember the individual's name that made the guarantee, only that "it was the tournament manager or director."<sup>52</sup>

The *Jackson Daily News* also ran the Associated Press' work on Ole Miss' withdrawal from the tournament with the headline "Mississippi Cagers Balk at Integration" on the front page of its December 31, 1956, edition.<sup>53</sup> The *Delta Democrat-Times* published the same AP article as the *Clarion-Ledger* on December 30, 1956, and on the Ole Miss incident on December 31, 1956. In the latter article, Williams said, "It is the policy of the school to maintain segregation so far as the team play is concerned inside or outside of the state."<sup>54</sup> The United Press later reported that tournament chairman and Kentucky Wesleyan College professor Gus E. Paris "flatly denied" Williams' and Smith's claim that Ole Miss was promised that no black would play in the tournament.<sup>55</sup> "The question of Negroes was not discussed with the University of Mississippi officials and absolutely no guarantee was made that there would be no Negro players in the tournament," Paris told the United Press.

*Daily News* staff writer Phil Stroupe wrote about the dual withdrawals in the December 31, 1956, edition of the paper from the perspective of the state's political elite. Most of the political figures interviewed for the article had nothing but praise for the decisions made by MSC and Ole Miss. "The colleges took the only honorable course they could," Sen. Earl Evans of Canton told Stroupe. "Their action will be heartily endorsed by the vast majority of people in Mississippi."<sup>56</sup> Evans was identified as a member of the state Sovereignty Commission, an agency founded in 1956 to propagandize the segregationist position and monitor black activists.<sup>57</sup> Rep. George Oayne Cossar of Charleston said that the two schools should have made more of an effort to learn the specific nature of the two tournaments. The Ole Miss graduate was one of the original members of the Sovereignty Commission and was appointed by state Speaker of the House Walter Sillers, a

segregationist.<sup>58</sup> Rep. Russell Fox, who was identified in the article as being pro-segregationist, said, “I approve of the withdrawal. We can compromise on method and manner, but never on principle. Officials at both institutions should be commended.”<sup>59</sup> Fox was one of the sturdiest purveyors of the Closed Society in Mississippi’s political circles. Described by journalist Bill Minor as vicious, Fox was never shy about using his considerable political clout to manipulate legislation, especially in collaborations with fellow segregationist Sillers. Fox supported school equalization in 1954 as a means of keeping integration at bay and, as of 1955, stated publicly that maintaining segregation in the school system was the most important issue facing the state.<sup>60</sup> The article included a photograph of Hill with Iona Head Coach James McDermott.<sup>61</sup>

#### Reaction from the Press

In the editorials and columns that were published during this three-day time period, the overwhelming opinion from editors and reporters in the state was that the State College Board and officials at Mississippi State and Ole Miss failed in their duties to enforce the unwritten law and protect the Closed Society. From segregationist publications like the *Jackson Daily News* to the more progressive *Delta Democrat-Times*, editors expressed a degree of disappointment in these agencies for perpetuating the belief that issues of race were being governed inconsistently thus painting the Magnolia State in a weak and hypocritical light.

In a strange twist of irony, *Jackson Daily News* sports columnist Lee Baker almost predicted the historic events before they even happened. In writing about the upcoming holiday basketball schedule for local teams, Baker wrote that Ole Miss and MSC, “would get a chance to show their wares against teams that never could be met at home . . . it’s for the best they get this crack at outsiders from around the nation. No matter how they fare, they should come back wiser and tougher.”<sup>62</sup> Despite the accuracy of his commentary, it is not known if Baker was aware that the schools could and would participate with integrated teams.

After his April 22, 2003, death at the age of 78, Baker was inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 2004. The state Senate recognized Baker as “the first person in Mississippi sports media history to cover predominantly black colleges and high schools and one of the first writers in the South to give women's athletics full coverage.”<sup>63</sup> However, in the sources consulted in the first six chapters of this dissertation, he never addressed the larger social issues surrounding the various racial controversies examined. By the time Mississippi State participated in its first NCAA tournament in 1963, Baker appeared to have softened his stance on race relations and sports.

Two days later, *Daily News* sports editor Harold Foreman also previewed the tournaments and wrote of Ole Miss' newfound success on the court.<sup>64</sup> Foreman would later choose to ignore the event in his December 30, 1956, column, the first following the withdrawal of MSC. Foreman focused his work on the play of MSC stars Ashmore and Howell rather than discuss what happened in Evansville. At no point was the game and the withdrawal mentioned, following the silent trend among Mississippi's sports journalists.<sup>65</sup>

In the January 1, 1957, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Sullens used his daily editorial to address MSC and Ole Miss, defend the unwritten policy, and express outrage over the lack of consistency demonstrated. He wrote that everyone associated with college athletics in the state should “understand, once and for all, that they must not take part in games anywhere or under any circumstances where the opposing team has Negro players composing a part of the personnel” and that the unwritten law was “as irrepealable as the law of gravitation.”<sup>66</sup> Because of the considerable influence Sullens had in political circles in the Closed Society, his commentary on the unwritten law legitimized the gentleman's agreement to his audience.

In a final nod to the fiascos, the January 3, 1957, edition of the *Daily News* devoted a Henny cartoon by cartoonist and segregationist Bob Howie to MSC and Ole Miss. “Henny” featured a donkey that often spoke in broken English and took editorial liberties with state

political issues. In this particular cartoon, the donkey dribbled a basketball. In the caption, the donkey is quoted as saying, “If Hinny Were a Cager He’d be Cagey as he should and find out who he’s playin’ before he said he would!”<sup>67</sup>

In his December 31, 1956, column, *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer and columnist Carl Walters wrote that he wondered how MSC officials did not know that they would be playing integrated teams and, if they did know, why they participated in the first place. Walters questioned MSC’s decision to play against Denver, even when it was evident that the team was integrated, before “withdrawing and disrupting the tournament.”<sup>68</sup>

The *Vicksburg Evening Post* of Louis P. Cashman also took the decision to task, calling the State’s decision to leave the tournament a regrettable one. The editorial, which was published without a byline, found fault with the school’s acceptance of the invitation to play in the tournament, calling it a calculated risk. Furthermore, the anonymous author, assumed to be Cashman, called the withdrawal ridiculous since Mississippi State had already played and defeated an integrated team. “We are just as dedicated to the cause of segregation as any, but we do not approve of such actions on the part of our state universities. We believe it best to remain aloof from situations which will precipitate drastic action,” the editorial read. “By withdrawing, State has given the liberal-radicals some choice fuel to add to their flame and, instead of representing Mississippi properly, has directed all kinds of adverse publicity in our direction.”<sup>69</sup>

Unlike Cashman, the *Evening Post*’s sports editor Billy Ray commended the two universities for “keeping Southern tradition” in the December 31, 1956, edition of his column “Press Box Views.”<sup>70</sup> Despite his support, Ray criticized the two teams for waiting so long to leave their respective tournaments and said he believed the schools knew that “colored players were on some of the teams competing” unless, he quipped, they were “color blind.”<sup>71</sup> Ray would later advocate the elimination of the unwritten law and Mississippi State’s future

participation in the integrated NCAA national championship tournament despite his self-professed status as a segregationist.

*Natchez Democrat* sports columnist Joe Mosby expressed a similar opinion on State's handling of the team's withdrawal and, in particular, with the actions of Noble. Mosby claimed in his daily column, "Sideline Slants," that Noble "goofed," citing the athletic director's timing for the school's withdrawal considering the all-white contingent from Starkville had already played the integrated Denver team.<sup>72</sup> Mosby also doubted the claim that the team's exodus was Noble's idea alone, citing pressure from state legislators. Mosby added that had Noble refused to participate in the tournament in the first place, "It would of demonstrated Mississippi State's determination to uphold the traditions of segregation, even in the face of inevitable criticism from the north." Mosby would later muse about the actions of both MSU and Ole Miss, writing that both schools would be hard pressed to receive an invitation to play in another basketball tournament unless it was in the "deep, deep South."<sup>73</sup> Citing the negative attention both schools received from the incidents, Mosby wrote that Smith and Noble could have avoided their situations altogether if they had been taught "the old axiom of 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do,' and they should also be taught that nobody is making them go to Rome."

While Mosby dedicated some of his work in 1957 to the topic, in hindsight, he said it was almost a non-issue for his audience. "I recall a newsroom conversation to the effect that college presidents and politicians need to shut up and let the players do their thing," he said in a 2009 interview. "It was not a major concern for our readers."<sup>74</sup> Mosby, who would leave Mississippi-based sports reporting to run the news desk in 1957, said, at the time, he favored segregated athletics because "that was what we had and what I had grown up with. When times changed, I changed. As a boy, I played sandlot baseball with black kids. I enjoyed it. We went to separate schools, and I do not recall any talk of 'wish I could play at your school' or such."<sup>75</sup>

*Delta Democrat-Times* editor Hodding Carter took both Mississippi State and Ole Miss to task for their failure to know about the integrated status of the individual tournaments beforehand. Carter called both situations a “flagrant mishandling which has brought bad publicity on Mississippi and harmed race relations.” Carter was the only editor to point out that MSC actually played and defeated a team with blacks and wrote that Ole Miss left only after the team was scheduled to play an integrated foe. Carter blamed the situation on school officials and the Board of Trustees for Institutions of Higher Learning. Unlike Sullens, Carter took the unwritten law to task, writing that college officials should have felt silly trying to enforce a segregated sports policy despite the fact that most Mississippi residents could watch integrated play on television and that the unwritten law would eventually force the best athletes to stay away from the state. “Sometimes, even college administrators act like freshmen,” Carter concluded.<sup>76</sup>

*Jackson State Times* editor Paul Tiblier wrote that playing the integrated Denver team and the subsequent withdrawal would be viewed as a hypocritical move by MSU and called for consistent rules and regulations from the State College Board to be put in place.<sup>77</sup>

While many of the newspapers in the state, despite their obvious ideological and political differences, noted the overall lack of unity on the enforcement of the unwritten law, only Carter of the *Democrat-Times* called the law into question. During the introduction of the potential law in January 1956, few, if any, newspapers commented on the proposal. In many of the articles, the proposal was an afterthought, as if the majority of Mississippians had already accepted the unwritten law. The silence attached to the coverage of such a proposition could be interpreted as an acknowledgement that the premise behind the unwritten law was an accepted social norm. There was no outrage or objection to such a law because the public always thought of it as an understood tenet. Any objection would have been viewed as a sign of rebellion.

From the perspective of the student press, only the University of Mississippi's student newspaper, the *Daily Mississippian* of editor Ann Flautt published an article on either MSC's or Ole Miss' withdrawal. In a January 11, 1957, column on the dual exodus of Ole Miss and Mississippi State, Flautt placed the blame for both incidents on school officials, writing, "Realizing that it is the strong policy of our state institutions not to engage in sports activities with integrated schools, one has to wonder why a more defined investigation was not made of the schools invited to play in the tournament."<sup>78</sup> Flautt argued that, by walking out, the schools provided more ammunition to the northern-based critics of the Magnolia State. "If we are to expect to meet success in our plans to maintain segregation in spite of the High Court's order, we are hardly taking concrete steps in that direction by constantly slapping the other sections of the nation," Flautt explained. "This is no way to win friends and influence people, but an effective means of turning the sentiment of the whole nation against the South."<sup>79</sup>

A universal theme that arose from the articles that covered the two tournaments was the acknowledgement that the unwritten law was not a law at all, rather a nod to "tradition." The newspapers mirrored the climate of the world in which they were produced. They often avoided the obvious questions, ignored logical inquiry, and protected the status quo. No journalist other than Carter was willing to call out the hypocritical nature of enforcing a non-existent law in either of these situations. Through this silent majority, the views and ideals of the Closed Society were not only in place in the avenue of athletics but were supported and enforced by journalists across the state.

#### The Aftermath and Public Opinion

Like many issues of race in Mississippi, the events of late 1956 were quickly forgotten. Only the *Jackson State Times*, the *Laurel Leader-Call*, and the *Delta Democrat-Times* mentioned of the events surrounding MSC and Ole Miss in subsequent sports articles.<sup>80</sup>



While letters poured into the administrative offices at Mississippi State and Ole Miss, only three letters to the editor appeared in state newspapers on the matter during this timeframe, making the press a flawed barometer of public opinion. Two such expressions of opinion appeared in the *Jackson State Times*, and both claimed that the negative attention generated by the decisions was well deserved. The first letter, from “One Man and Opinion,” said that Mississippi State’s and Ole Miss’ exit “embarrassed the State of Mississippi before the eyes of the nation and represented the type of petty sulking which hampers, not aids, the segregation fight.”<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the letter’s author claimed that, while the unwritten law governed the Magnolia State, the inability to play integrated teams outside of the state was “stupid and ridiculous.”<sup>82</sup> Two days later, an anonymous Clinton resident called for Mississippians to “grow up,” likening the exits to “a little sulking boy picking up his marbles and going home.”<sup>83</sup>

The only other publication to publish a letter to the editor was the *Clarion-Ledger*, which in the January 3, 1957, edition, a “State Observer” wrote that MSC’s actions were a violation of “sportsmanship, fair-play, good faith and how to act as a guest” and that Noble thought little of these things before he made the decision to remove the Maroons from the tournament to “head back to home base where Negroes are ‘untouchable’ in matters of education and religion.”<sup>84</sup> The anonymous author concluded by pointing out the negative attention the school had received as a result of the withdrawal and called for Hilbun to “know more about what is going on at State in the future.”

#### Jackson State College Falls to the Unwritten Law

Three months after the withdrawals of MSC and Ole Miss, a surprising challenge to the unwritten law would come from Jackson State College. The Tigers were experiencing unprecedented success on the hardwood of the black college basketball circuit. The team, lead by 23-year-old head coach Harrison B. Wilson, went 53-5 in two seasons from 1955-1957. Wilson, who arrived on the Jackson campus fresh from finishing his master’s degree in

health science and administration from Indiana University, was the youngest coach in school history. At the end of the 1957 basketball season, the Tigers, with a 23-2 regular season record, received and accepted a bid to play in the NCAA small college basketball tournament.<sup>85</sup> Despite an opening round victory over 15-9 Philander-Smith College of Arkansas in Jackson 93-65, president Jacob Reddix made the decision to have the team withdraw from the tournament because the Tigers would face integrated teams during the remainder of the competition, which would have been a violation of the unwritten law.<sup>86</sup> While months earlier, the Mississippi press took both Mississippi State and Ole Miss to task for blindly entering into integrated tournaments, the basketball team from Jackson State generated little interest from both white mainstream reporters and their black counterparts in the Magnolia State. Not only did white reporters fail to cover Jackson State's games during the course of the season, they demonstrated a lack of journalistic consistency, refusing to ridicule the Tigers and their withdrawal from the integrated postseason in the same manner as they attacked MSC and Ole Miss. Mississippi's most prominent news source for Mississippi's black communities, Percy Greene's *Jackson Advocate*, did little other than cover the Tigers' trek through the regular season. Greene's newspaper, which often took a conservative route in the coverage of issues involving race, failed to express any opinion on the unwritten law. While many historians, including Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, have indicated that the black press identified the social significance of the integration of sports during the civil rights era, the *Jackson Advocate* failed to do so.<sup>87</sup> The *Jackson Advocate* was a natural to cover the JSC basketball team because of the paper's location in Jackson. From January 1, 1957, through March 9, 1957, the Tigers were featured in the weekly *Advocate* six times and never on the front page. The *Advocate* also failed to offer any opinion on the matter, indicating that the controversial Greene tried to minimize the potential importance on the JSC withdrawal to his readers.

Wilson's Tigers began the season with an impressive 13-game winning streak after winning 22 straight the year before. As detailed in the *Jackson Advocate*, "The storm signals are out, but that commotion you hear roarin' out of this Deep South isn't the result of elemental conditions at all but is the direct result of Coach Harrison B. Wilson's Jackson State hoopsters who last season, hurricane like, swept through 22 straight opponents before suffering their first loss. Wilson's charges have hit with speed and sureness as they slammed the door in the faces of 13 successive opponents to enter the New Year with a highly respectable 13-0 record."<sup>88</sup> At the press time of the article, the Tigers were coming off victories over rival Tennessee A&I State University and the North Carolina State College Eagles. The *Advocate* identified senior Billy McDonald, a center from Bay Springs, as the team's primary offensive threat. The *Advocate* also published a photo of the team's starting five of McDonald, guards William Gaines and David Johnson, and forwards Jesse Downey and Herbert Smith, with an extended outline recognizing the team's 13-0 record and victories in the Grambling Invitational Tournament and the Mississippi College Tournament.

The following week, the *Advocate* again featured the Tigers as the team ran its record to 16-0 with wins over Tougaloo Southern College, Stillman College, and Alcorn A&M College of the Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference, Fort Valley State College of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, North Carolina A&T State College of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, and fellow Midwestern Athletic Association conference members Grambling College and Tennessee A&I State.<sup>89</sup> The article detailed the Tigers tough 1956 stretch through the MWAA where the 22-0 squad lost four straight contests against Tennessee State twice, Kentucky State and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, or NAIA, champion Central State College. However, after a victory over Maryland State College, the 1956 team "believed then they were the nation's number one Negro college team." The anonymous author said the same aura of confidence existed in the 1957 Tigers: "To a man, they believe the same thing today," they wrote.

The dream season of the JSC contingent continued through February, where the powerful Tigers would suffer only a single regular season defeat against rival Tennessee A&I State in overtime 72-64. In the February 16, 1957, edition of the *Advocate*, the MWAA tournament was previewed as both schools were poised to take their opposition into postseason play. Called “the hottest basketball rivalry in this section of the country” by the anonymous author, the only way the two teams could meet again is if they were to reach the tournament finals.<sup>90</sup> Tennessee State would play host to the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the MWAA tournament starting on February 21, 1957.<sup>91</sup>

In the MWAA tournament, the host Tennessee A&I State University Tigers wound up winning the crown. For JSC, both Gaines and Smith were named to the All-NWAA tournament team.<sup>92</sup> While the *Advocate* published an article on the selection of the tournament’s all-star squad and had separate articles on both the SIAC and the SCAC basketball tournaments, the MWAA postseason plight of the Tigers never appeared in Greene’s publication.

While the 22-2 Tigers may not have won the MWAA conference tournament, the team was extended an invitation to the NCAA small college basketball tournament and a chance to play for a national championship. In the first round of the tournament, the Tigers defeated Philander-Smith, another predominantly black college, 93-65. Little did the Jackson State team or school officials know that one of the biggest victories in school history put them directly in crosshairs of the unwritten law and Mississippi’s segregated elite. The team was slated to play against either Monmouth College out of Illinois, South Dakota University, or South Dakota State, all segregated white schools. The invitation and acceptance of neither the bid nor the game against Philander-Smith was detailed in the pages of the *Advocate*.

As a result of the Tigers’ possible opposition, JSC president Dr. Jacob L. Reddix made the decision to keep the JSC team in Jackson, ending the team’s quest for a small college national championship. News of the Tigers’ forced withdrawal appeared in the

*Advocate* on the seventh page of its March 9, 1957, edition although it could have been easily argued that news of that magnitude to Mississippi's black community should have been featured on the publications' front page. The article, which appeared in other state newspapers and was written by Associated Press scribe Douglas Starr, indicated that Reddix decided to withdraw the JSC contingent from the tournament "after state authorities advised that their policy is against play 'under the present conditions.'" <sup>93</sup> Reddix's official announcement, as detailed in the article, did not explicitly cite the unwritten law as the reason for the team's withdrawal; rather, it utilized the phrase "current conditions" on two different occasions as a verbal replacement for segregation. Starr editorialized, writing, "Although Dr. Reddix's announcement did not say so, it was obvious the state board's advice came because Jackson State College would of played a white team Saturday night." The author explained the unwritten law, writing, "Mississippi has no state law against inter-racial athletics. But the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning, commonly called the College Board, has made it clear that such play is against their 'policy.'" The article also included Reddix's telegram to NCAA executive director Walter Byers. Reddix's statement, only a paragraph in length, cited "circumstances beyond our control" as the reason for the team's tournament exit. Senior and team captain McDonald was quoted as telling a reporter, "I'm disappointed. I've worked four years for a chance to play in a national tournament. Now this has come up. The fellows who come later will have nothing to look forward to. All we can do is keep winning." <sup>94</sup> JSC student council president Haskell Bingham declined to comment, although the Vicksburg native's name would come up again in other publications. Other publications that published Starr's work included the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the *Daily Herald*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Natchez Democrat*.

The decision to publish Starr's AP account could have been due to the breaking nature of the article; however, most state newspapers reported on the decision on March 6,

1957, and the weekly *Advocate* was not available to the public until three days later. The lapse in time between Reddix's decision and the publication of Greene's paper meant there was enough time for an *Advocate* reporter to cover the story rather than rely on material from the AP. In total, the disregard of a local topic of interest to the black Jackson community only supplied support for the white establishment looking to negate any sort of social significance in the Tigers' withdrawal. With all due respect to Starr's work, Greene's decision appeared to be a demonstration of laziness and apathy. Mississippi's most prominent black newspaper also failed to publish any sort of editorial content on the matter or publish any material outside of its designated sports section, despite the social and political nature of the topic. Greene, a former Jackson State College football player and professed sports fan, provided no original content to his audience as it pertained to the JSC decision, thus failing in his role as a social watchdog for the black community.<sup>95</sup>

Greene was an enigma in Mississippi's journalistic history. While Greene was often viewed as being aligned with the political white elite in Mississippi, the Jackson native also organized the Mississippi Negro Democrats Association in 1940. "Contrary to the young civil-rights activists and militants, that was the first time that anything had been done to actually start the masses of Negroes not only to doing it (voting) but to thinking about it," Greene said in a 1972 interview with historian Neil McMillen.<sup>96</sup> By the end of the 1940s, Greene had developed a reputation as an outspoken advocate for black voting rights, but over time his level of activism shifted dramatically.<sup>97</sup>

This shift could be found after the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, which Greene opposed in the pages of the *Advocate* in favor of a separate but equal funding system for whites and blacks.<sup>98</sup> In Greene's opinion, the federal government was fully capable of "picking over the curriculum process (and) curriculum for the schools and colleges and make them uniform as a guarantee of equal education in the country."<sup>99</sup> Greene, rather than calling for unity from the black community, damned it for its refusal to accept its

secondary social role and inability to get along with whites.<sup>100</sup> Greene felt that blacks would only receive racial equality through introspection. While Green would often address national issues of race, he rarely, if ever, called out the indignities festering in his own backyard.<sup>101</sup>

By 1956, his allegiance to a segregated Mississippi would culminate with his role as a paid agent for the state Sovereignty Commission. He became, in essence, a black spokesperson for segregation that consistently attacked the efforts of, among others, the NAACP and Martin Luther King, Jr.<sup>102</sup> In Greene's mind, the best way to obtain equality with whites was through respectful interaction.<sup>103</sup> Greene was later viewed as a villain and a traitor in the black community and his credibility as a journalist was null. In a 1972 interview, Greene claimed the civil rights movement was nothing more than a Communist plot. "Their aim was to create friction between the different racial groups that make up this country with the hope of using the Negroes as the opening phalanx in their hope for revolution," he said.

<sup>104</sup>

From the student press perspective, the *Blue and White Flash*, the official student newspaper of Jackson State College, did little to come to the aid of the school's basketball contingent. News of the Tigers' basketball team and the eventual NCAA tournament controversy was scarce. Both topics were not addressed until the monthly newspaper's March 1957 edition. Sports columnist and writer Q. V. Sykes wrote about the Tigers' season in summary, leading with the team's victory over Philander-Smith College. In his only comments dealing with the NCAA controversy, Sykes never explicitly identified or explained the reason for the team's withdrawal, writing, "After winning this game, however, the Tigers could no longer participate for reasons beyond their control. Either South Dakota University or South Dakota State College would have been the next team to play."<sup>105</sup> Much like the *Advocate*, Sykes had an opportunity to speak out to the very audience that was affected by the decision and address the social ramifications of the topic. He did neither.

The Mainstream Remains Silent

Most accounts of the Tigers' exit from the NCAA small college basketball tournament in Mississippi's predominantly white press utilized wire material. While the majority of seasonal coverage of the Tigers could be found in the *Jackson Advocate*, the team's exploits would, on occasion, make its way into Mississippi's traditionally white, segregationist publications, such as the *Jackson Daily News*. The announcement of the small NCAA tournament's opening-round pairings appeared in the Hederman-owned newspaper on March 1, 1957, where it was revealed that the Tigers would face Philander-Smith.<sup>106</sup> The team's dominant victory over the Arkansas-based college was detailed in the March 3, 1957, edition of the *Daily News*. The four-paragraph article, which was similar to accounts that appeared in both the *Jackson State Times* and the *Hattiesburg American*, referenced the team's possible second-round opponents as Monmouth of Illinois, South Dakota University, and South Dakota State but did not identify the schools' racial status. The Tigers' Gaines led all scorers with 19 points.<sup>107</sup>

News of Jackson State's first-round victory over Philander-Smith College in the NCAA's Midwest regional could be found in the *Jackson State Times*, which published an article from the United Press. The short, two-paragraph account made no mention of the school's potential second-round opponents or their racial make-up and, beyond providing a final score and the team's record, the only new information presented is the identification of Gaines as the team's statistical leader.<sup>108</sup>

Other Mississippi newspapers, such as the *Hattiesburg American*, covered the Tigers' opening-round victory in the form of an Associated Press article.<sup>109</sup> The account, which was published in the paper's second section, was only two paragraphs long and referenced the team's possible second round opponents as Monmouth of Illinois, South Dakota University, and South Dakota State. The racial status of these institutions was not addressed.

Starr's aforementioned work, as published in the *Jackson Advocate*, appeared in either abbreviated form or in its entirety in various state newspapers such as the *Clarion-*



*Ledger*, *Hattiesburg American*, the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, the *Enterprise-Journal* in McComb, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Natchez Democrat* on March 6, 1957.<sup>110</sup> Unlike the version published in Greene's paper, other forms of Starr's account included commentary from State College Board executive security Dr. E. R. Jobe, who told Starr, "I don't know anything about it. I left Jackson on Sunday. (It is) generally understood that was the accepted policy."<sup>111</sup> Surprisingly, the segregationist *Clarion-Ledger* of the Hederman family was the only Mississippi newspaper to publish news of JSC's withdrawal on its front page in the paper's March 6, 1957, edition. Starr said in a 2009 interview that he was not surprised by the paper's use of his work.

"They (the *Clarion-Ledger* specifically) would not run original stories from their reporters that were negative about Mississippi," he explained. "They would run the AP story, which would give them an out. If anyone complained, they would just point at it and say, 'It wasn't us, it was the Associated Press.' They would publish our stories and then write a column taking the opposite side."<sup>112</sup>

Perhaps what hurt JSC in terms of media attention and commentary was Reddix's leadership. Reddix, the fifth president at Jackson State College, developed a reputation as a no-nonsense leader who advocated quiet civil rights opposition rather than visible demonstrations of resistance. In the wake of various displays of civil unrest in 1961, including the arrival of the Freedom Riders in Jackson and the riots induced by the enrollment of James Meredith at Ole Miss, Reddix stressed his opposition to open demonstrations. "Ten years ago, you couldn't pay a Negro to go downtown and challenge the law the way he's doing here now," the JSC president said. "And these Negroes now are even unafraid of guns staring them in the face."<sup>113</sup> Reddix believed that true independence and equality for black citizens could be obtained through his philosophy of black economic independence. Reddix was the founder of the First American Bank of Jackson, which was the only black-owned commercial bank in Mississippi.<sup>114</sup> The son of former slaves, Reddix made

headlines when he dissolved Jackson State's student government after the group organized an on-campus, anti-segregation demonstration in 1961 that included the participation of 400 of the school's roughly 1,600 students. Reddix also expelled student body president Walter Williams. "The real issue here is not segregation versus integration but rather it's over whose going to run this college," Reddix told *Jet* magazine. "It's not going to be run by the power boys around here. It's not going to be run by newspapers in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia. I run this college and anyone here who doesn't like the way I run this college can leave . . . We have to get Negroes here ready for freedom."<sup>115</sup>

Reddix was considered a trustworthy individual by the elite of the Closed Society and a "yes man" by many in the black community. He hailed governor J. P. Coleman in his book *A Voice in the Wilderness* for signing the bill to make the Jackson State College for Negro Teachers into Jackson State College "without hesitation" and called the college a sign that progress had been made in the area of human relations.<sup>116</sup> He also discussed the academic prospects of former JSC students Alfanette Bracey and Cleve McDowell with the Sovereignty Commission, both of whom had attempted to enroll at the University of Mississippi.<sup>117</sup> In 1967, well after his retirement from Jackson State, the state Sovereignty Commission suggested that Reddix should replace Helen Bass Williams as director of the Mississippi Action for Progress because "Dr. Reddix has the respect of both races."<sup>118</sup> Others close to Reddix claimed his compliance with the Closed Society was merely an act. Politician Robert Clark described Reddix as a man who "knew how to finesse white folks by pretending to be on their side."<sup>119</sup>

Both the *Daily News* and the *Meridian Star*, also known for their segregationist views, published a United Press article on the JSC-NCAA issue. The information in the account was very similar to that of the Associated Press; however, the lead of the article identified Jackson State as "a state-supported Negro institution" and claimed that the withdrawal of the team was "to comply with a state ruling that bans racially integrated

athletic events.”<sup>120</sup> The article left the impression that the “ruling,” otherwise known as the unwritten law, had some sort of legitimate legal power or, at the least, was a legitimate “adopted rule against state teams participating in integrated athletic events,” despite the lack of documented evidence of the law’s existence. Credence was given to this interpretation when the anonymous author failed to explain that the state did not have a legally recognized law against integrated athletics, a point made in Starr’s article for the AP.

“You see, we all knew that legally you could not do that,” Starr explained in a 2009 interview. “I mean, you could but someone would have sued the state and it would have been overturned. But nothing surprised me about Mississippi when it came to issues of race.”<sup>121</sup>

In the March 6, 1957, issue of the *Jackson Daily News*, it was reported that Jackson State students, led by Bingham, protested Reddix’s decision by writing a letter to the State College Board. The account, which was written by an anonymous author and contained no wire-based identification, again referred to JSC as the “Jackson State College for Negroes” and included commentary from Reddix indicating that the school had experienced no disruptions from the populace as a result of his decision. Although much of the account presented the unwritten law as “ruling” with some sort of legal significance, the last paragraph of the story indicated that, while the state had no law prohibiting integrated athletics, “Most state officials have pledged to maintain segregation.”<sup>122</sup> The article appeared in the paper’s secondary news section rather than sports, a rarity.

The *Jackson State Times*, while never publishing an article dealing with the team’s exit from the tournament, chronicled the student body’s complaint to the State College Board. The account, which was written by an anonymous author and contained no wire-based identification, referred to JSC as “a Negro school” and, in acknowledgement of the unwritten law, said the Tigers were prohibited from participating in the tournament “under the same ruling that kept Mississippi’s white schools from participating in integrated athletic events.”<sup>123</sup> The *State Times* also published the account in the paper’s “A” section, a place

where more traditional news was often found and a sign that the publication identified a greater social significance in the debate. In the United Press account of the student-based protest, “disappointed students appointed a committee to draft a letter of protest to the board which had made the ruling several months ago primarily to keep white teams from playing against Negroes.”<sup>124</sup> The article appeared on the front page of the March 6, 1957, edition of the *Delta Democrat-Times*. It was later reported that the NCAA, in response to Jackson State’s withdrawal, advanced South Dakota University to the quarterfinals of the tournament.<sup>125</sup>

Specific reasons why so many papers chose not to cover JSC were unknown, but Mosby explained in a 2009 interview that the plight of an all-black college in 1957 was of little interest to white-owned and operated publications. “Jackson State got little attention from the Mississippi press on athletics or any other topic,” he said.<sup>126</sup>

#### Editorial Commentary and Public Opinion

One of the only newspapers to publish any sort of editorial commentary on the JSC-NCAA debate was the *Jackson State Times*. In a letter to the editor from “A Committee of Local Citizens,” the decision was vehemently denounced as “a crushing blow to the morale of the college and its friends and citizens of the local community. It is felt that a grave disservice has been dealt to the cause of education, fair play, and the progress of our state.”<sup>127</sup> The letter went on to identify four primary reasons why the state was negatively affected by the decision, which included the loss of both black and white students to out-of-state schools, the lack of an actual law prohibiting interracial athletic competition, the loss of federal funding, and the “spotlight of unfavorable attention” the decision placed on the state.<sup>128</sup>

Another letter in the March 13, 1957, edition of the *State Times* from “Disappointed” in Durant, called the decision “a gross mistake” because “it has now placed our prejudices before the nation and the world.”<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the letter stated that allowing JSC to play in the tournament was a wasted opportunity and could have helped with the nation’s negative

public perception of the state. “Jackson State is one of the most outstanding Negro colleges in the United States. Such a blunder will not go unnoticed,” the Durant resident wrote.

Support was also present in the *Clarion-Ledger*, who much like the *State Times*, countered its Jackson-based competitor with a letter to the editor on the topic. In the March 9, 1957, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger* a “State Observer” joined “the student body of Jackson State College and the 95 percent of all of the people in the United States in protesting and condemning the cheap, snide, rotten, narrow-minded, biased, prejudiced, discriminating, silly, unsportsmanlike, asinine, pusillanimous, undemocratic, unbrotherly, unchristian, dictatorial, tyrannical edict of the Board of Trustees of the Higher Institutions of Learning of Mississippi in withdrawing Jackson State College from NCAA’s tournament of small colleges.”<sup>130</sup> The letter, which called for equality among races in the South and Mississippi, said the forced withdrawal lacked “evidence of sportsmanship, fair play, equal justice, honor, democracy, brotherhood, (and) Christianity.”

While the appearance of this anonymous voice of support in the Hederman and segregationist *Clarion-Ledger* was somewhat surprising, in the paper’s previous edition, George F. Byrd of Florence denounced any and all effort to “mix the races,” writing “We, the white race of the U.S.A. brought the black people to the United States from the jungles of Africa, where nothing but ignorance prevailed and where it is said they even feasted on one another’s carcasses.”<sup>131</sup> Byrd’s ignorant and racist stance continued, as he claimed that individuals both white and black were “trying to lower the standards of both races by advocating and passing laws that will lead to the mongrelizing the two races.”<sup>132</sup> Byrd’s letter, while not directly dealing with the JSC-NCAA controversy, failed to address any on-going issue in the state’s news landscape, serving little to no purpose other than expressing one person’s racist views. If anything, the publication of Byrd’s commentary was a reminder of the paper’s position on issues of race because of the letter’s lack of relevance.

The only editorial or column that appeared during the JSC incident was from segregationist *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Harold Foreman. In his daily column under the heading “No Reason For Concern,” Foreman wrote that the school’s withdrawal “should cause no particular stir” and placed a degree of blame on the school, which “knew when it entered the playoffs that state policy forbids integrated athletic contests. The school further knew that its opponent in the second round would be either Monmouth (Ill.) College, South Dakota University, or South Dakota State. All are white schools.”<sup>133</sup> Foreman concluded by calling the issue “a closed incident.”<sup>134</sup> While the *Daily News* sports editor’s decision to address the issue in an opinion-based forum could have been commended, his quick dismissal of the JSC argument served as an example of Foreman’s inability to identify the social implications of the issue beyond the realm of sports. Foreman never entertained the possibility that JSC’s presence could be a positive for the state; rather the almost instant assignment of blame demonstrated a childish tone on behalf of the Jackson-based sports scribe. Much like other sports writers used in this study, Foreman’s work lacked foresight and appeared limited in intellect from a social perspective.

The small NCAA basketball tournament championship was eventually won by Wheaton College, which defeated Kentucky Wesleyan 89-65 on March 15, 1957. Few Mississippi newspapers carried any material, wire or otherwise, on the eventual champions.<sup>135</sup>

Noticeably absent from the majority of news articles was any sort of commentary from Wilson. In a 1978 interview, Wilson called this time period in Mississippi’s history “the real turbulent years in race relations” and attributed the tense social climate in Mississippi to the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. “(It’s) why everything changed in Mississippi,” he said.<sup>136</sup> He also admitted that he feared for his life and chose not to make social waves because of the presence of the Citizens’ Council, possible justification for his silence on the withdrawal of his Tigers. “The Citizens’ Council was much like the Nazi’s SS troops that would spy on you, would hire people to spy within your community, would burn

your house, would get you fired from your job, would harass you in every way possible. I worked at a state institution and could not be active outwardly but I would collect clothes and I would collect blankets,” he explained. “All of us that could not afford to come out in the open would work behind the scene like that. And that's what made the Citizens’ Council so dangerous because they would watch to see who was helping.”<sup>137</sup>

Wilson’s unprecedented success at JSC ended in 1967 when he left the school. He finished his coaching career with an amazing 371-93 record from 1950 through 1967. Wilson expressed little regret about his decision to walk away from basketball. “I had a lot of success as a coach. I was known nationally. I got tired of it. It became routine every year,” he explained. “I knew I had a certain number of players and I was winning all the time. I won eight out of ten games, every ten games I coached eight of them we won over a period of 16 years, and I lost four home games in 16 years. I wanted more of a challenge. I felt I could do more than coach.”<sup>138</sup>

Despite leaving the hardwood behind, Wilson continued on a successful trek in academia. Wilson finished his Ph.D. at Indiana University and, after a stint at Fisk University; he became the second president at Norfolk State College in 1975. He retired in 1997.<sup>139</sup>

### Conclusion

In the end, the white establishment of Mississippi breathed a sigh of relief. While the MSC-Denver game made history as the first to be played involving the Maroons and an integrated team, the press ignored the social significance of the contest. For a moment, journalists on both sides of the racial debate saw eye-to-eye on the inconsistent nature of the unwritten law and took both the Maroons and the Rebels to task for their indiscretions. The material published by Mississippi newspapers, specifically the *Jackson Daily News*, helped fend off the dual attacks to the unwritten law and solidified the closed nature of college sports in Mississippi.

Furthermore, while this chapter illustrated how the majority of the white-based press opposed the tournament appearances of Mississippi State and Ole Miss, the exile of Jackson State from the small NCAA tournament provided evidence that not only did the white press in Mississippi oppose racially mixed competition but the black press, specifically the *Jackson Advocate* and Greene, took a silent approach to the issue, free of opinion. While the Mississippi-based daily newspapers published very little to no material on Jackson State, Greene had both a geographical and audience-based justification for covering the Tigers yet failed to do so in a complete manner. Historically speaking, the black press has viewed issues of race, even in the sports world, as being socially significant. Greene, however, served as an outlier. While the *Advocate's* lack of coverage could be attributed to Greene's affiliation with the Citizens' Council, the paper as a whole failed to acknowledge the social and political significance of JSC's continued participation in the small NCAA tournament and voiced no opinion on the issue. By remaining silent and offering what seemed to be minimal content on this issue, Greene demonstrated his part in the Closed Society and the protection of the white-dominated social structure.

With the borders of the Closed Society reinforced against racially progressive threats provided by the sports world, it was almost two years before the traditions and customs of Mississippi would be challenged again from the hardwood. A familiar foe in the form of James "Babe" McCarthy and the Mississippi State Maroons questioned the racial and social standards of the state and, in turn, the journalists and newspapers of Mississippi, led by Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, would protect the white caste system.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mississippi State University, "About Us," [http://www.msstate.edu/web/gen\\_info.htm](http://www.msstate.edu/web/gen_info.htm), accessed 21 April 2008. Mississippi State University was known as Mississippi State College from 1932 until 1958 when it was officially granted university status by the state of Mississippi.

<sup>2</sup> "Seeks Racial Ban in College Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1956, 1.



---

<sup>3</sup> Russell J Henderson, "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: 'Something more than the game will be lost'," *The Journal of Southern History* 63, No. 4 (1997): 830. The State College Board meeting minutes, housed at Mississippi State University, show no record of the proposal and adoption of the unwritten law.

<sup>4</sup> Henderson, 828.

<sup>5</sup> "Stiff Penalties Are Sought for Mixing Athletic Games," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 January 1956, 1; "Senate-House Talks Today Work Out Coleman Recall Law Kinks," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 19 January 1956, 1; "Introduce Bill to Halt Mixed Sports in State," *Meridian Star*, 19 January 1956, 8; and "Sports Segregation Sought," *New York Times*, 19 January 1956, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Paul, Richard McGee and Helen Fant, "The Arrival and Ascendance of the Black Athlete in the Southeastern Conference, 1966-1980." *Phylon* 45, no. 4 (December 1984): 284.

<sup>7</sup> Frank R. Parker and Eddie N. Williams, *Black Votes Count: Political Empowerment in Mississippi After 1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 83; and Charles Evers and Andrew Szanton, *Have No Fear: The Charles Evers Story* (J. Wiley & Sons, 1997), 77-78.

<sup>8</sup> "Seeks Racial Ban in College Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>9</sup> "Introduce Bill to Halt Mixed Sports in State," *Meridian Star*, 19 January 1956, 8.

<sup>10</sup> "Iron Out Flaws Holding Up Sheriff Recall Bill, First Major State Legislative Move," *Meridian Star*, 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>11</sup> "House, Senate Smooth Recall Bill Changes," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>12</sup> "Stiff Penalties Are Sought For Mixing Athletic Games," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 January 1956, 1.

<sup>13</sup> John Herbers, "Senate-House Talks Today Work Out Coleman's Recall Law Kinks," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 19 January 1956, 1, 11.

<sup>14</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 90, 199.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "Legislative Digest," *Commercial Dispatch*, 22 January 1956, 6B.

<sup>17</sup> "State Hoopsters Face Denver In Indiana Tourney," *Starkville News*, 21 December 1956, 4.

<sup>18</sup> "State Cagers To Face Denver University in Evansville Tournament," *Starkville News*, 28 December 1956, 4.

- 
- <sup>19</sup> “Maroon Cagers Face Auburn, Alabama To Launch ’57 Activity,” *Starkville News*, 4 January 1957, 4.
- <sup>20</sup> “State Basketballers Play Mixed Quintet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 29 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>21</sup> “Mississippi State Defeats Denver,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 29 December 1956, 9.
- <sup>22</sup> “State Basketballers Play Mixed Quintet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 29 January 1956, 1.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> “Mississippi State’s Basketball Team Quits Integrated Meet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 30 December 1956, 9.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> “Maroons Post Tourney Win,” *Jackson State Times*, 29 December 1956, 7; “Maroons In 69-65 Cage Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 December 1956, 7; “Maroons Into Tourney Final,” *Meridian Star*, 29 December, 1956, 5; “State Edges Denver 69-65 To Gain Finals,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 30 December, 1956, 5; and “Mississippi State Over U. Denver By 4,” *Natchez Democrat*, 29 December 1956, 5.
- <sup>27</sup> “Vain Blocking Attempt,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 December 1956, 13.
- <sup>28</sup> “State Maroons Cage Squad Leaves North Tournament,” *Jackson State Times*, 30 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>29</sup> Wolfgang Saxon, “Vance Hartke, 84, Antiwar Senator From Indiana, Dies,” *New York Times*, 29 July 2003, 21A.
- <sup>30</sup> “Mississippi State’s Basketball Team Quits Integrated Meet,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>31</sup> “Mississippi State’s Basketball Team Quits Integrated Meet,” *Jackson Daily News*, 30 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>32</sup> “Miss State Out of ECI Tourney — Color is Why,” *Natchez Democrat*, 20 December 1956, 7.
- <sup>33</sup> “Maroons Quit Tournament, Negroes Play,” *Meridian Star*, 30 December 1956, 10.
- <sup>34</sup> “Negro Players Reported As Cause of ‘State’ Withdrawal,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 30 December 1956, 1; and “Officials Jerk Maroons from Cage Tourney,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 December 1956, 9.
- <sup>35</sup> “Noble Took State’s Team Out of Play,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

---

<sup>37</sup> Don Weiss, "Surprises Galore in Holiday Cage Action," *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December, 1956 5; and "SEC Cage Action Begins This Week," *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December 1956, 6. Weiss would go on to be known for his work in the National Football League and is often credited for creating the Super Bowl. He joined the league in 1965 as director of information and was involved in the NFL-AFL merger of 1966. In 1968, he became director of public relations for the NFL and in 1977 became the league's executive director. He retired in 1994 and died in 2003. For more on Weiss, see Don Weiss and Chuck Day, *The Making of the Super Bowl* (McGraw-Hill Professional: New York, 2003).

<sup>38</sup> Michael B. Ballard, *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003* (Jackson: Mississippi State University, 2008), 142.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Ballard, 143.

<sup>41</sup> "Maroon Cagers Face Auburn, Alabama To Launch '57 Activity," *Starkville News*, 4 January 1957, 4.

<sup>42</sup> "Ashmore Sinks 30 But State Loses To Murray, 91-80," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 January 1957, 9; and "State Drops Game 91-80 To Murray," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 January 1957, 6.

<sup>43</sup> "Mississippi Loses 91-80," *Natchez Democrat*, 1 January 1957, 7.

<sup>44</sup> "Mississippi Cagers Balk at Integration," *Jackson Daily News*, 31 December 1956, 1, 14.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Mississippi Department of History and Archives. Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 1-67-2-20-1-1-1, [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd01/003526.png&otherstuff=1|67|2|20|1|1|1|3420|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd01/003526.png&otherstuff=1|67|2|20|1|1|1|3420|) (accessed on 19 August 2009).

<sup>47</sup> Barry Jacobs, *Across the Line: Profiles in Basketball Courage: Tales of the First Black Players in the ACC and SEC* (Guilford, Conn: Lyons Press, 2008), 304.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*; and "Rebels Join Maroons in Cage Walkout," *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December 1956, 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> "Ole Miss Also Drops Tourney With Negroes," *Meridian Star*, 31 December 1956, 8.

<sup>52</sup> "Ole Miss Denied Request that Iona Drop Negro Cager," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 January 1957, 9.

<sup>53</sup> "Mississippi Cagers Balk at Integration," *Jackson Daily News*, 31 December 1956, 1.

- 
- <sup>54</sup> “Ole Miss Pulls Out of Cage Tournament,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 31 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>55</sup> “Ole Miss Denied Request That Iona Drop Negro Cager,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 January 1957, 9.
- <sup>56</sup> Phil Stroupe, “Legislators Applaud Non-Mixing Decision,” *Jackson Daily News*, 31 December 1956, 1, 14; “State, Ole Miss Praised By State Segregationists,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 January 1957, 7; and “State Solons In Praise of Action At Cage Tourney,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 January 1957, 6.
- <sup>57</sup> Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse's Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi's Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 109.
- <sup>58</sup> Yasuhiro Katagiri, *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission: Civil Rights and States' Rights* (Oxford, Miss: University Press of Mississippi, 2007) 8-9; and Emilye Crosby, *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 71.
- <sup>59</sup> Crosby, 70-71.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., and Mississippi Department of History and Archives. Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 99-103-0-286-1-1-1, [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd10/081543.png&otherstuff=99|103|0|286|1|1|1|80504](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd10/081543.png&otherstuff=99|103|0|286|1|1|1|80504) (accessed on 16 August 2009).
- <sup>61</sup> “James McDermott and Stanley Hill,” *Jackson Daily News*, 31 December 1956, 1.
- <sup>62</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 December 1956, 11.
- <sup>63</sup> Mississippi Legislature. State Concurrent Resolution 571. <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2004/html/SC/SC0571SG.htm> (accessed 16 August 2009).
- <sup>64</sup> Harold Foreman, “Harold Foreman,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 December 1956, 6.
- <sup>65</sup> Harold Foreman, “Harold Foreman,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 December 1956, 11.
- <sup>66</sup> “Ignorance is Not an Excuse,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 January 1957, 4.
- <sup>67</sup> “Hinnie,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 January 1957, 1.
- <sup>68</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 December 1956, 7.
- <sup>69</sup> “This Was Ill-Advised,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 31 December 1956, 4.
- <sup>70</sup> Billy Ray, “Press Box Views,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 31 December 1956, 8.

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Joe Mosby, "Sideline Slants," *Natchez Democrat*, 2 January 1957, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Joe Mosby, "Sideline Slants," *Natchez Democrat*, 4 January 1957, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Joe Mosby, email interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Hodding Carter, "Athletic Policies Foul Out," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 3 January 1957, 8.

<sup>77</sup> "Bad Publicity Showers Mississippi Because of Apparent Team Hypocrisy," *Jackson State Times*, 2 January 1957, 6A.

<sup>78</sup> Ann Flautt, "We Do Not Add Laurels," *Daily Mississippian* (The University Of Mississippi), 11 January 1957, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> "Rebs Cagers Invade Bama To Play Tide," *Jackson State Times*, 4 January 1957, 3B; "State Falls To Murray Teachers," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 1 January 1957, 6; "Miss. State Loses to Murray," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 January 1957, 7A; Associated Press, "SEC Cage Season Opens With Gators Meeting Bulldogs," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 3 December 1957, 5; and "Ashmore Sinks 30 But State Loses To Murray, 91-80," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 January 1957, 9.

<sup>81</sup> "Letters From Our Readers," *Jackson State Times*, 2 January 1957, 6A.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> "Letters From Our Readers," *Jackson State Times*, 4 January 1957, 6A.

<sup>84</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 January 1957, 10.

<sup>85</sup> Newspaper accounts going into the NCAA small college basketball tournament indicate the JSC had a 22-2 record and would finish the season 23-2. Records from the Jackson State University 2009-2010 media guide indicate that the Tigers' finished with a 24-1 record. Since none of the newspaper accounts from 1956-57 indicated anything different, this chapter was written with the Tigers having a 23-2 record.

<sup>86</sup> "Jackson College Quits Integrated NCAA Tourney," *Jackson State Times*, 5 March 1957, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Chris Lamb and Glen Bleske, "Covering the Integration of Baseball — A Look Back," *Editor & Publisher* 130, no. 4 (27 January 1996): 48-50; and Chris Lamb, *Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training* (Omaha, Neb.: Bison Books, 2006), 46-47.

<sup>88</sup> "Tiger Cagers Rack Up 22 Straight Wins," *Jackson Advocate*, 12 January 1957, 7.

---

<sup>89</sup> “Tiger Cagers Take 16 Straight,” *Jackson Advocate*, 19 January 1957, 7.

<sup>90</sup> “Jackson College Tennessee State Rivalry Goes To Tournament,” *Jackson Advocate*, 16 February 1957, 7.

<sup>91</sup> “Five teams Ready For NWAA Cage Tournament This Week At Tenn. State,” *Jackson Advocate*, 23 February 1957, 7.

<sup>92</sup> “Name All-NWAA Cage Team,” *Jackson Advocate*, 1 March 1957, 7.

<sup>93</sup> “Jackson College Five Leaves Cage Tourney,” *Jackson Advocate*, 9 March 1957, 7.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Neil R. McMillen, *An Oral History with Mr. Percy Greene*, Mississippi Oral History Program, the University of Southern Mississippi, vol. 286, 1989.  
<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/coh&CISOPTR=2796&REC=1>  
(Accessed 17 August 2009).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 63-64.

<sup>98</sup> Davies, 65.

<sup>99</sup> Neil R. McMillen, *An Oral History with Mr. Percy Greene*, Mississippi Oral History Program, the University of Southern Mississippi, vol. 286, 1989.  
<http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/coh&CISOPTR=2796&REC=1>  
(Accessed 17 August 2009).

<sup>100</sup> Charles A. Simmons, *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage during National Crises, 1827-1965* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1998), 8.

<sup>101</sup> Simmons, 63, 67, and 72.

<sup>102</sup> John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 74-75; and Davies, 69-70.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. Dittmer cited a 1957 editorial in the *Jackson Advocate* where Greene wrote, “The greatest need in Jackson, in Mississippi, and in the rest of the South is more and more ‘Uncle Toms.’” Similar commentary by Greene on such civil rights-based topics like the Freedom Riders, the NAACP, *Brown vs. Board of Education* can be found in the following: Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice Pivotal Moments in American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 333; Kari A. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 83-85; and Linda Royster Beito, *Black Maverick: T. R. M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 91.

---

<sup>104</sup> Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 33-34.

<sup>105</sup> Q.V. Sykes, "Sykes Says," *Blue and White Flash* (Jackson State College), March 1957, 8.

<sup>106</sup> "Jackson State Tourney Tilt Slated Here," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1957, 9.

<sup>107</sup> "Jackson State Wins Berth In NCAA Tourney," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1957, 13.

<sup>108</sup> "Jackson State Wins Initial Tourney Game," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1957, 1D.

<sup>109</sup> "Jackson College Wins Opener In NCAA Tourney," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 March 1957, 2B.

<sup>110</sup> Douglas Starr, "Jackson College Five Leaves Cage Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1957, 1; Douglas Starr, "Jackson State Withdraws From NCAA Tourney," *Natchez Democrat*, 6 March 1957, 7; "Jackson State Withdraws From Small College Meet," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1957, 13; "Jackson College is Out of Tourney," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 March 1957, 8; "Jackson College Quits NCAA Tourney Due To Segregation Policy," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 March 1957, 4B; "Jackson College Not In NCAA Cage Tournament," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 6 March 1957, 13; "Jackson State College For Negroes Withdraws From NCAA Small College Event," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 March 1957, 16; "Jackson State Negro Five Pulls From Tournament," *Enterprise-Journal*, 6 March 1957, 3; and "Jackson Negroes' College Pulls Out Of NCAA Action," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 March 1957, 1, 7.

<sup>111</sup> Douglas Starr, "Jackson College Five Leaves Cage Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1957, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Dr. Douglas Starr, interview with author, 30 July 2009.

<sup>113</sup> Myrlie Evers-Williams, and Manning Marable, *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters and Speeches*, (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005), 287.

<sup>114</sup> Williams and Marable, 290.

<sup>115</sup> Dittmer, 88, 116; and Alex Poinsett, "President's Action Chokes Off," *Jet*, 26 October 1961, 24-27. In Poinsett's article, Reddix's decision to eliminate the school's student government was attributed, in part, to Jackson State's lack of accreditation, making it a real possibility that the school would be closed in response to the demonstrations. Reddix was also asked about a year-old incident where hundreds of Jackson State students protested the arrest of nine Tougaloo Christian College students who were staging a "study-in" at the local library in Jackson. Eyewitnesses at the demonstration claimed that Reddix, while trying to break up the demonstration, pushed a female student to the ground during a demonstration after she allegedly called him an "Uncle Tom." Reddix said the incident was a misunderstanding and the student fell when she lost her balance after stepping into a ditch. Williams told *Jet* that he did not harbor any resentment towards Reddix and understood the justification for his decision. Dittmer's book also references both boycotts and Reddix's response. Further information on the Jackson State protest to the Tougaloo arrests can be

---

found here: Wallace Dabbs, "Jackson State College Students Stage Protest," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 March 1961, 1 and Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 2-72-1-81-1-2-1.

<sup>116</sup> Jacob L. Reddix, *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness: The Memoirs of Jacob L. Reddix* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), 144.

<sup>117</sup> Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 1-69-0-4-2-1-1,  
[http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd01/004761.png&otherstuff=1|69|0|4|2|1|1|4643|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd01/004761.png&otherstuff=1|69|0|4|2|1|1|4643|) (accessed on 12 August 2009) and Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 1-75-0-6-1-1-1,  
[http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd01/005604.png&otherstuff=1|75|0|6|1|1|1|5452|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd01/005604.png&otherstuff=1|75|0|6|1|1|1|5452|) (accessed on 12 August 2009).

<sup>118</sup> Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 6-45-5-57-1-1-1,  
[http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd06/047506.png&otherstuff=6|45|5|57|1|1|1|46816|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd06/047506.png&otherstuff=6|45|5|57|1|1|1|46816|) (accessed on 12 August 2009) and SCR ID # 99-48-0-175-1-1-1,  
[http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commission/images/png/cd10/080428.png&otherstuff=99|48|0|175|1|1|1|179395|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commission/images/png/cd10/080428.png&otherstuff=99|48|0|175|1|1|1|179395|) (accessed on 12 August 2009). Letters written by Erle Johnston, Jr. indicate that the commission was waging an undercover campaign to remove Williams, who was appointed by Aaron Henry, from her position as MAP director. From these files, it is unclear whether or not Reddix had knowledge of their motives.

<sup>119</sup> Will D. Campbell, *Robert G. Clark's Journey to the House: A Black Politician's Story* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 93.

<sup>120</sup> "Jackson College Quits Integrated NCAA Tourney," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1957, 3; and "State Team Withdraws From Tourney," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1957, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Dr. Douglas Starr, interview with author, 30 July 2009.

<sup>122</sup> "Jackson College Students Protest Exit of Team," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1957, 6.

<sup>123</sup> "Jackson State Plans Protest of Withdrawal," *Jackson State Times*, 6 March 1957, 9A.

<sup>124</sup> "Say Negro Students Protest Withdrawal From NCAA Tourney," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 March 1957, 1.

<sup>125</sup> "NCAA Reports Advance After College Quits," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 March 1957, 10.

<sup>126</sup> Joe Mosby, email interview with author, 23 July 2009.



---

<sup>127</sup> “Blow to Morale,” *Jackson State Times*, 11 March 1957, 6A.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> “Reader Ashamed,” *Jackson State Times*, 13 March 1957, 8A.

<sup>130</sup> “Protests Exclusion of Jackson College,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1957, 6.

<sup>131</sup> “Deplores Efforts To Mix The Race,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1957, 10.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Harold Foreman, “Harold Foreman,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1957, 11.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> “Darkhorse To Battle Choice In NCAA Meet,” *Jackson State Times*, 15 March 1957, 4B; Orlo Robertson, “Lesser Lights Reducing Field In NCAA Tourney,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 14 March 1957; “College Basketball,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 16 March 1957, 10; and “Cage Scores,” *Jackson State Times*, 16 March 1957, 16.

<sup>136</sup> Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., *An Oral History with Dr. Harrison B. Wilson*, Special Collections, Old Dominion University, 1978.  
<http://www.lib.odu.edu/special/oralhistory/tidewater/wilsonhtranscript.html> (accessed on 12 August 2009).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Norfolk State University. History. <http://www.nsu.edu/inauguration/NSUPresidents.html> (accessed on 12 August 2009).

## CHAPTER IV

## WE'LL STAY AT HOME AND TELL EVERYBODY WE'RE THE BEST

In 1959, the Mississippi State University basketball team experienced what still ranks as one of the greatest seasons in school history. Under the leadership of the colorful James “Babe” McCarthy and behind the play of All-American and future Basketball Hall of Fame member Bailey Howell, the Maroons finished the season with a record of 24-1 and the school’s first Southeastern Conference basketball championship. As the champions of the SEC, the team received the right to participate in the National Collegiate Athletic Association national championship tournament. However, what appeared to be an honor for the team’s on-court play turned into a fierce debate about integration and the possible violation of the state’s unwritten law. The NCAA tournament fielded mixed teams, making it possible that the Maroons would face black players during the course of the postseason. Despite the team’s desires for a national championship, MSU president Ben Hilbun announced that, rather than test the segregational standards of the Magnolia State, the Maroons would honor the gentleman’s agreement and abstain from postseason play. When asked by *Jackson Daily News* sports reporter Lee Baker about the decision after MSU’s title-clinching victory over Ole Miss on February 28, 1959, McCarthy said, “We’ll stay at home and tell everybody we’re the best.”<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the Maroons as a college basketball power placed McCarthy’s squad in the middle of a firestorm that centered on the Closed Society’s tradition of segregation. From the perspective of the press, the merits of violating the unwritten law was the subject of countless news articles, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor that, more or less, supported Mississippi’s white way of life and gave little credence to the athletic and, more importantly, the social justification for integration. Much like the historic participation of the Jones County Junior College football team in the Junior Rose Bowl, the 1959 Mississippi State basketball team was seen as a legitimate threat to the Closed Society and a

possible catalyst for integration. Sandwiched between the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the 1962 integration of the University of Mississippi, the 1958-59 basketball season for the Maroons came with the Closed Society at optimum power, a fact that was evident in the pages of the state's newspapers. While a minority of journalists, including Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* and sports editor Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times*, advocated an MSU trek into the integrated postseason, most reporters and editors in the Magnolia State condemned the Starkville-based basketball team for even considering such an opportunity. Led by Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, a segment of the journalistic population professed their belief in the Closed Society, segregation, and the unwritten law and painted the Maroons as an internal threat of sorts to their white way of life. Other reporters, including those on the sports desk, voiced no opinion on the matter, silently throwing their support behind the unwritten law and enforcing the state's segregationist standard. The Maroons and their 1958-59 campaign were treated no differently from other social threats to segregation and were dismissed by the journalistic purveyors of the Closed Society, thus demonstrating the power and influence of Ward and his comrades.

In this chapter, the debate surrounding the Maroons and the NCAA tournament was examined in all news articles, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor published in select Magnolia State newspapers from MSU's February 9, 1959, victory over the favored University of Kentucky Wildcats through the conclusion of the season and Hilburn's March 1959 announcement of the Maroons' absence from the integrated postseason tournament. The newspapers selected for examination were the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson State Times*, *Hattiesburg American*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Commercial Dispatch* in Columbus, the *Starkville Daily News*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi. These publications were chosen based on prominence within the state, known ideological views on race relations, specifically integration, and proximity to Starkville, the

home base of the Maroons. During this 21-day period, the Magnolia State's news and sports press served as an extension of the Closed Society and, by exercising ignorance of or outright contempt for the possibility of integrated competition, suppressed any pro-NCAA tournament feelings within its audience or from the journalistic minority. As a whole, rather than consider the possibility and/or the merits of an NCAA tournament berth for the Maroons, the press in the Magnolia State preserved the segregational beliefs of the state and helped keep college basketball a white-only venture.

### Conquering Kentucky

Legitimizing the Maroons' season would come in the form of facing defending national champion the University of Kentucky of coaching legend Adolph Rupp. On February 9, 1959, the 18-1 Maroons faced the 18-1 Wildcats in Starkville.<sup>2</sup> An Associated Press article published in the *Delta Democrat-Times* was the only reminder of a possible NCAA tournament berth as the anonymous author wrote that Kentucky was the favorite for a postseason bid, regardless of the outcome. "State officials in the past have refused to permit the Maroons from taking part in tournaments where they would have to play against Negroes," wrote the anonymous author.<sup>3</sup> For MSU, a win would virtually lock up the SEC championship and a possible bid in the NCAA tournament in March, as all five remaining opponents on its schedule had losing records. Meanwhile, Kentucky needed a victory to keep pace with Auburn University, which had a 16-0 record at the time. *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Carl Walters wrote that the contest was the Maroons' game of the year, and a victory would lead to a degree of prominence in the basketball nation, but no reference to the NCAA tournament was made.<sup>4</sup>

Mississippi State would go on to defeat the defending champions and top ranked Wildcats 66-58 in what *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer Robert Fulton called "a humiliating defeat" for Rupp's charges.<sup>5</sup> Howell led the Maroons with 27 points and 17 rebounds, as the team shot 53 percent from the floor to Kentucky's 35 percent.<sup>6</sup> Billy Rainey, *Meridian Star*

sports editor, described the contest as a one-sided affair and said the Maroons ran away with the game after establishing a 5-4 lead after six minutes and never fell behind.<sup>7</sup> McCarthy, who was met with a standing ovation by those in attendance, won his 31<sup>st</sup> game in a row and handed his new rival Rupp his second loss of the 1959 season. “This was simply great. I have to admit, we’ve got a pretty good ball club,” the joyous McCarthy said to *Jackson State Times* sports reporter Jim Roden.<sup>8</sup> McCarthy boasted to the Associated Press, “We think we can beat anybody in the United States at Mississippi State.”<sup>9</sup> Beaming with pride, the *Jackson Daily News* used its February 11, 1959, edition of “Hinny” to praise the Maroons for its landmark victory.<sup>10</sup>

UPI accounts identified the Maroons as a direct threat to the SEC championship and, possibly, an NCAA berth.<sup>11</sup> The *Jackson State Times* published a UPI article by an anonymous author that detailed the team’s desire to play in the NCAA tournament if the opportunity presented itself. The unwritten law was described as an “iron clad policy against Mississippi teams playing teams that have members of the opposite race,” and its creation was credited to “state officials, legislators who appropriate money to state-supported schools and college officials.”<sup>12</sup> Howell, the team’s on-court leader, told UPI, “I would want to go. All the boys would want to and we will if they let us.” Another UPI account published in the *Jackson Daily News* focused on the Maroons’ victory but served as more of a wrap-up piece on the entire conference and was absent of any reference to the NCAA tournament.<sup>13</sup> With such an impressive performance, it was only a matter of time before the question of the NCAA tournament would arise.

#### A NCAA Bid Becomes a Possibility

In the aftermath of the win over the Wildcats, the majority of Mississippi’s newspapers depended on wire articles to depict MSU’s chances at the NCAA tournament, a way to defer any negative attention to the AP or UPI. The Jackson-based *Clarion-Ledger* published an AP article on February 11, 1959, that identified the Maroons as a likely recipient

for an NCAA berth because undefeated Auburn, the SEC's first-place team, was on probation and ineligible for tournament play. McCarthy declined to comment on MSU's chances of playing in the integrated postseason.<sup>14</sup>

The *Jackson State Times* followed suit, publishing a UPI article on February 11, 1959, in which Rupp said he still felt his team was the favorite for the NCAA bid because of Auburn's ineligibility and State's inability to participate in the tournament "for reason which you all know."<sup>15</sup> From a journalistic perspective, what was more telling was the *Jackson State Times'* placement of the article in relation to a small sidebar on the page. While Rupp's confidence in an NCAA bid shared top billing on the page with a brief profile on State superstar Howell from David M. Moffit of UPI, a short sidebar detailing governor J. P. Coleman's claim that he had no authority over the Maroons appeared below both accounts.<sup>16</sup> The same article appeared in the *Delta Democrat-Times* and the *Commercial Dispatch*.<sup>17</sup> While Coleman's comments could have given the Maroon faithful hope, the secondary placement of the article to one that assumed another Wildcat tournament bid had to seem disheartening. Moffit's profile of Howell did not reference the NCAA tournament.<sup>18</sup> The *Meridian Star* also published two Maroon-related articles; neither referenced the possibility of postseason play or the SEC championship.<sup>19</sup>

UPI sports scribe Cliff Sessions focused on the Magnolia State's latest race-based controversy, which had risen due to the Maroons' victory. Sessions, who wrote that MSU had an easy path to the SEC championship, paid particular attention to the unwritten law, which he described as "an unwritten, iron-clad policy against Mississippi teams meeting racially-integrated teams."<sup>20</sup> Sessions quoted State Rep. Russell Fox of Claiborne County, who said, "You can compromise method and manner but you cannot compromise basic principle without sacrifice in the major issue involved. . . . Pride in one basketball team won't change the people's basic belief. There is a principle involved." Fox had been one of the original advocates of the unwritten law in 1956.<sup>21</sup> William J. "Bill" Simmons of the Citizens' Council

was also quoted, saying that state officials had to make the decision and had to face the eventual consequences.<sup>22</sup> Described a “suave sophisticated zealot,” Simmons joined the Citizens’ Council after the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision and feared the possibility of a “black-dominated government.”<sup>23</sup> Sessions, who would go on to become the press secretary for Attorney General Ramsey Clark, was instrumental in the coverage of Medger Evers and opened his home to the civil rights activist. A native of Bolton, Mississippi, Sessions graduated from Mississippi Southern College in 1955 and became a bureau manager in his home state for the AP from 1957 through 1964.<sup>24</sup> The son of an Episcopal minister, Sessions believed that segregation was necessary, but his years as a journalist began to sway the newsman’s beliefs.<sup>25</sup>

McCarthy’s success at Mississippi State began to breed feeders from other colleges and universities. After the Kentucky victory, UPI reported that the University of Texas contacted McCarthy about its vacant head basketball coach position, although he denied having an interest.<sup>26</sup> Both MSU Athletic Director Ed Olle and McCarthy confirmed to the *Jackson State Times’* McDowell that the Longhorns had contacted the Maroons’ leader, but McCarthy said “he would rather wait until the completion of the current season before discussing it.”<sup>27</sup> McDowell, whose editorial work is discussed in detail later in this chapter, concluded the article by asking his audience for its opinion on the MSU-NCAA debate, an uncommon journalistic occurrence outside of columns and editorials. Days later, the *Jackson State Times* sports editor published the letters verbatim. Details of that article can be found later in this chapter.

On February 13, 1959, the attention quickly switched to the Maroons’ upcoming battle with the University of Florida, who had a record of 7-11. The *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson State Times*, and the Biloxi-based *Daily Herald* all published articles that previewed the game, but none of them referenced the impending NCAA controversy.<sup>28</sup> The Maroons would go on to dominate the Gators 105-68 in the February 14, 1959, contest.<sup>29</sup> A UPI

account of the win, found in the *Jackson State Times* and the *Meridian Star*, placed State in the position of NCAA tournament favorites if the team could win the remaining games on its schedule.<sup>30</sup>

After the victory over the Gators, Ed Wilks of the AP wrote a February 16, 1959, preview of the upcoming week of NCAA basketball and predicted that the SEC's tournament representative would come from either Starkville or Lexington. "The Wildcats could make it even with a third-place finish should Mississippi State pass up the trip because of race problems," Wilks wrote.<sup>31</sup> A similar sentiment was expressed by an unknown UPI reporter who previewed MSU's February 16, 1959, game against the University of Georgia, writing, "High scoring Bailey Howell and his Mississippi State teammates are favored to take another step towards the NCAA playoffs," and predicted a win over the Bulldogs.<sup>32</sup> AP sports writer Mercer Bailey, who also previewed the game, predicted an easy victory for the MSU but failed to mention the NCAA tournament.<sup>33</sup> The Maroons defeated the University of Georgia on February 16, 1959, by a final tally of 76-56, pushing its record to 21-1. The AP article of MSU's dominating win painted an NCAA bid as a distant possibility.<sup>34</sup> Reporters for both UPI and AP failed to reference State's postseason chances.<sup>35</sup>

On the same day State defeated the Bulldogs, Berry Reece of the *Jackson Daily News* reported that Coleman again stressed his inability to interfere in the Mississippi State-NCAA tournament debate, calling a potential decision "a matter of policy."<sup>36</sup> According to AP and UPI accounts of Coleman's comments, the segregationist governor pointed to Mississippi's governing body as the determining factor in the debate. "The Legislature has the power of the purse strings. That's obvious," Coleman said to an anonymous AP reporter, referring the state's threat to cut appropriations for any university that participated in integrated competition.<sup>37</sup> The unknown author also explained that there was no state law against integrated athletics, but the "Legislature has indicated appropriations would be cut for any school that participate in them (integrated competition)."<sup>38</sup> Coleman, who acknowledged that



he was receiving more and more inquiries about the Maroons and their possible NCAA bid, told UPI that he had no more authority on the matter “than any other citizen of Mississippi,” and it was ultimately up to MSU and the State College Board. Along those lines, both the *Jackson State Times* and UPI reported that R. D. Morrow, president of the State College Board, said he doubted that the board would take any action or have anything to say about a potential NCAA bid for the Maroons during its upcoming meeting. Morrow reiterated that the decisions in those matters were usually left up to the president of the institution in question.<sup>39</sup> The AP article on Coleman’s statements that appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger*, *Hattiesburg American*, the *Laurel Leader-Call*, and the *Daily Herald* all stated that there was no law in Mississippi prohibiting integrated athletics outside of the state, a detail left out of Reese’s work.

Despite all of the attention on a potential NCAA bid, Howell was having a season for the ages. As Moffit wrote in a profile of the MSU star, Howell was quickly approaching the single season and career records for scoring at MSU.<sup>40</sup> Howell averaged 28.6 points a game — third best in the nation. Moffit did not mention the NCAA tournament. Similar commentary could be found in an AP story on Howell’s season and his ascent in the SEC record books for most points in a career, challenging the mark set by LSU’s Bob Pettit three years earlier.<sup>41</sup>

The day after his work on Howell appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger*, Moffit wrote a February 18, 1959, article that was featured in the Hederman-owned publication on the race for the SEC championship and the subsequent NCAA tournament bid. Despite MSU’s first-place status, Moffit identified Kentucky as the tournament favorite. “The folks in Mississippi are quite rigid when it comes to the playing against Negroes – either in state or out . . . the Wildcats’ hopes for a fifth NCAA crown now depends almost entirely on the segregation sentiments of deep south Mississippi,” the UPI sports reporter wrote.<sup>42</sup>

MSU Students Vote for the Team to Play

While the chances of the Maroons engaging integrated competition remained a hot-button topic in the Magnolia State, the students at Mississippi State in an almost unanimous vote, “overwhelmingly” voted to play in the NCAA tournament if the team were to receive a bid.<sup>43</sup> Morrow again told the AP that the decision to play was Hilbun’s, to which the MSU president said the students’ vote would have no impact. School officials also denounced any rumors of protests on the part of the student body if the team bypassed in the NCAA tournament. Robert “Tutt” Patterson, secretary of the executive committee of the Citizens’ Council, told reporters, “This organization is unalterably opposed to integration of the races whatever may be the disguise. This includes basketball games and all other athletic and scholastic contests.”<sup>44</sup> A graduate and former football star with the Maroons, Patterson had founded the Citizens’ Council in 1953 after he learned about the various school desegregation cases that would ultimately lead to the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case.<sup>45</sup> After the murder of Emmitt Till, Patterson defended the council from charges of extremism, claiming that the Citizens’ Council helped keep the white community at bay and maintained peace.<sup>46</sup>

While both the *Clarion-Ledger* and *Meridian Star* reported on the student vote, both publications focused more on the total number of students who participated and less on the outcome, attacking the validity of the election. The *Clarion-Ledger* called the student vote of 973 for and 162 against misleading because only 25 percent of the 4,333-student population participated in the election.<sup>47</sup> An anonymous source told the *Clarion-Ledger* that Hilbun said, “It was a foregone conclusion that MSU would not attend the NCAA tournament.”<sup>48</sup>

The *Meridian Star*’s account of the election varied from the version that appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger* in that the article expressed a degree of surprise on behalf of the anonymous author. “A majority of students at Mississippi State University apparently are not disturbed over the question as to whether the school’s high-riding basketball team will be permitted to participate in the racially-integrated NCAA tournament,” the article’s lead read.<sup>49</sup> The author, who assumed the student body would express dismay over the possibility

of integrated play, expressed an opinion on behalf of the *Star* and violated the journalistic notion of objectivity. The *Star*'s headline also indicated that the election attracted "little interest" and was not well received on campus because "around 75 percent of the students at the university failed to vote."<sup>50</sup> Because of the subjective nature of the word "interest," such a headline could have been misleading.

Surprisingly, MSU's student newspaper *The Reflector* also seemed to downplay the overall importance of the student vote. In the paper's only article on the 1959 MSU-NCAA debate, student Ray Sadler wrote, "The ballot, which did not deal with segregation or integration, was merely a statement as to whether or not the Maroons should be allowed to participate in the national tournament, something no other Maroon club had accomplished previously."<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the *Jackson State Times* countered with news that 86 percent of MSU's 1,135 voting students wanted the team to participate in the NCAA tournament if the Maroons were to win the SEC title.<sup>52</sup> "Whether a Mississippi team can participate in integrated sports outside of the state isn't stated in any statute," the anonymous *Jackson State Times* reporter wrote. "Unwritten policy has been not to enter Mississippi teams in integrated athletic contests."<sup>53</sup> Other publications, such as *Jackson Daily News* and the *Starkville News*, did not publish an article on the student vote.

Members of the national press, specifically *Sports Illustrated*, caught wind of the Maroons' successful season and the accompanying debate. The sports magazine published an article on MSU's 1959 campaign and, citing a "strong statewide rumor," reporter Dudley Doust wrote that if the school refused to accept an invitation to the NCAA tournament, McCarthy would resign from his post to take the job at the University of Texas and students on the Starkville campus would march on the capital.<sup>54</sup> In the Mississippi press, there was no evidence of a student protest or of McCarthy's future resignation. "There is nothing further from the truth. I haven't even considered resigning," McCarthy told reporters in response to

Doust's claim.<sup>55</sup> McDowell would later write that Doust's work was "practically entirely complementary."<sup>56</sup>

After a meeting of the State College Board, secretary E. R. Jobe reiterated Morrow's comments in the February 20, 1959, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, telling an unknown author that the board had "no long standing regulation against interracial athletics," but, based on the actions of colleges and universities in the past, there was an understanding that interracial athletics were prohibited.<sup>57</sup> The following day, in an attempt to present a consensus of opinion from the College Board, Reece polled Mississippi's educational governing body with little success. The board declined to answer any questions pertaining to a possible NCAA bid for the Maroons.<sup>58</sup> Jobe, in particular, took issue with the *Jackson Daily News* reporter, saying, "I don't think that is a proper question for you to ask me."<sup>59</sup> S. R. Evans of Greenwood added that he was against the Maroons playing in the NCAA tournament because he had to go with board policy "which was against playing teams with Negroes on them — at least it was the last time it came up."<sup>60</sup> Only Dudley Bridgforth of Nesbitt told Reece that the team should play, although he professed his segregational beliefs. The *Daily Herald* in Biloxi published an article on Reece's work by the AP.<sup>61</sup>

The continued success of the team only fueled the fear that the segregated Maroons would play in the integrated tournament, as echoed by an AP article in the February 21, 1959, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*.<sup>62</sup> As the unwritten law faced this homegrown barrage from Mississippi State, at least two papers in the Magnolia State chose to educate its audience on the gentleman's agreement. Both the *Delta Democrat-Times* and the *Meridian Star* published an UPI article from John Herbers that explained the origins of the unwritten law. While the article repeated much of the information found in Chapter III of this dissertation, what was more significant were the comments made by Mississippi House Speaker Walter Sillers, who told Herbers that "there's no doubt in my mind" that the team should not play in the NCAA tournament.<sup>63</sup> In a violation of journalistic balance, Herbers editorialized and claimed that

members of the legislature were “passing the buck like a hot potato and Gov. Coleman said the legislature should be polled.”<sup>64</sup>

#### The Maroons Close in on the SEC Title

While the debate continued, the Maroons successfully played out their remaining basketball docket. The team defeated a 9-13 Louisiana State University squad 75-67 on February 22, 1959, which moved them into a tie for the SEC lead with Auburn, who was soundly defeated by Kentucky 75-56.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, state journalists seemed to continue to ignore the prospects of a NCAA tournament bid for the Maroons, leaving such recognition to members of the AP and UPI. According to AP sports writer Bailey, while the victory left the SEC-NCAA representative up for grabs, “Whether State officials will permit Mississippi State to go is doubtful because of the race issue.”<sup>66</sup> An anonymous author for UPI wrote that a win against the Green Wave of Tulane on February 23, 1959, would clinch the SEC title and a place in the NCAA tournament but “the High flying Maroons may have to reject the berth in the national championship despite a strong desire to participate. Mississippi’s segregation policies include an unwritten law keeping its teams out of racially-integrated athletic events.”<sup>67</sup>

One of the few state-based journalists who wrote freely about the date, McDowell penned an article for the *Jackson State Times* that focused on Hilbun and the decision the Mississippi State president faced. Comparing Hilbun to a “western marshal walking down that lowly street on High Noon,” McDowell called the entire controversy a “buck-passing episode” and placed the lack of public and political support on fear of action from the Citizens’ Council.<sup>68</sup> In detailing the various statements made from members of the State College Board and Coleman, McDowell painted Hilbun in a sympathetic light, writing, “Now Mr. Ben has his toughest decision of all to make with apparently everyone in Mississippi adopting a hands-off attitude.”<sup>69</sup> He concluded by calling the debate “the most controversial racial problem since Mississippi finally accepted the integrated veteran’s hospital in Jackson.

The hospital was accepted for the good of Mississippians. Perhaps a national championship isn't."<sup>70</sup> Rather than focus on the decision that faced Hilbun, McDowell objected to the MSU president's quandary and questioned if Mississippi was deserving of a national championship, making an editorial statement in the confines of a news article.

The Maroons defeated the Tulane Green Wave 65-51 on February 23, 1959, as Howell broke Bob Pettit's career SEC scoring record with 32 points. With the win and a 56-55 Auburn loss to Tennessee, the Maroons officially clinched a tie for the SEC championship.<sup>71</sup> While McCarthy told the AP that his team was one of the best in the country, he stopped short of lobbying for permission to play in the tournament.<sup>72</sup> Some UPI accounts included McCarthy saying, "We are four games from the national championship. I would love to get a chance to play those four games. So would my boys."<sup>73</sup> Other articles, such as the one that appeared in the *Meridian Star*, lacked such comments.<sup>74</sup>

McDowell covered the SEC-clinched victory for the *Jackson State Times* and, in an editorial statement, argued that the team was one of, if not the best, in the nation. "No major college team in America has a record to compare to the mighty Mississippians who also clinched the Dixie Dozen's NCAA tournament berth with the 14 point decision," wrote the *Jackson State Times* sports editor.<sup>75</sup> In a similar UPI account published in the *Jackson State Times*, Hilbun simply said of his impending decision, "It's a tough spot to be in."<sup>76</sup>

#### Hilbun Decides to Stay Home

On February 25, 1959, the AP reported that, despite MSU's remaining contest with arch rival Ole Miss, the team would have the right to be SEC representative in the NCAA tournament even if they finished tied with 11-2 Auburn and Kentucky based on the Maroons head-to-head victory over the Wildcats.<sup>77</sup> Butler of the AP wrote that State, with its clinching of a partial share of the SEC championship, had a berth in the NCAA tournament if officials within Mississippi would let the team play.<sup>78</sup> Despite being promised as the SEC representative in the postseason quest for the national championship, the unknown AP

reporter predicted that the Maroons would likely wear its SEC crown at home as “Mississippi looks with jaundiced eye on its state supported schools playing teams that have Negro players — almost a certainty in the NCAA playoff.”<sup>79</sup> Both the AP and UPI reported that Hilbun would make a decision in the next five days.<sup>80</sup>

Two days before MSU’s contest with the Rebels, both the AP and UPI reported that Hilbun would make his decision public after the game, and it was expected that the MSU president would say no. The UPI article, written by an anonymous author, said Hilbun had reached a decision “but obviously it was a negative one.”<sup>81</sup> McCarthy, who in the future would campaign for MSU’s participation in the NCAA tournament, told UPI that nothing would be official until after the game, but he was interested in what the average Mississippian thought. “As a real true segregationist bred in Mississippi I would not want to jeopardize the segregation cause of my state,” McCarthy said. “If the majority of white Mississippians feel that we should go, certainly I think that the boys have earned the right to go. If the majority of white Mississippians think they shouldn’t go, I would be the first to say we would not step foot out of Mississippi to enter a racially-mixed contest.” The AP, citing “informed sources” out of Starkville and Jackson, home of the State College Board, also reported that it was expected the State would bypass the NCAA tournament.<sup>82</sup> Similar accounts appeared in both the *Jackson State Times* and the *Jackson Daily News*, neither of which had bylines or wire affiliation. In the *Jackson State Times* article, Hilbun said that McCarthy asked the president to wait to make his decision public until after Mississippi State’s last game because it could have been “demoralizing to the team,” indicating that Hilbun had already decided to keep the Maroons out of the NCAA tournament.<sup>83</sup> The same could be said for the *Jackson Daily News* version, which stated that odds for rejecting an NCAA bid were “extremely high” according to a source close to the administration.<sup>84</sup>

While the debate was only days away for culminating with Hilbun’s announcement, others in positions of power in the Magnolia State were making their opinions on the matter

known. Rep. Brown Williams of Philadelphia and a candidate for lieutenant governor, told *Jackson State Times* reporter George Whittington that he would prohibit the Maroons from playing in the national championship tournament. "We can't be partly integrated and still believe in the Sothern way of life. Let's say that I'm no moderate. I think the legislature made it self clear on what it thought of after such contest in 1956," said Williams in a reference to the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl and the original proposal of the unwritten law.<sup>85</sup>

While MSU had clinched, at worst, a tie for the conference title, there was still hope in Kentucky and Auburn for a State upset at the hands of SEC doormat Ole Miss.<sup>86</sup> Going into the contest, the Maroons were a NCAA best 23-1 and had won 14 straight games since a January 3, 1959, loss to the Plainsmen of Auburn. The Rebels came into the game with a 1-12 conference record but were led by the SEC's second-leading scorer Jack Walters, who averaged 19 points per game.<sup>87</sup> A number of previews of the contest failed to mention anything involving the NCAA tournament.<sup>88</sup> The day before the game, the AP again reported that Hilbun was expected to reject the bid after the game against Ole Miss, regardless of the outcome. Sources close to the school told the anonymous author that Hilbun's decision "must be in line with the state's policy against whites participating with Negroes, even outside of Mississippi."<sup>89</sup>

A day before the final contest, McCarthy was awarded with a new four-year contract and a "substantial salary increase" from athletic director C. R. Noble.<sup>90</sup> McCarthy professed his loyalty and admiration for Mississippi State to the press, regardless of Hilbun's opinions on the NCAA tourney. "No matter what decision may be reached with reference to participation in the NCAA basketball tournament, I plan to remain at Mississippi State," the coach said.<sup>91</sup> UPI's Cliff Sessions wrote that McCarthy received the new contract and pay raise "after toning down public statements about the Maroons playing in the NCAA tournament."<sup>92</sup> Session, in attributing McCarthy's quotes, wrote that the coach again called himself a true segregationist. "I stand for the same things Mississippians have always stood



for,” McCarthy said. “I am happy to make my stand alongside the people of Mississippi.”<sup>93</sup> McCarthy later told UPI he felt that people should be loyal to their employers and thought that the lack of an NCAA appearance would not hurt the team or its prospects for a successful future.<sup>94</sup> According to the unknown author, McCarthy “expressed an intense desire to enter the tournament but after conferences with Hilbun he said he wouldn’t want to do anything ‘to jeopardize the segregation cause.’”<sup>95</sup>

In his final article before the Maroons battled Ole Miss, *Jackson State Times* sports editor McDowell again editorialized in a news-based account, writing that Kentucky would likely be the SEC representative in the NCAA tournament “thanks to Magnolia State hospitality and a keen desire not to crawl out on a limb,” expressing a degree of displeasure with the upcoming decision.<sup>96</sup> McDowell continued his opinion-based script, defending the embattled MSU president. “It’s election year in Mississippi and politicians are frowning on saying anything one way or another about State seeking the national title,” McDowell wrote. “In a spectacular game of ‘buck passing’ President Hilbun was tagged it by the Board of Trustees, State Institutions of Higher Learning, after Governor J. P. Coleman had correctly said it was up to the Board to decide.”<sup>97</sup> The article, while appearing to be a legitimate news account of MSU’s NCAA hopes, was a forum for McDowell’s opinion and, regardless of “Mississippi Red’s” nod to social progress on the hardwood, violated the journalistic notion of objectivity.

In what was described as a slow, piddling contest, the Maroons defeated Ole Miss 23-16 to win the SEC championship, to which *Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray wrote, “That’s not a typographical error.”<sup>98</sup> Ole Miss head coach Bonnie “Country” Graham employed slow-down tactics in response to the high-scoring Howell, who was held to seven points and failed to eclipse the SEC’s all-time single season scoring record, which was held by former teammate Jim Ashmore.<sup>99</sup> However, of larger consequence, Hilbun

announced that the MSU team would not accept a bid to the integrated NCAA tournament, citing the unwritten law in the following passage as justification:

Under long-standing policies and customs of the State of Mississippi, athletic teams of the institutions of higher learning have not engaged in competition with integrated teams or participated in tournaments in which integrated teams were entered. This policy, so far as I know, has not been discarded or revised. Therefore, the basketball team at Mississippi State University will not compete in the NCAA tournament this year. From the standpoint of basketball alone, I wish it were possible for our fine team to participate in the tournament. However, in this situation there are great issues involved, which transcend mere athletic competition. On these issues and where matters of principle are involved, I have and will always cast my lot with, and stand beside, my people — the people who have been good to me and who, as far as I am concerned, are the greatest people in the world.<sup>100</sup>

McCarthy told Baker that he agreed with the decision and confidently proclaimed the Maroons college basketball's top squad. "We'll stay at home and tell everybody we're the best," the MSU head coach said to Baker.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, McCarthy told McDowell, "Well, at least we can always say that we had the best team in the country and I think winning the (SEC) championship was mighty fine."<sup>102</sup> The SEC title would be MSU's first basketball championship since they had won the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association title in 1923.<sup>103</sup>

Only a day later, on March 2, 1959, AP sports writers Vernon Butler and Hugh Fullerton, Jr., reported that Kentucky would go on to the NCAA tournament in MSU's place. Butler said that MSU had fallen victim to the integration issue, and Hilbun's decision was based upon his inability to change the unwritten law.<sup>104</sup> In a different sentiment expressed by Butler, Fullerton, Jr., wrote that State was serving as a steward of Mississippi tradition and decided to "honor" the unwritten law.<sup>105</sup> Similar commentary could be found in an AP article published in the *Delta Democrat-Times* with the headline "SEC Champion Maroons Victims of Integration Issue."<sup>106</sup> Earl Wright of UPI made similar comments in his work, writing "Mississippi State won't enter the NCAA tournament because of the State's unwritten law against whites competing against Negroes in sports."<sup>107</sup> Moffit also wrote about Kentucky's appointment as the SEC representative, but began his article focusing on Hilbun's decision to

not go to the NCAA tournament and Howell's failure to capture the all-time SEC scoring record.<sup>108</sup> In a separate AP account found in the *Jackson Daily News*, McCarthy said, "I naturally would have like to have taken the team to the tournament but I won't squawk. I'll do whatever I can for the school."<sup>109</sup>

As reported in the March 3, 1959, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, students on the Starkville campus hung Hilbun in effigy for his decision.<sup>110</sup> The *Jackson Advocate* published its only article on the MSU-NCAA debate when it reported the student body's reaction to Hilbun's decision.<sup>111</sup> Hilbun resigned from his post as president of Mississippi State at the end of the 1959-60 school year. He would die in 1963, well before the 1965 integration of his alma mater.

Howell, a graduating senior, was undaunted by the decision. The future NBA star played in two integrated all-star games in Maryland and North Carolina after the 1959 season. School officials told UPI that Howell could participate because it was an individual decision and he was not an official representative of the university. Howell told UPI that he and his teammates were disappointed, but he said, "We won't make a fuss about it."<sup>112</sup> Howell was the only unanimous selection to the All-SEC first team, was named a first team All-American, and was named most valuable player in the SEC during the 1958-59 campaign.<sup>113</sup> MSU finished third in the final AP national basketball poll behind Kansas State University and Kentucky.<sup>114</sup>

#### Starkville Remained Silent

While the Maroons were making headlines across the state, in their home base of Starkville, the weekly *Starkville News* of editor Henry Myer took a passive approach in covering the plight of MSU, even exercising a degree of neglect on the Maroons' season and the debate surrounding integrated athletics. Owned by Myer and his brother Morris, the *Starkville News* published material on the victory over Kentucky in the February 13, 1959, edition three days after the game. The article, which appeared to be written by a staff writer

for the Starkville newspaper, called the win State's "most important basketball victory."<sup>115</sup> In the same edition, the Maroons' upcoming battles against Florida and Georgia were previewed.<sup>116</sup> The paper continued with this trend, previewing the team's contests against LSU and Tulane and recapping the victories over Georgia and Florida in the February 20, 1959, edition of the Starkville newspaper. However, while referencing both the team's status as the fifth best team in the nation according to the AP and their 21-1 record, any and all aspirations towards a conference and national title were ignored.<sup>117</sup>

Days later, the *News* featured a front-page story describing the team's homecoming after victories over Tulane and LSU; however, the ongoing debate was never referenced.<sup>118</sup> The NCAA tournament was also absent from multiple articles previewing the season finale against Ole Miss and the Maroons' victory over the Rebels.<sup>119</sup>

Likewise, *The Reflector*, Mississippi State's student newspaper, only referenced the NCAA tournament once during the examined time period. In its March 3, 1959 edition, Hilbun's decision served as the primary focus of Ray Sadler's article, the bulk of which was made up of Hilbun's official statement. Sadler wrote that Hilbun's decision "had been evident for almost a week and McCarthy's team was not surprised. The consensus of opinion among the players was one of no protest."<sup>120</sup> The level of reporting demonstrated by Starkville's news outlets, especially the *Starkville News*, was shocking. For the Starkville and MSU communities, the issue should have had social and personal relevance, yet Myer's newspaper reflected the contrary. Myer eventually sold the paper to *West Point Times Leader* editor and publisher Henry Harris, a staunch segregationist and protector of the Closed Society.<sup>121</sup> Harris would establish the *Starkville Daily News* in 1960.

#### Jimmy Ward Takes up the Fight

While the news and sports-based articles dealing with the MSU debate can offer a glimpse into the mindset of the reporters and editors who covered the topic, a true reflection of the feelings and emotions that surrounded the unwritten law could be measured in the

columns and editorials that these journalists penned. No one struck out in defense of the unwritten law and the Closed Society quite like *Jackson Daily News* editor Jimmy Ward. Considered an apprentice of former *Jackson Daily News* editor Frederick Sullens, Ward did his best to follow in his mentor's spiteful footsteps. Ward was the central figure in the Hederman's journalistic Jackson-based monopoly and was a strident protector of the Magnolia State's white dominant social structure. His work, rich with sarcasm and hate, attacked integration at every turn and protected the Closed Society from all threats both white and black. Ward would place himself at the front line against integration and civil rights and used his forum to protect the interests and beliefs of the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission and the state Citizens' Council. As an editor, Ward became known for either ignoring issues of race that might have put a proverbial black eye on the reputations of local whites or publishing material that was racist, inaccurate, and void of all objectivity, minimizing his journalistic credibility outside of Jackson and the state of Mississippi.<sup>122</sup> Ward's "Covering the Crossroads" column was the domicile of the segregationist's insensitive and often insulting views on topics ranging from race, politics, and even sports.<sup>123</sup>

No threat to the Closed Society was safe under Ward's eagle-like watch. He attacked James Meredith's entry into Ole Miss, defended Barnett's fight to keep Meredith out of the Oxford-based university, claimed the 1964 Civil Rights Act was the work of Communists who would regret supporting such legislation, and wrote after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. that, "It's sickening that Dr. King went to Memphis to fan the flames of racial discord."<sup>124</sup> Even the tragic murder of Emmett Till was subject to the sensational attacks employed by Ward and the *Jackson Daily News*, as the Jackson-based editor claimed that Till's father, who was killed in Italy during World War II, was hung by Italian authorities for murder and rape.<sup>125</sup> Ward's insensitive, inaccurate, and horrific claim was an attempt to counter the outrage aimed at Mississippi and the white social structure for Till's murder. Ward was, according to James Dickerson, a "hard drinker" who viewed his sharp humor and

wit as a potential weapon against those who opposed his segregationist beliefs.<sup>126</sup> Former Mississippi Associated Press correspondent Douglas Starr described Ward as “an opportunist” who took advantage of the racial strife in Mississippi to make a name for himself in the Magnolia State.<sup>127</sup>

Ward first addressed the Maroons-NCAA issue in his February 17, 1959, edition of “Covering the Crossroads.” The Citizens’ Council member wrote that any decision involving the NCAA tournament should be divorced from all emotion. “It would be tragic if this sidelight to the integration-segregation issue were to divide this state’s policies on a long range point of view,” Ward wrote. “It would be tragic if the team accepts a tournament bid and later, due to public reaction, must cancel out and come home when faced with interracial competition. A clear cut consistent decision is needed now — without emotionalism.”<sup>128</sup>

As the whispers of a possible NCAA tournament berth for the Maroons turned into yells, Ward claimed in an editorial for the February 18, 1959, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* that “agitators are already at work creating an issue which places the entire state in an uncomfortable position of being asked, once again, to reiterate its stand on segregation.”<sup>129</sup> Ward suggested that the team should simply send a telegram to NCAA officials claiming that the team had to study for spring exams and asked what should the Mississippi contingent do if they were to play in the tournament and some sort of violence between the white and black players were to erupt. “This is no time to risk a racial incident for the temporary joy of a championship,” he wrote. “Mississippi’s policy in athletic competition and all other phases of society and education calls for segregation of the races.”<sup>130</sup> Ward then continued by writing that the decision was a choice between Mississippi’s way of life and the “empty promises of another swallow of shallow bouncing round ball glory?”<sup>131</sup> A number of state newspapers published wire accounts of the column.<sup>132</sup>

Ward, long considered one of the more racist journalists in the annals of Mississippi history, again addressed the prospects of an NCAA tournament appearance for the Maroons

on February 25, 1959. In his daily edition of “Covering the Crossroads,” Ward addressed those who justified a pro-NCAA stance by arguing that “the state should do in Rome as the Romans do.” In response, Ward quipped, “The University of Pittsburgh was invited to play in a segregated tournament in New Orleans and declined because of ‘local’ — or shall we say Roman-customs. This is a consistent attitude for northern bigots and southern mixers?”<sup>133</sup> Ward openly asked if it was possible to win a national championship in college sports “without getting involved in pseudo-sociological extra curricular expeditions.” Ward also attacked the work of the *Chicago Defender*, which published a front-page article titled “Mississippi Pupils Seek Integrated Play” and included comments from his counterpart at the *Delta Democrat-Times*, editor Hodding Carter, who told the *Defender* that gradual integration was upon Mississippi. Ward lashed out, writing, “All of this centers around the issue of whether Mississippi State University’s basketball team will participate in an integrated tournament. The institution has been done a national disfavor that the subject was ever raised in the first place. There is more than a basketball score involved.”<sup>134</sup>

Ward would again write about the Maroons in his February 26, 1959, edition of “Covering the Crossroads” and aimed his literary cannon at *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans) sports columnist Buddy Diliberto, who wrote that MSU was finished as a college basketball power if they were not allowed to participate in the NCAA tournament. Ward chastised Diliberto, calling his commentary “utterly ridiculous” and “silly.”<sup>135</sup> Citing Louisiana’s own policy against integrated competition, Ward wrote, “Despite this alleged handicap in Mr. Diliberto’s hometown, the Sugar Bowl is gaining in prominence each passing year. If Mr. Diliberto’s argument is a sound one, the annual Sugar Bowl classic would have collapsed years ago. Tut, tut. Two more tut, tuts, Buddy.”<sup>136</sup>

Ward’s work on MSU in the February 26, 1959, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* continued with an op-ed piece on the Maroons and the NCAA tournament. “We believe that sending a Mississippi team to an integrated tournament will be misconstrued in the nation’s

press as a significant sign the state is cracking. It would be an open invitation to the agitators to come on down and start stirring strife,” Ward wrote.<sup>137</sup> Accompanying the column was a headline from an AP article in the *Los Angeles Mirror-News* that read “Miss. State Okays Negro Foes.” The article was published after MSU’s student body voted to play in the NCAA tournament. Ward, in response to the *Mirror-News* article, wrote, “If clear-thinking people can’t see the potential harm in passing this impression along to the nation, then they have sticky film over their pupils. Damage to the sensible, tested cause of segregation has been done. A fine institution of higher learning has been made to suffer. Too much has been said on the subject. The issue should die a swift natural death.”<sup>138</sup>

After Hilbun’s decision was announced, Ward closed his commentary by penning an opinion-based article for the March 2, 1959, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. Ward wrote that Mississippians should have been proud that State passed on the tournament and “the social experiment foisted upon the South by the aforementioned nitwits” was a failure.<sup>139</sup> Ward called the NCAA tournament a minor component to a major issue and that any benefits from playing would have been temporary and fleeting. Liking his resolve to that of a ship captain, Ward praised Hilbun writing that the MSU president had unshakable character and resolve. “His love of a university, his dedication to the many causes of education, the training of young minds helped him decide that challenging issue,” he added. “Excitable voyagers tug at hemlines to go on wandering joy-rides in the bay of life. But true skippers keep their eyes on the harbor, genuine beacons and bright, unchanging stars.”<sup>140</sup>

Ward’s work was indicative of the sort of commentary the Closed Society’s most strident journalistic supporter was known for. There was never a subject too taboo for the segregationist editor. While the merits of the unwritten law would again be a subject of debate in 1961 and 1962, Ward would remain silent on the issue until 1963, when MSU’s basketball team would make its NCAA tournament debut and, in essence, put an end to the gentleman’s agreement.



### Editors in Jackson, Meridian Defend the Closed Society

While editorial objections to challenges to the Closed Society were common in the Hederman-owned newspapers, especially the *Jackson Daily News*, most of the commentary that was produced by Hederman sports editors Carl Walters of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News*, and Fitz McCoy of the *Hattiesburg American* either ignored the debate or denounced any hopes of an NCAA tournament bid as a potential crack in Mississippi's segregationist foundation.

The most outspoken critic from the sports desk of MSU's NCAA efforts was *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer and columnist Carl Walters. In 1959, the *Clarion-Ledger* was steered by Purser Hewitt, a former sports journalist who spent his entire 40-plus year career in the Magnolia State.<sup>141</sup> Unlike fellow Hederman scribe and *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker, Walters used his column on a number of occasions to denounce the possibility of an NCAA tournament berth for the Maroons, thus protecting the Closed Society. In his February 11, 1959, edition of his daily column, titled "Shavin's," Walters warned that, "while the Starkville contingent and its fans should be happy with the win over Kentucky, it also has to temper the joy for five more wins were needed to clinch the team's first SEC Championship," ignoring the possibility of a postseason berth into the national title tournament. The following day, Walters would write of an NCAA tournament bid as an "excruciatingly slim-possibility," justifying his contention by citing the unwritten law. "The race problem is involved in the NCAA tournament, however, so far as Mississippi State is concerned, and if precedent is followed the Maroons would not be allowed to compete in the blue-ribbon battle that decides the national champ," he wrote.<sup>142</sup>

In the February 12, 1959, edition of the *Ledger*, Walters risked insulting the MSU fan base by calling the "hullabaloo" surrounding the NCAA tournament "premature and a little on the stupid side."<sup>143</sup> In an effort to dismiss any hopes within his audience of an MSU national championship, Walters dismissed State's chances, thus protecting the interests of the

Closed Society. “The Maroons will not — repeat N-O-T — be numbered among the entries in the NCAA tournament regardless of what any poll or sampling of public opinion may reveal,” Walters emphatically wrote.<sup>144</sup> Justification for Walters’ striking statement was absent from his work. Once the long-time *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer established his opinion on the matter, he tried to dismiss any notion of a tournament bid, choosing to write his next Mississippi State-based column on the University of Texas’ interest in McCarthy.<sup>145</sup>

Walters would not take long to return to the postseason debate, choosing to publish in his column, verbatim, an opinion piece from the student-based *Daily Mississippian* of the University of Mississippi on February 18, 1959, which argued that the Maroons should be allowed to participate in the NCAA tournament out of hopes for a national championship.<sup>146</sup> While Walters offered no counter opinion to the *Mississippian*’s argument, the publishing of the Ole Miss editorial in Walters’ column was interesting, considering that he had already emphatically stated that the team would not go to the NCAA tournament. Walters took a similar approach in the February 20, 1959, edition of “Shavin’s,” again publishing the work of another writer, this time sports columnist Furman Bisher of the *Atlanta Journal*. Bisher wrote that the Maroons would “reap tremendous dividends in good will and constructive publicity” if it were to play in the tournament.<sup>147</sup> While Walters defended Bisher, calling the Georgia-based journalist “a true-blue Southerner, born and bred; a staunch segregationist and a high-type Christian gentleman,” he never expressed his own opinion on the matter.

In his February 23, 1959, column, Walters would take a different approach to the postseason question and utilized silence to make an impression. While Walters took considerable time identifying the various laurels available to the MSU squad, he failed to address the NCAA tournament or a national championship. “The reason we did not mention participation in the tourney by the Maroons is because we do not think they have a chance to get a ‘go-ahead’ signal from ‘the powers-that-be,’ which, in this case, are the members of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning,” he wrote.<sup>148</sup> Walters again

defended the unwritten law, writing that he would not advocate the team's entry into the tournament because it would violate state policy, even though it was not a law. Citing Reese's poll for the *Jackson Daily News* of the State College Board, Walters cryptically quipped, "It is a dead issue. Actually, it never had the breath of life."

After the Maroons clinched a share of the SEC title, Walters did not discuss the accomplishment by the Starkville quartet; rather he focused on letters from Thomas Guion of Vicksburg, Ole Miss student Bruce Brady, and MSU student Phillip Humber, all of whom wrote that the Maroons should not be allowed to play in the NCAA tournament. Walters apologized for not publishing the letters because "the fact that nothing new has been advanced in arguing for either side of the question," although State had already won a share of the conference championship.<sup>149</sup> While Walters expressed his opinion during the MSU controversy, it was clear that this particular column was a journalistic attempt to deemphasize the debate.

While Walters did not focus on the NCAA tournament in his February 25, 1959, column, the veteran sports writer took issue with State's place in both the AP and UPI basketball polls. "It is utterly stupid for anybody to maintain that Mississippi State should not be ranked number 1," Walters wrote.<sup>150</sup> Walters identified a number of reasons for the Maroons' placement in the polls, but the obvious justification, the refusal to play segregated teams, and a possible NCAA bid, was never discussed. The following day, Walters briefly wrote about the decision Hilburn was to make and said he did not envy the position the MSU president was in. While offering no opinion on the matter, Walters predicted that "there would be plenty of 'heck raised.'"<sup>151</sup>

By the February 27, 1959, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Walters had grown tired of the debate and wrote that he was going through a self-imposed moratorium on discussing the NCAA tourney. Walters claimed that he had planned to pass up any further mentioning of the issue but received a letter from MSU students Elbert Kuyrkendall, Roger Kuyrkendall, Wicky

Martin, Wendell Ott, and Charlie Cummings, III, who took exception to the *Ledger's* questioning of the legitimacy of the student body vote. The MSU students argued if the vote had been better publicized, 90 percent of the students would have voted for State to participate in the tourney. The letter also said but for pressure coming from “minority groups” in the state, more influential individuals would support the team’s efforts.<sup>152</sup> The letter did not indicate what group or groups were being referenced, and Walters offered no additional commentary on the letter.

While Walters’ March 1, 1959, column on McCarthy’s new contract with MSU failed to address the postseason, the columnist spent a great deal of space to discuss the Hilbun decision in the March 2, 1959, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, even though he had said he wanted to avoid the subject all together. Walters denounced the news value of Hilbun’s decision writing, “Everybody and his brother knew about the establishment several year ago of the ‘policy’ and as President Hilbun said, it had not been discarded or revised.”<sup>153</sup> Walters also defended the embattled MSU leader and took the State College Board to task for refusing to publicly object to an NCAA appearance by the Maroons. In his opinion, such a stand would have ended the controversy long before it became an issue and taken pressure off of Hilbun.

Well after the debate had run its course, Walters discussed his visit to “Maroons Appreciation Night,” in West Point in the March 12, 1959, edition of “Shavin’s” and called the 1959 MSU team “the finest in the land for 1959, so far as we are concerned . . . Pessimism was conspicuous by its absence and we got the impression that everything is ‘looking up’ at the Starkville school,” a vague reference to the discontent from the student body.<sup>154</sup> Walters’ later claimed in his March 16, 1959, column that the Maroons were the best in the nation after Kansas State University lost in the tournament to the University of Cincinnati 85-75 and the University of Louisville defeated Kentucky by a score of 88-81. “Poll or no poll, tournament or no tournament, the Mississippi State Maroons proved by

winning 24 of 25 starts that they were the best team in the land,” Walters wrote.<sup>155</sup> In both instances Walters failed to address the obvious answer for MSU’s lack of success in the polls: The team’s failure to play integrated teams outside of the South. It was this “have your cake and eat it too” mentality that poisoned the editorial work of many of Mississippi’s prominent journalists, including Walters. Most wanted the Maroons to be considered the best basketball team in the country; however, they were unwilling to support the team’s place in the NCAA tournament. Once the decision was made, journalists like Walters called even louder for MSU to receive the same level of national respect typically reserved for college teams that played all comers, regardless of skin color. In fact, a number of Walters’ columns took a very defiant tone. Although Walters’ opinions mirror that of the Closed Society and the Hederman family, he said in a 1974 interview that he was never forced into writing a particular opinion or viewpoint because of the Hedermans’ ownership of the *Ledger*.

“I would have to say they are the most influential family in the state of Mississippi,” Walters said. “Personally, I have not always agreed with their choice and support of political candidates, at least not all of them. Never, ever, in anyway, have they tried to influence me one way or another on anything like that. They have given me a real freedom in writing. And I know — I know — that there have been times when I have written stuff that they didn’t agree with, and some of it that they may have wished that it had not been published in their paper. I know that. But I haven’t ever written anything with the deliberate intent to show my (individuality).”<sup>156</sup>

Baker, the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor, played his part in the Closed Society by failing to express a definitive opinion on the matter during the course of the journalistic debate. The sports editor neglected the possibility of an NCAA tournament berth after the Maroons defeated the Wildcats in his February 10, 1959, edition of “Baker’s Dozen.” Baker, who focused on the MSU triumph, wrote that the Maroons were the better team and that the AP rankings, when released, should reflect the Starkville contingent’s dominance over

Kentucky.<sup>157</sup> Baker's February 10, 1959, work would be indicative of the majority of the opinion-based material he penned during the Mississippi State-NCAA debate, as the editions of "Baker's Dozen" that were published on February 11, 1959; February 13, 1959; and February 16, 1959, discussed the Maroons but never mentioned the NCAA tournament.<sup>158</sup>

Baker first addressed any NCAA related topic when he wrote that part of McCarthy's alleged attraction to the Texas position was because "no longer would he have to face such a problem as might hamstringing his current Maroons chance for postseason NCAA play for segregation is no issue for Texas teams."<sup>159</sup> Yet, he expressed no opinion on the matter. Baker again discussed the issue on February 20, 1959, when the sports editor looked at Doust's article in *Sports Illustrated*. Baker argued that Doust's belief that McCarthy would leave Starkville if MSU were to reject a NCAA bid was illogical. As for the rumor that students would march on the state capital if a bid was received and rejected, Baker wrote "anyone with a grain of sense knows that students are always available for anything even vaguely hinting excitement and adventure."<sup>160</sup> Baker, without expressing an opinion one way or another, wrote that the Maroons should play out their remaining schedule before deciding on an NCAA tournament berth. Baker's subsequent column on the Maroons would again fail to address any discussions on the NCAA tournament.<sup>161</sup>

Baker would return to the postseason debate, albeit briefly, in the February 23, 1959, edition of "Baker's Dozen" when, after the team's victory over LSU, Baker wrote that MSU did not discuss the potential tournament bid and was more focused on winning the SEC championship. "Of course, they want to go to the NCAA regional. But that is something off in the future to be decided by someone else," Baker wrote in a dismissive tone.<sup>162</sup> Although the future Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame member would focus on the Maroons in two more columns, on February 24 and February 25, 1959, he did not discuss the national title tournament.<sup>163</sup>

After his April 22, 2003, death at the age of 78, the State Senate recognized Baker as “the first person in Mississippi sports media history to cover predominantly black colleges and high schools and one of the first writers in the South to give women's athletics full coverage.”<sup>164</sup> However, an examination of his work throughout this chapter and dissertation found that Baker was, perhaps, unable or unwilling to speak out for athletic integration and often failed to acknowledge the larger social issue in his work. Despite Baker's shortcomings, McDowell offered nothing but praise for his former colleague, calling him a great writer and journalist.<sup>165</sup> Despite the impact Baker left on many of his fellow sports reporters, his columns during the Maroons' 1958-59 season were insignificant and offered little in terms of a personal opinion.

The MSU debate also instigated the opinion of *Jackson Daily News* cartoonist and Citizens' Council supporter Bob Howie, who drew a Bulldog bearing the “M” of Mississippi State shredding an article from the student-based *Reflector* that reported on the student body's vote of support for an MSU appearance in the NCAA tournament. Howie's cartoon was accompanied by the headline: “It's Our Bulldog That's Being Kicked.”<sup>166</sup> The following day, another Howie cartoon appear depicting a basketball player with a tag that read “State's NCAA Tourney Chances” being tossed back and forth between two hands labeled “pro” and “con” with the headline “Jump Ball!”<sup>167</sup> While the cartoonist failed to express the insensitive commentary typically found in his “Hinny” cartoons, nevertheless, his February 26, 1959, effort certainly coincided with his segregationist beliefs.

Another segregationist and member of the Hederman family, *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Arnold Hederman, followed the lead of fellow Jackson-based sports journalist Baker and spent the majority of his editorial work voicing no opinion on the Maroons and the NCAA tourney. Hederman wrote in his February 12, 1959, edition of “Highlights in Sports” that the biggest sports news to come out of Mississippi during the past week was the Maroons' defeat of Kentucky. He did not address the team's potential NCAA hopes, not

surprising considering how journalists in Mississippi handled issues of race.<sup>168</sup> Hederman maintained his silence in the segregationist's February 27, 1959, column on the Maroons' season finale against Ole Miss. While Hederman wrote that the game would determine the winner of the SEC crown, he never mentioned the NCAA tournament.<sup>169</sup> Hederman would again discuss the Maroons; however, he made no mention of the integrated postseason.<sup>170</sup>

Hederman acknowledged the controversy surrounding MSU only the day of the Maroons' final against Ole Miss. Hederman wrote that, while the game had generated a degree of interest, more eyes would be on Hilbun and the announcement of his decision. Hederman added that he was sure the MSU president would be relieved after his revelation.<sup>171</sup> However, Hederman thought so little of the contest that he first discussed local high school basketball tournaments before mentioning the MSU-Ole Miss game. Continuing this trend of minimization, Hederman did not reference MSU's victory over Ole Miss, the SEC championship, or the NCAA tournament in his March 1, 1959, column, the day after MSU won.<sup>172</sup> Hederman did pen a column to congratulate the Maroons on their successful season, but not without one last nod to the NCAA tournament. "We are not going to get into the battle of whether the Maroons should or should not have gone to the NCAA, for that has already been settled," Hederman wrote in a dismissive fashion in his March 3, 1959 column.<sup>173</sup> Two days later, Hederman addressed the student body's reaction to Hilbun's decision and defended the MSU president. "President Ben couldn't have made any other announcement about the NCAA than he made," he wrote.<sup>174</sup> Hederman added that he was disappointed the issue had taken public interest off of education and that the student body should remember that they were there to learn, an interesting perspective coming from a sports writer. Hederman's combination of silence and dismissive commentary was indicative of the journalistic work on issues of race found during the civil rights era. Although the sports editor may not have been as vocal as fellow sports writer Walters or even the venomous



Ward, his ignorance of the issue, in combination with a few inferences of opinion, made him an ideal journalistic protector of the Closed Society.

Fellow Hederman sports scribe and *Hattiesburg American* sports editor Fitz McCoy took his cues from Walters rather than Baker, attacking the Maroons' NCAA chances with an edge not indicative of the *American*. McCoy was a perfect fit in the Hederman's journalistic empire. In anticipation of Freedom Summer, McCoy, a segregationist, wrote a column for the *American* that called the Martin Luther King, Jr.-led Congress of Racial Equality or CORE, "a militant, extremist organization with wild, often stupid, escapades."<sup>175</sup> While McCoy did not discuss any NCAA implications in his February 11, 1959, column, he attempted to temper the Maroons fan base, not with the shadow cast by the gentleman's agreement, but with a general athletic premise. "Speculation about whether State will go to the NCAA playoffs started immediately after the victory," McCoy wrote. "This is being dangerously presumptuous. State has five more games to play, all of them on the road."<sup>176</sup>

In his February 20, 1959, column, McCoy would take a different and unique position from his colleagues, defending the Maroons while, at the same time, opposing an NCAA appearance by the team. The Hattiesburg sports editor called the building controversy "sickening and embarrassing because we — meaning you and me and our politicians and all of our people who care about and discuss these things publicly — have committed a grave tactical blunder in ever allowing any doubt about what our college teams would do in his situation."<sup>177</sup> McCoy called for a "stated policy that is clearly understood by all our people, all the people up North, the NCAA, the NAACP and everyone else with real or feigned interest."<sup>178</sup> McCoy opposed any pro-NCAA tournament sentiment, not because there would be some sort of harm to the state's segregationist mission, but because the situation would leave "bitterness and division back home that could undermine us worse than the bitterness and division that will result if the team does not go."<sup>179</sup> Five days later, McCoy would use the February 25, 1959, edition of "Giving 'em Fitz" to discuss the Maroons' stop in Hattiesburg

after the team's victory over Tulane. McCoy wrote that most members of the team said they wanted to play in the national tournament but would respect any decision made.<sup>180</sup> While McCoy wrote about the Maroons' season-ending contest against Ole Miss on March 2, 1959, calling the low-scoring affair, "the march of the turtles," he did not reference the NCAA tournament or express an opinion on the matter.<sup>181</sup>

McCoy closed out his commentary on the Maroons and the NCAA by offering a degree of perspective to the hanging of Hilbun in effigy, writing that no real harm had been done. "The kids, feeling at the time that they are re-shaping the world, get it out of their systems and everyone else soon forgets it ever happened," he wrote.<sup>182</sup> McCoy's work failed to advocate integrated competition, thus honoring the unwritten law, and chastised both the MSU basketball team and the political elite of the Closed Society for their individual positions. Despite McCoy's scathing evaluation of his audience, in the end, he ended up protecting the very individuals he was addressing. McCoy would carve out a niche in Hattiesburg, going on to become the *American's* Sunday editor. He died at the age of 84 in October 2008.<sup>183</sup>

While McCoy's *Hattiesburg American* colleague Benn Lee, Jr., wrote in a February 16, 1959, column that the Maroons had become the focus of conversation at the local high school basketball tournament, his work failed to mention the NCAA tournament or the SEC championship.<sup>184</sup>

Other journalists and editors from the Hederman empire also made their opinions known on the MSU-NCAA debate. Citizens' Council member and *Clarion-Ledger* columnist Tom Ethridge, who sympathized with the appeal of playing for a national championship, denounced any possibility of an NCAA tournament appearance. "Our Magnificent Maroons would not be contaminated by 'mixing' away from home," Ethridge wrote, adding that if the decision were left up to him, he would "hold the line — regretfully, but none the less positively."<sup>185</sup>

*Clarion-Ledger* columnist Charles M. Hills also wrote about the Maroons after Hilburn's announcement and argued that there was a profound difference between Mississippi athletes who go on to play in integrated competition and state-based teams who are charged with representing the Magnolia State. Hills added that state colleges and universities use money allocated to them by the legislature and it had been government policy to stay out of integrated competition. An NCAA appearance by MSU, in Hills' opinion, could have led to integration of, not only athletic venues, but of state schools as well. In Hills' words, by playing, MSU would have "started a lot of complications and implications, so, why not forget it all? We have the championship we wanted anyway. If we had won the national championship, no one would have been proud of it but us."<sup>186</sup>

Andrew Harmon, editor of the *Hattiesburg American*, wrote a brief editorial on the MSU debate and directed his discontent to the "south-haters, do-gooders and political hatchet-men" for their attacks on "Southern people and their long-established habits because of the No-Mix policy established by law and custom."<sup>187</sup> Harmon claimed that forced integration was ineffective and pointed to both the MSU-NCAA controversy and a new Detroit-based police that required officers of different ethnic background to patrol together. The policy, which Harmon wrote had been met with protests on the part of the police, was proof that "when forced mixing is attempted it is opposed in Michigan as well as in Mississippi."<sup>188</sup>

In the same social vein of the Hederman papers was the *Meridian Star* of owner and editor James B. Skewes. The Skewes family was unequivocally against any challenge to the Closed Society in Meridian and Lauderdale County, where 40 percent of the population was black during the mid-1950s.<sup>189</sup> As member of the Citizens' Council, Skewes carried on the racist and segregationist traditions at the *Star* that his father had established. The younger Skewes once called the Civil Rights Movement "the Negro Revolution" and wrote that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was "another step towards mongeralization."<sup>190</sup> With that being

said, surprisingly, *Meridian* sports editor Billy “Sunshine” Rainey was one of the first journalists to comment on any NCAA chances harbored by the Maroon squad. In his February 10, 1959, edition of “Sunshine on Sports,” Rainey discussed MSU’s sound defeat of Kentucky and foresaw big things for the Starkville team. Despite “Sunshine’s” positive commentary, the Meridian-based sports editor wrote that it was likely “Mississippi’s statewide policy against integrated athletics will keep the Maroons off the postseason tournament trail.”<sup>191</sup> Rainey would use his February 12, 1959, column to agree with fellow sports editor Walters and called for the Maroons to simply focus on the remaining basketball docket and forget about the NCAA tournament. “NO team from Mississippi will compete in the NCAA tourney or in any other event where competition against teams with Negro players is involved. We do not necessarily share the opinion that this is the way it should be done but it is our sincere belief that this is the way it WILL be done,” Rainey wrote.<sup>192</sup>

After the release of Doust’s article in *Sports Illustrated*, Rainey took issue with the last three paragraphs of the story, which claimed McCarthy and his team would be upset if the unwritten law kept them out of the NCAA tournament. In response, Rainey offered a vague complaint about Doust’s work, writing, “Despite this, the story on a whole is very complementary.”<sup>193</sup>

In the aftermath of the Maroons’ win over Tulane, rather than discuss the NCAA prospects for the Starkville contingent, Rainey took exception to UPI’s latest college basketball rankings, which had MSU as the seventh best team in the nation. “The cold hard fact is that though Mississippi State has the best record in the United States with 23 wins and one defeat, the Maroons will NOT gain the approval of the 35 coaches in the weekly UPI polls,” the Meridian-based sports editor argued.<sup>194</sup> While Rainey offered no explanation for his theorized UPI oversight, an obvious justification was MSU’s refusal to play integrated teams. The following day, Rainey discussed McCarthy’s pleas for an understanding of public opinion regarding the NCAA tournament. Despite addressing the issue in his column, Rainey

claimed he would be keeping his opinion on the sidelines, as he claimed he did not feel qualified to make a judgment.<sup>195</sup> Although “Sunshine” would write about the Maroons in his March 3, 1959, column, in particular, the epic season Howell was having, he did not address the NCAA controversy again.<sup>196</sup>

Rainey’s commentary was not necessarily reflective of a man whose work would go well beyond the sports world and place him at the forefront of one of the more tragic and egregious acts of Mississippi’s past. Rainey was the *Star’s* primary reporter on the June 1964 murders of civil rights workers Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and Andrew Goodman in the Neshoba County-based city of Philadelphia during Freedom Summer. While the search and subsequent discovery of their murder made national headlines, Rainey worked on location for 52 days until the bodies were found.<sup>197</sup>

Like Skewes, *Commercial Dispatch* editor Birney Imes agreed with the Jackson contingent that the Maroons should not participate in the NCAA tournament. Imes called the student vote favoring MSU’s participation in the tournament “childishness” in the February 23, 1959, edition of the *Dispatch*. Imes wrote that the students were “hoodwinked by NAACP tactics. It’s not unusual for students to have the wool pulled over their eyes. Maybe they are to be excused for being gullible in view of the skill with which the NAACP and its like operate. But even scholars shouldn’t have fallen for this one.”<sup>198</sup> Imes continued to criticize the students, writing that the vote was “just another device for headline grabbing for ‘the cause.’ . . . Students should stick to painting signs along the side of the road about the game with Ole Miss. They handle a paintbrush much better than the ballot . . . Ballots are too dangerous for immaturity.”<sup>199</sup> Imes closed by calling any effort by MSU to play in the tournament a precursor for integration.

#### Other Journalists Speak Out

One of the first editorials in the state to support an MSU appearance in the NCAA tournament came from the *Delta Democrat-Times* of Hodding Carter. As detailed in Chapter

III of this dissertation, Carter was known as one of the more moderate journalists in the Magnolia State during the civil rights era. In the paper's February 23, 1959, editorial, Carter wrote that most Mississippians would like to see Mississippi State's basketball team "get their well deserved chance at the national title." Carter's work, which was picked up by wire services and appeared, through UPI, in the *Jackson State Times*, expressed a degree of confidence in the Starkville team in the following passage:

We believe State can win the NCAA title if the people of Mississippi can get behind them the way their own student body has. Let's face it. The Maroons playing in this tournament will not affect Mississippi's stand on integration of its classrooms one way or another. But if State is forced to reject the berth, it will be the fault of a few half-baked politicians and writers.<sup>200</sup>

Carter's editorial support for the Maroons would incite the ire of the segregationist Ward, who quickly responded to his journalistic counterpart in Greenville in his February 24, 1959, edition of "Covering the Crossroads." Ward wrote that the *Delta Democrat's* "flat-footed" support for an NCAA tournament bid was no surprise, referencing Carter's liberal reputation. Ward did compliment the paper for at least taking a position but "whether the endorsement will enhance State's chance of playing is itself, a subject for brief debate. Very Brief debate."<sup>201</sup>

Carter would use an editorial in the *Democrat-Times'* February 25, 1959, edition to urge his readers to express an opinion on the matter, calling for MSU's supporters to follow the lead of the university's student body and publicly support the Maroons. "We also feel that to decline the invitation would be unfavorable publicity for the state," Carter wrote. "But more than that it would deny the team the opportunity it deserves."<sup>202</sup>

After Hilbun's decision was announced, Carter attacked the same public support that he once tried to incite for its lack of inactivity and blamed it for making Hilbun's decision an easy one. "Only a few vocal Mississippi State backers spoke up against the politicians and writers who thrive on picking far-fetched excuses to show what ardent segregationists they are, so President Ben Hilbun didn't have the backing he needed. The ironic thing is that

State's All American Bailey Howell will play in All-Star games, possibility on the same team with Negroes," wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning editor.<sup>203</sup> Carter's work added a degree of logic to the debate that certainly was not evident in the storm of commentary that originated from the Hederman papers in Jackson.

*Natchez Democrat* editor James Lambert also chimed in on the debate, congratulating Hilbun in a March 3, 1959, editorial for making "his contribution to the great effort now being made here and elsewhere in the South for the preservation of Our Way of Life."<sup>204</sup> Lambert added that MSU's president had no choice in the matter, citing the state's gentleman's agreement against integrated competition as if it had some sort of legal basis. "The law is clear; the line for the preservation of segregation has been plainly and distinctly drawn. There can be no deviation — no matter under what pretense," he claimed. Lambert closed his commentary by describing MSU's potential participation in the tournament as "the breaking down of all we love and stand for in Mississippi and the Deep South" and took some of his journalistic brethren to task for their support of MSU. "There have been some sports editors throughout the state who have become so enthused over Mississippi having a champion SEC team that they seem to have forgotten that far more important than any other basketball game or accomplishment of any sports team in the state is the preservation of Our Way of Life," Lambert wrote.<sup>205</sup>

Joe Mosby, a former sports editor at the *Democrat*, described Lambert as "a fine person with the usual local beliefs on the segregation issue" in a 2009 interview. Mosby explained that the paper's newsroom was influenced more by Natchez's extreme MSU fan base than the ideological position taken by their audience.

"Natchez had a handful of loud and rabid Mississippi State alumni and fans that tried to put pressure on Jimmy Lambert, on me, and on all the newsroom," he explained. "One fall in preseason football predictions, I picked Mississippi State to finish 9th in the SEC. At 7

a.m., it appeared in the paper, and I received a phone call from a Mississippi State alumni threatening to ‘whip my ass.’ Mississippi State finished 12th in the SEC that season.<sup>206</sup>

*Natchez* sports editor Don Guin followed the standard set by the majority of his sports journalistic brethren and failed to express a definitive opinion on the matter. Guin, in the February 27, 1959, edition of the *Democrat*, wrote, “We are inclined to think that the higher ups and big-wigs of State College know what’s best for the whole team and the state as a whole and that they have taken everything into consideration before they make the final statement.”<sup>207</sup> Noting the objections voiced by the *Jackson Daily News* and the support offered to the Maroons from Rainey and Billy Ray of *Vicksburg Evening Post*, Guin was noncommittal on the issue, only offering support for MSU’s embattled president. “One final word — WHATEVER THE LAST WORD IS — WE GO ALONG WITH IT — WITHOUT QUESTION,” Guin wrote of Hilbun’s pending announcement.<sup>208</sup>

Sports editor Charles B. Gordon of the McComb-based *Enterprise-Journal* predicted in his February 23, 1959, column titled “Sports Journal” that, despite the Maroons’ successful campaign, the team would not venture into integrated athletics. “This prediction can safely be made: There’s virtually no likelihood that the State team will be seen in the NCAA tournament,” Gordon wrote.<sup>209</sup> The sports editor anointed Kentucky as the likely recipient of the NCAA bid, adding that the Maroons would uphold “one thing or another, depending on how you look at the situation,” a clear nod to the unwritten law and the principles outlined in the Closed Society. Gordon would again write about the Maroons’ record setting 1959 campaign but did not address the NCAA tournament.<sup>210</sup>

Others, such as Harriet Gibbons of the *Laurel Leader-Call*, expressed no opinion on the NCAA issue but cited the whole affair as problematic. Gibbons wrote that the biggest problem with the issue was the lack of consistency from citizens and political officials in terms of integration. “Our young people are not willing to forego competition that will bring them into integrated situations,” Gibbons wrote. “And their parents who find it easier to agree



with their children, than to disagree with them, will not raise their voices. And school authorities, that talk segregated schools out of one side of their mouths, talk integrated sports out the other side.”<sup>211</sup> Gibbons continued, asking for Mississippians to make up their mind. “Do we mean what we say or say what we mean? Is integration going to follow the path of prohibition in which we have laws that we don’t intend to follow?”<sup>212</sup>

#### McDowell Emerges as a Progressive Voice

Between the vocal discontent and opinion-based silence that personified the journalistic opinion of the Maroons and the possibility of an NCAA tournament bid sat the work of Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times*. A prominent and visible figure on the Mississippi sports scene, McDowell was one of the few sports journalists who expressed an opinion and supported a possible NCAA tournament bid for the Starkville-based Maroons. McDowell, or “Mississippi Red” as his fellow sportswriters knew him, was a former sports reporter and editor with the *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger* before he began working as sports editor of the fledging *Jackson State Times*. McDowell, who spent seven years with the newspaper, never viewed race as a viable justification for not playing another college or university in an athletic contest. In his mind, competition, not social equality, was reason enough to compete against integrated squads.<sup>213</sup> “To me, those teams deserved it,” McDowell said in a 2010 interview. “They won the SEC; they deserved a chance to play for a national title.”<sup>214</sup>

Although McDowell’s unwavering support for the Maroons was never justified as opposition to segregation, unlike fellow sports editors Dick Lightsey of Biloxi and Billy Ray of Vicksburg, the fiery redhead never felt the need to proclaim his loyalty to the Closed Society. Regardless of his justification, McDowell’s commentary offered a refreshing and potentially progressive voice in opposition of the typical, white journalistic rhetoric found in Mississippi during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In his first column after the team's landmark victory over the Wildcats, McDowell claimed that, "Mississippi State may very well have the finest basketball team in the nation. But will they get a chance to prove it?," a clear identification of the impending debate.<sup>215</sup> McDowell towed an impartial line, noting MSU's hopes for a tournament bid without stating his opinion on the matter. McDowell called the issue a "loaded question" for state and university officials to deal with because it was an election year, a point the Jackson-based editor would make time and time again. McDowell ended by making a pitch for the Maroons, writing, "Mississippi State's basketball team could be a splendid Magnolia State good will salesman."<sup>216</sup>

Unlike a number of his fellow journalists, McDowell asked for input from his audience. In his February 11, 1959, column, McDowell said the 1959 MSU squad was, perhaps, the best in the history of Mississippi, and the merits of a NCAA tournament was becoming a topic of conversation.<sup>217</sup> In order to measure public opinion, McDowell conducted an informal poll, asking his audience to submit their opinions on the issue. "Politicians are afraid to mix in the matter, but a poll of the people could help the politicians vault over the fence," he wrote. McDowell advocated a Maroon appearance, added, "The young men of Mississippi State would uphold the customs and traditions of the great state of Mississippi if permitted to participate. They could prove to the nation that Mississippi takes a back seat to none as far as athletics are concerned. The players want the opportunity of carrying the Mississippi banner to Louisville in pursuit of the college cage crown. You hold the key."

Two days later, on February 13, 1959, McDowell spent considerable space in his column sharing some of the letters he had received as a part of his aforementioned Mississippi State-NCAA poll. An anonymous author wrote to the sports editor, "It would be a great thing for Mississippi to be able to win a national championship. Goodness knows we get enough bad publicity. It gives us something to show the nation that what we have in

Mississippi is exceptional.”<sup>218</sup> Another letter from “a prominent lawyer” who claimed to be a segregationist also advocated a national championship attempt for the Maroons because it would be a positive for the state. “After all, when our Mississippi delegates go to national political conventions, they are thrown with delegates from other states which are integrated,” the reader wrote. Yet another segregationist agreed, writing, “Playing against mixed teams does not say we are going to lose any advantage we have so long as there is no social contact. I may be wrong, but I think I’m right.” McDowell concluded his daily musings by revisiting the University of Texas’ interest in McCarthy and identified a chance at a national title as having a part to play in retaining the Maroons’ leader. “Mississippi State will have to probably ‘sweeten the kitty’ to keep him, and even then there is no guarantee for McCarthy has a national championship look in his eyes. Again, it is only natural for a coach to want to be the very best in his chosen profession,” he wrote. McCarthy would later get a new four-year contract and a raise, a point McDowell believed years later was done to keep the head coach from publicly opposing the unwritten law.<sup>219</sup>

On February 16, 1959, as the *Jackson State Times* reported on Coleman’s public deflection of responsibility of a State-NCAA decision, McDowell wrote in amazement at Howell’s 43-point effort against Florida. Despite Coleman’s claims, “Mississippi Red” was unwavering in his support for the Maroons. “With four games to go, the Maroons remain in the driver’s seat to represent the Southeastern Conference in the NCAA tournament,” wrote the spirited redhead.<sup>220</sup> The following day, McDowell would address Coleman’s comments in the February 17, 1959, edition of his daily column. McDowell praised the extraordinary efforts of Howell in the win over Georgia, but then offered a political contradiction to the comments of the segregationist governor, detailing his conversation with “a sports-minded legislature” who told McDowell, “Let ‘em go.”<sup>221</sup> While McDowell offered no personal perspective or views on integration, the future Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer objected to the position taken by Mississippi political leaders, in particular Coleman.

McDowell would again offer support to the Starkville contingent in the February 18, 1959, edition of the *Jackson State Times* by discussing a conversation he had with *Atlanta Constitution* sports editor Furman Bisher, who told McDowell that he favored the Maroons playing in the NCAA tournament.<sup>222</sup> McDowell published portions of the Atlanta-based editor's column, which referred to MSU as a "prisoner of tradition" and called the Maroons "pawn of politics." McDowell, in agreement wrote, "Mr. Bisher speaks wisely. Mississippi apparently is going to get more bad publicity if the Maroons do not go, than if they entered the tournament and brought the national championship back to Mississippi."<sup>223</sup>

McDowell would again detail MSU's possible path to the NCAA tournament in his February 19, 1959, column and reiterated that the Maroons only needed to win the SEC title to get an automatic berth, as if to tell the Maroon contingent that permission to go was unnecessary.<sup>224</sup> McDowell also detailed a conversation he had with McCarthy, who refuted a number of details in Doust's *Sports Illustrated* article, specifically, the presence of student pressure to make a pro-NCAA decision and the coach's vow to resign if MSU declined the bid. "I wouldn't dare make such a statement," McCarthy said. "As far as tournament participation is concerned, that is entirely out of my hands."<sup>225</sup>

McDowell's next editorial concerning the MSU-NCAA debate appeared on February 22, 1959, and the outspoken sports editor wrote perhaps his most straightforward and supportive column on MSU. McDowell again referenced the lack of public responsibility for an NCAA decision from the state legislature and the State College Board, calling it "political 'buck-passing.'"<sup>226</sup> McDowell, in an expression of opinion not found in the work of his journalistic sports brethren, called the Maroons worthy challengers for a national championship and claimed that race should have been a non-issue for the decision makers in the Magnolia State:

Personally, this matter, in my opinion, is entirely different from other racial conflicts in that they are not required to sleep and eat with opposing players. As a matter of fact, they aren't even supposed to touch them or else it would be a personal

foul. To be a national champion, you have to whip all comers. It is the belief of this writer that Mississippi State's lion-hearted gladiators are capable of scaling such heights.<sup>227</sup>

Going into State's title clinching win over the Green Wave, McDowell would again ridicule both lawmakers and MSU officials when he referred to the MSU debate as "more buck passing" in his February 23, 1959, column. Rather than writing that MSU could clinch the SEC title, McDowell claimed that a win would clinch an automatic berth in the NCAA tournament, putting the emphasis on the integrated postseason. "If Mississippi officials are having such a difficult time deciding whether the Maroons should go to the national tournament, passing the buck up and down the line, it is suggested by this writer that the buck be passed to Babe and his team. They'll answer the question, pronto," McDowell wrote.<sup>228</sup>

After the Maroons' victory over Tulane, McDowell shared his conversation with Green Wave head coach Cliff Wells in his column. Wells, who would publicly support MSU in future NCAA efforts, told McDowell it would be a shame if the Starkville contingent were denied a chance at the national championship. McDowell, with the same bravado demonstrated in his other columns, challenged the university and the College Board's resolve on the matter. "Will the college board display the same sort of courage as this great ball club?" he wrote.<sup>229</sup> McDowell would follow up in his February 25, 1959, column, writing that McCarthy told the Jackson-based scribe, "We are four games from the national championship. I would love to get a chance to play those four games. So would my boys."<sup>230</sup> McCarthy, who stressed his belief in segregation to McDowell, pleaded for "white Mississippians" to voice their opinions. McDowell agreed. "Not a single letter writer has said he favors integration," he wrote of the correspondence he had received on the matter. "They also think that it would be good for the state of Mississippi for State to pursue and win the national title."<sup>231</sup> McDowell continued his assault on Mississippi's political and educational elite, sarcastically calling for an end to participation by Mississippians in all integrated forums, including the return of Mississippi's senators and congressmen to the

Magnolia State out of fear of their attendance at integrated national conventions. “Oh yes, the students and citizens of Mississippi have received a magnificent lesson in the Magnolia State political scene these past few weeks. Buck passing at its finest cornpone hour . . . it’s election year in Mississippi and political big wigs are walking the chalk line. The utter lack of courage and the sickening fear of a biased and political whip hovers like a menacing shadow over Mississippi State’s shoulder. Is there a truly big man in the house? Time is precious running out.”<sup>232</sup> At multiple times in his column, McDowell tried to make an emotional appeal to the masses in an effort to evoke both pride for MSU and the state of Mississippi. “They can whip any team, any time, any where,” McDowell wrote of the Starkville contingent. However, “Mississippi Red” saved his more poignant and passionate remarks for the conclusion:

Indeed at times, we are a strange breed, we Mississippians. Yes, it is our state, a beautiful lady, a friendly people, a gorgeous terrain, the land that we love, have loved all of our life. Still, there is the blot of inconsistency, the poor uncaring judgment of sending “jokes” to the legislature, the demagogue, who is blazing his own trail at the expense of the ignorant, and the wild-haired, power mad political-minded ‘string pullers’ of the puppet men, who fire away at the college lads, insisting they are mere children when they express an honest opinion. The “children” who form the nucleus for the armies, navies, marines and air corps every time the country goes to war, while the brave, shouting patriots protect the home front and buy war bonds, courtesy of black market sugar and hosiery, gasoline, and groceries. The decision to send or not to send Mississippi State to the National tournament is more important than you think. It will be a long, long time before the last of it is heard, and some gentlemen offering their services for re-election will be retired to private life because the people are sick of the way the entire thing has been handled. No one, no one, seeks to change Mississippi’s ways of life in believing the Maroons should seek the National title.<sup>233</sup>

McDowell had an ideal opportunity to express his own feelings on segregation, but unlike his fellow sports-based supporters of MSU, he did not. McDowell’s own omission of his political beliefs, even in an opinion-based forum, showed a degree of ethical care by the sports scribe. Rather than use the opportunity to protect himself from the Closed Society, the opinionated McDowell kept his focus and stressed his belief in Mississippi State and its basketball team. “Mississippi Red” also identified a greater social importance to participating in the national title tournament outside of race relations and took the purveyors of the Closed

Society to task for their attack on the students at Mississippi State. McDowell has argued that his vantage on the MSU-NCAA fiasco was always based on his belief that the debate should have centered on sports and all political and social beliefs should have been cast aside.<sup>234</sup>

When asked what his own personal feelings were on segregation, the veteran sports writer quipped, “I don’t know. I don’t remember.”<sup>235</sup>

“Mississippi Red” would later come to the defense of the embattled MSU president, who in McDowell’s mind had been put in an unfair and precarious situation. In his column on February 26, 1959, McDowell did not lobby for MSU’s place in the NCAA tournament; rather, he said he would put his faith in Hilbun, calling him a fair man who would do what he thought was best for Mississippi State.<sup>236</sup> McDowell again attacked the powers that be in his February 27, 1959, editorial but, in his diatribe, came to the defense of Hilbun. Noting the 69-year-old’s health problems, McDowell took issue with the political elite in the state for failing to support the MSU president:

It’s election year and politicians aren’t going to commit themselves. What the majority of people (voters) think or the students or the players or the coach makes absolutely no difference. Race haters, North and South, have twisted the Maroon story to attempt to make the tournament more than a tournament of champions. And that is the unfair thing about the whole business. The (State College) Board simply dumped the whole business in Ben’s lap and Ben Hilbun isn’t going to be the scapegoat. He asked for assistance from the Board and received exactly none.<sup>237</sup>

After the Maroons’ February 28, 1959, SEC title-clinching victory over Ole Miss, McDowell, in an uncharacteristic move, chose not to write on Hilbun’s decision to keep MSU out of the tournament. Rather, he used his column to thank Mississippi State Athletic Director C. M. “Dudy” Noble for giving McCarthy a raise and keeping the Mississippi native away from the head coaching position at the University of Texas. McDowell, who was the foremost journalistic supporter of the Maroons, did not reference the NCAA tournament, the SEC title, or State’s game against Ole Miss.

In the March 2, 1959, edition of the *State Times*, McDowell said he believed Hilbun’s decision was made, in part, because he feared that the State College Board would step in and

overrule him to which an anonymous board member told McDowell Hilbun's fears were correct. McDowell again lambasted the political elite in Mississippi and lamented for an opportunity lost.

Now watch the politicians seeking offices this summer, who failed to utter one remark, jump on the band wagon and praise Hilbun for his courageous decision. This shameful denial will be long remembered in Mississippi by true sportsmen who are also 100 percent segregationists, and who realize that the NCAA tournament was a tournament of champions and nothing else. Mississippi State's greatest basketball opportunity — only four games away from the national championship — may never come again.<sup>238</sup>

An editorial cartoon titled "That's the Way the Ball Bounces," appeared in the same issue of the *Jackson State Times*, depicting a MSU basketball player with a "SEC crown" on his head chained in shackles to a rock labeled "election year." In the background, a University of Kentucky basketball player is shown riding off into the distance next to the words "National Championship."<sup>239</sup>

While McDowell would not go so far as to call himself a liberal, the longtime Mississippi sports writer and editor's work during the 1958-59 MSU basketball season would bravely challenge the white status quo in the Magnolia State and offered opposition to the unwritten law, ranking him in the company of such journalistic luminaries as Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* as an antagonistic element of change in the Closed Society. "Mississippi Red" would revert to his old tricks at the conclusion of Mississippi State's 1960-61 basketball campaign, which can be found in Chapter V.

#### The Sports Desk Speaks Up

McDowell was not the only sports editor to advocate an NCAA tournament appearance for MSU. Both Dick Lightsey of the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi and Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post* stood along McDowell in their belief that the opportunity for a national championship would benefit the Magnolia State. However, both men stressed their segregationist beliefs and looked at the tournament as a way for the all-white Maroons to extend the Closed Society's dominance to the national hardwood.



Lightsey, who wrote a daily sports column titled “Bunts, Boots and Bounces” for the *Daily Herald*, was one of a few journalists who identified the prospects of a NCAA tournament bid after the Maroons’ victory over Kentucky. “The Maroons are in the driver’s seat -- if they can get by five loop foes on the road,” he wrote.<sup>240</sup> Lightsey again focused on the Kentucky game on February 13, 1959, but did not reference State’s hopes for an NCAA tournament bid.<sup>241</sup>

Lightsey would again note the team’s chances for a postseason berth on February 16, 1959. After explaining how Auburn’s NCAA probation status would keep the Plainsmen out of the tournament, Lightsey wrote, “Seems a shame the Maroons may not be allowed to participate in the NCAA tournament even if they should qualify for a berth. They should have a fine ball club and could bring a lot of prestige to the Magnolia State if allowed to go for the mythical national championship.”<sup>242</sup>

Citing MSU’s dominance in wins over Florida and Georgia, Lightsey argued for State’s appearance in the NCAA tournament in his February 18, 1959, column. “We favor allowing the team to compete in the NCAA event. Win or lose, it would definitely bring good publicity to the Magnolia State and chances are the Maroons could win it all,” the Biloxi-based sports editor wrote.<sup>243</sup> Unlike McDowell, Lightsey claimed he was a segregationist but saw little harm that could come from State’s participation in the tournament.<sup>244</sup> Despite his perceived activism, Lightsey would conclude by predicting the Maroons would be kept from the tournament.

Much like *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Baker, Lightsey published segments from a column in the University of Mississippi’s student newspaper, the *Daily Mississippian*, which advocated MSU’s participation in the NCAA tournament. The student-based editorial, while not stressing any notion of human rights, referred to any member of the Board of Trustees who might stop MSU as a “group of bigoted politicians.”<sup>245</sup> Lightsey’s only statement on the matter came at the conclusion, where he wrote, “Them’s pretty strong words

in favor of yo' arch rival, Colonel."<sup>246</sup> While Lightsey established an issue earlier that he was a segregationist, the editorial from the *Daily Mississippian* suggested a social justification for MSU's participation in the tournament. By publishing the article verbatim, Lightsey expressed an editorial opinion that favored the position taken by the Ole Miss newspaper.

In the February 20, 1959, edition of the *Daily Herald*, Lightsey commented on the pressure being placed on State from "outside sources," specifically the aforementioned article from *Sports Illustrated*. In response to the work, Lightsey expressed both hope and realism when it came to State's NCAA prospects. "We would like to see the team participate," Lightsey wrote. "But Mississippi has taken a stand on the racial issue, and we feel the state will stand pat — even at the expense of a fine basketball team."<sup>247</sup>

Lightsey continued to stress a pro-MSU sentiment coupled with his belief that the team would remain in Starkville in the February 23, 1959, edition of the *Daily Herald*. Lightsey would turn his attention to the SEC championship race between MSU, Kentucky, and Auburn, and he anointed the Wildcats as the SEC representative in the NCAA tournament because "State will probably remain at home because of an unwritten law."<sup>248</sup>

In the aftermath of MSU's victory over Tulane, Lightsey did not express his opinion on the NCAA tournament, but he pointed out the opinions of his journalistic brethren at the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, and the *Vicksburg Evening Post*.<sup>249</sup> While it may have appeared as if Lightsey may have been separating himself from the MSU debate, his best work on the controversy was yet to come.

In the February 26, 1959, edition of "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," Lightsey devoted the majority of his column on the unwritten law and its origins. Lightsey wrote that the "law" could not be found in any sort of public record because it was never presented on the floor of the House and "what happened at that meeting did not leak out for a long time. But the agreement made in the meeting was accepted as applying to all Mississippi institutions."<sup>250</sup>

Then, after going through the history of the agreement, Lightsey again stressed his position as both a fan of MSU basketball and a segregationist.

We would like to see the team go to the postseason event where it would get the chance to grab off the number one spot in the nation. We are not in favor of integration in Mississippi, but go along with the old saying: When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Even if they get beat, they will at least have a chance of proving to themselves — and other Mississippians — just how good they really are. Enough said.<sup>251</sup>

After the season-ending victory over Ole Miss, Lightsey called Hilbun's decision a mere formality. Rather than continuing to argue for an NCAA bid for the Maroons or voice a discontenting opinion, Lightsey chose to cheer on Kentucky, hoping that a Wildcat title would improve the public perception of the 24-1 Maroons.<sup>252</sup> Days later, Lightsey defended Hilbun after students on the Starkville campus hanged the MSU president in effigy. "State students gave vent to their disappointment when the team was denied the right to take part in the NCAA event. But the wrong man was hanged in effigy. Hilbun had no alternative. He had to either keep the team at home — or probably lose his job," Lightsey explained.<sup>253</sup>

While the Biloxi-based sports editor may have favored an MSU-NCAA tournament appearance, his justification, like that of his fellow sports writers and editors, was a nod to athletic success and not human equality or civil rights. From an examination of his opinion-based articles, Lightsey wanted to have it both ways. He did not want to advocate anything that would lead to integration, thus challenging the Closed Society, yet he wanted Mississippi State to play for a national championship. Regardless, his support for State was a radical notion for the white elite in the Closed Society. The idea that the harmonious white dominated social structure would be temporarily cast aside for a basketball team's pursuit of glory was attacked by other, more traditional segregationist publications in the Magnolia State.

*Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray also devoted the bulk of his editorial work on the success of the Maroons and the potential NCAA bid. Sparked by the Maroons'

victory over the Wildcats, Ray wrote in the February 12, 1959, edition of the *Evening Post* that if MSU were to win the rest of its games, the “segregation question” would have to be addressed. While never explaining the unwritten law, Ray referenced the gentleman’s agreement on three different occasions. However, he maintained that both the team and fans alike should focus on the remaining schedule and not the issue of race.<sup>254</sup> Ray’s February 15, 1959, column would also feature the Maroons, specifically Texas’ interest in McCarthy; however, the NCAA tournament was never referenced.<sup>255</sup>

As the Maroons continued their successful march to the conference championship, discussions of an NCAA berth became more commonplace. In the February 17, 1959, edition of “Press Box Views,” Ray wrote if the Maroons were to win their final three games, the team would be in line for a tournament invitation. Much like McDowell, Ray asked his audience to voice their opinions on the matter. “Do you think the Maroons should be permitted to compete for national recognition if they are asked?” he wrote. “Public sentiment will probably be the deciding factor. We’d like to have your opinion on the matter right away.”<sup>256</sup>

Two days later, in the February 19, 1959, edition of “Press Box Views,” Ray expressed his own profound viewpoint on the issue. Just as fellow sports editor McDowell, Ray, citing 1959 as an election year, insinuated that the political elite in the state could potentially be swayed by public opinion thus justifying why “sports editors throughout the state have called upon the general public to express their opinions on the matter.”<sup>257</sup> Despite the supportive tone, Ray’s strongest commentary was saved for his own opinion, in which he argued for both a tournament appearance and the reaffirming of the subservient position of blacks in the Closed Society. In the following passage, the Vicksburg-based Ray offered support for the Maroons and integrated play but his justification did not mention civil rights. Like Lightsey, Ray wanted to have his proverbial cake and eat it too.

Personally, we can't see too much harm in letting the team participate. Of course, they would be criticized by some folks no matter what the final decision, but in our opinion, if State competes; more good will and beneficial national recognition would come to the state of Mississippi than if they turned the invitation down. Just by playing against a Negro or two for an hour or so a day in a championship event of this sort wouldn't mean the team had turned integrationists . . . and it would give them a chance to show up these colored boys and show the nation how basketball is played at Mississippi State.<sup>258</sup>

Ray's February 22, 1959, column addressed the letters and inquires that had flooded the Vicksburg-based *Post* on the MSU debate and claimed that public support seemed to back the Maroons. The first, from Robert Johnston of Vicksburg, called Mississippi's Legislature "chicken" and openly questioned whether or not they feared that the Maroons might lose to an integrated foe. Regardless of victory or defeat, the Ole Miss graduate wrote, "The school and the state can claim 'We were there, and the opponents knew it.'"<sup>259</sup> However, Ray presented a degree of opposition from W. C. Carlisle of Vicksburg, who wrote, "Either we are for integration or we are against it. I don't think there is any in between." Ray concluded his column by addressing the unwritten law and predicted that the Starkville contingent would remain home. "The past policy and the Legislature, although saying they were not going to discuss the issue, will probably bear the brunt of the decision. Mississippi State will not likely compete. If they did, the door would be left wide open for other schools, such as Ole Miss, Mississippi Southern, Mississippi College, Millsaps, etc., to compete against integrated teams in all sports. Eventually this will probably take place, but we have our doubts if it will begin next month regardless of public sentiment."<sup>260</sup>

In the aftermath of MSU's victory over the LSU Tigers and the Tulane Green Wave, Ray published, almost word for word, Carter's editorial from the *Delta Democrat-Times* that favored MSU's participation in the NCAA tournament.<sup>261</sup> While Ray had made his opinion known a week earlier, publishing Carter's work was, in itself, an editorial statement. The *Vicksburg* sports editor found merit in Carter's opinion and, by publishing it verbatim, only

solidified where Ray stood on the issue even if his stance was based, in part, on the premise of maintaining white Mississippi's dominant position over blacks.

With the NCAA invitation all but guaranteed for MSU, Ray again addressed the prospects of the Maroons playing in the tournament in his February 25, 1959, column. Ray expressed his desire for State participation in the tournament but forecast a grim outcome for McCarthy's troops.

(It) seems very unlikely when this was written because of past policy of playing against integrated teams . . . although in our opinion it's going to be a shame to deny the Maroons this privilege after producing such a fine record and bringing so much valuable publicity to the Magnolia State. A refusal to let the Maroons try for national recognition will turn this excellent publicity into the kind that's hard on the eyes and heavy on the heart. A definite 'yes' or 'no' answer is expected momentarily.<sup>262</sup>

Going into MSU's final game of the season against Ole Miss, Ray again published the work of other sports journalists in the February 26, 1959, edition of the *Evening Post*, including that of Walters and McDowell. In an expression of opinion, Ray spoke out in support of Hilbun, writing, "President Ben is on the spot. He is in the middle holding the bag. There's pressure bearing down on him from all sides. We feel for Mr. Ben, a great man in every respect, wanting to do what's right and can't get any help from the 'higher ups.' If his decision is to let the Maroons participate, we hope the Maroons will dedicate their national championship to him, for he will be the one actually responsible if they should compete and win it."<sup>263</sup> In the wake of Hilbun's decision to withhold Mississippi State from the NCAA tournament, Ray concluded his commentary on the matter by defending Hilbun. Citing "the racial issue" as justification for the Maroons' absence, Ray wrote of Hilbun, "No one should criticize Mr. Ben with his decision. Had he said 'go' his decision could have been reversed and he probably would not have remained very high on the 'higher-ups' list."<sup>264</sup> Ray also attempted to console the competitive spirit of McCarthy and his team. "Everyone knows the 'Babe' (McCarthy) sure wished he could have taken his boys North and showed up those 'other' teams, which we believe he could have done and the only thing that would have

actually resulted would have been bushels and bushels of beneficial publicity to the Magnolia State — and possibly the national championship,” Ray wrote.<sup>265</sup>

While Ray may have been a rare, vocal supporter for MSU and integrated play, his justification for such support was clear. While McDowell’s work seemed to identify a nod to social equality and/or journalism ethics, with the omission of his opinion on segregation, Ray did the exact opposite. Ray only advocated MSU’s participation because of the allure of a national championship and a possible demonstration of the Closed Society’s belief of the subservient nature of whites over blacks. While Lightsey and Ray expressed similar beliefs in segregation, Ray’s commentary was different because of his quest to use MSU’s possible athletic glory as a means to justify the Magnolia State’s belief in state’s rights and solidify the political white social structure that gripped Mississippi. Ray may have supported the Maroons, but he clearly supported the cause of white Mississippi as well.

#### Silence Again Rules in Starkville

Perhaps the *Starkville News* committed one of the more egregious acts of journalism during the 1959 debate. While the *News* was lacking as far as coverage of the Maroons was concerned, there was no shortage of original, editorial content. However, those efforts offered little to no insight into the paper’s opinion of integration or the unwritten law. After MSU’s victory over the Wildcats, an unknown author penned the paper’s “Athletes’ Feats” column looking back at the contest. The columnist warned MSU fans to not get overconfident. “Before any of you begin thinking in terms of State winning its first basketball title, remember the Maroons have five home games left to play.”<sup>266</sup> In the February 20, 1959, issue of the *Starkville News*, editor Henry Meyer wrote about the Maroons in his column, “Putting the OK on Tibbeha” and congratulated McCarthy and the MSU squad for a successful season.<sup>267</sup> Meyer made no mention of the team’s SEC title hopes or the NCAA tournament. In the same fashion, the paper’s “Athlete’s Feats,” column, while discussing the aftermath of

MSU's game against Kentucky, did not reference the team's hopes for a SEC title and NCAA bid.

Furthermore, in his February 27, 1959, column, Meyer again neglected the NCAA tournament, focusing on MSU's victories over Tulane and LSU and Howell's newfound ownership of the SEC career scoring record.<sup>268</sup> The same could be said for that issue's edition of "Athlete's Feats," which called the 1959 campaign the best in MSU history. While the unknown author discussed the prestige associated with winning the SEC championship, hopes for an NCAA tournament bid were never referenced.<sup>269</sup> Meyer would congratulate the Maroons on its SEC championship in the March 6, 1959, edition of the *Starkville News* but failed to reference the NCAA tournament, the unwritten law, or integrated athletics.<sup>270</sup> The same could be said for the March 6, 1959 edition of "Athletes' Feats," which never mentioned the NCAA tournament.<sup>271</sup> While other newspapers expressed little to no opinion on the matter, the story was a local one for Meyers and the *Starkville News*. To be void of, not only original reporting, but commentary demonstrated a degree of journalistic neglect by Starkville's primary news source.

With so many journalists failing to voice an opinion on the matter, especially from sports desks across the state, Mosby, much like McDowell, said many reporters thought the political issues of the days and athletics should have remained separate.

"The Mississippi sports writers of the time period had the general opinion that sports were for the playing fields and politics and social issues were for other arenas," he said.

"There were some exceptions, and when backed into a corner, they followed the wishes of their employers. I put myself in this category."<sup>272</sup>

#### Public Perception

While many journalists seemed to share the opinion that an MSU tournament appearance was a pipe dream, public opinion was somewhat difficult to measure. Most of the published letters to the editor, especially in the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*,



avored the opinions and views expressed by those newspapers editors and writers. Perhaps the most vocal publication against the Maroons and an NCAA trip, the *Jackson Daily News*, published a number of letters to the editor that damned the MSU contingent and, like Ward, protected the Closed Society from this internal attack. In the February 26, 1959, edition of "Our Readers' Viewpoint," Shirley Kempinska of Natchez placed the blame for student support for an NCAA bid on what was being taught in the classroom, citing the work of Southern California professor Floyd Ruch and his book *Psychology and Life*. Kempinska said that students were being brainwashed and that "complete amalgamation of the race is being promoted through this kind of teaching. Better check your son or daughter's college required subjects instead of blaming the students for agreeing to compete in non-segregated tournaments."<sup>273</sup> Another reader, Byron De La Beckwith of Greenwood, wrote that "If parents of students at Mississippi State and the faculty of Mississippi State haven't already explained to the students why they can't play ball with Negro students then it is high time for the taxpayers of the state to tell them why not. Even if your children want to integrate we know the folly of their wishes. Spare the rod and spoil the student."<sup>274</sup> The De La Beckwith name is a familiar one in the dark history of the Magnolia State as the Ku-Klux-Klan member was convicted in the murder of Medger Evers.<sup>275</sup> A final letter published in the section from L. B. Goodwin of Lexington, Kentucky, claimed that residents of the Bluegrass State also wanted segregated athletics and supported the cause of the Closed Society.<sup>276</sup>

Days later, in the February 28, 1959, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Ward published a letter from MSU students Marlyn Sanifer, Herman Cooper, Jr., and Bill Hodnett that expressed displeasure with any pro-NCAA tournament sentiment. The letter claimed that the poll held on campus was not publicized and that many of the students who voted did not think about the consequence and repercussions of such a vote. "When the state lets down in any small way on our segregation beliefs then there will be increased pressure from outside trying to break us down forever. Participation in an integrated tournament would go against

everything our state stands for,” the letter read.<sup>277</sup> Also published in the same edition of the *Jackson Daily News* was a letter from Fayette resident W. M. Drake, president of the Jefferson County Citizens’ Council. Drake praised the paper for its stand on integration and athletics and wrote, “Those, if any, who do not accept your argument now will accept it eventually.”<sup>278</sup>

The *Jackson Daily News* followed by publishing its final letters on the topic in its March 2, 1959, edition with A. J. Collins of Yazoo City hailing Ward and the *Jackson Daily News* for its stand on the “basketball agitation.”<sup>279</sup> Collins also noted his loyalty to the Citizens’ Council and added “it makes me sick and disgusted to read unfair remarks about the Citizens’ Council.”<sup>280</sup> While the letters in the *Jackson Daily News* were reflective of the ideals and values portrayed by the publication, it is illogical to think that everyone in the *Jackson Daily News*’ audience felt this way about the MSU-NCAA issue. Because of the influence the editorial staff of any newspaper has on what letters to the editor are published; Ward could have influenced the selection of correspondents that echoed his own personal beliefs. While the journalistic notion of objectivity indicates that journalists do their best to represent all sides of an issue, it was clear that Ward was only interested in the side that would help the Closed Society and end MSU’s threat against the unwritten law.

While the *Jackson Daily News* only published letters that objected to the MSU-NCAA tournament efforts, a similar sentiment appeared in the pages of the *Clarion-Ledger* as only one published correspondence supported the Starkville contingent. While Walters had discussed letters to the *Clarion-Ledger* in his column, the newspaper published its first letter to the editor on February 25, 1959. Grover W. Collins of Jackson wrote that, while he was proud of race relations in the state, he disapproved of any effort to keep the Maroons from playing in the NCAA tournament. “We do not refuse to send our representatives to the Federal Congress just because there are members of the colored race representing other states in the same capacity,” Collins argued.<sup>281</sup> Two days later, the *Ledger* published a letter from a

“State Observer” who admitted his or her support for the 1957 withdrawal of Jackson State College from the small NCAA tournament was misguided. “It would be nothing short of shame and disgrace if it (MSU) has to decline the invitation,” the anonymous author wrote. He or she called the precedent set with Jackson State “unfortunate for Mississippi so far as unfavorable publicity was and is concerned.”<sup>282</sup>

The *Ledger* also published two letters on March 4, 1959, that hailed Hilbun’s decision and offered continued support for a segregated Mississippi. The first, written by Ella Perry of Jackson, offered three cheers for Hilbun for “putting those foolish children at State U. in their place . . . it was down right indecent for children of former slaves to play around with children of their former masters in basketball or anywhere else.”<sup>283</sup> Perry further wrote that integration would lead to “intermarriage or misconception” and attacked MSU students for supporting a tournament appearance for the Maroons. The letter concluded by claiming that Mississippians were already having to sacrifice for the sake of the segregation cause and perhaps the basketball players and “silly students will obviously have to be told what to think if we segregationists are to prevent misconception from taking place in Mississippi.”<sup>284</sup>

A second letter came from A. S. Coody of Jackson, who said the state should be proud of both the basketball team and Hilbun for abstaining from the postseason. Coody wrote that Hilbun’s decision “would be clear when the evil days come upon us and attempts are made by the NAACP and the Commies to enroll Negroes in our Universities. We can then say that we have been consistent and have steadfastly stood against mixing and mongrelizing the races.”<sup>285</sup> Although the fellow Hederman newspaper published one letter that advocated an NCAA tournament appearance for MSU, the bulk of the material reflected the *Jackson Daily News* and protected the Closed Society through public opinion.

The only letter to the editor in Skewes’ *Meridian Star* was not reflective of the newspaper’s social view and thus offered a difference of opinion. On February 20, 1959, the *Star* published a letter from A. M Shirley of Meridian; a 1928 graduate of Ole Miss. Shirley

called for an NCAA tournament bid for the Maroons because of the past opportunities lost in the name of the Closed Society. “How long will ‘our way of life’ prevent high schools, colleges and universities competing in tournaments final?” Shirley wrote. “May we expect the ultimate defeat from within of a cause we hold dear. . . . Petty bigotry which divides and isolates us should have neither place nor part in our problem solving.”<sup>286</sup>

More so than any newspaper consulted in this chapter, the *Jackson State Times* offered a number of different opinions for and against MSU and, overall, did the best job attempting to strike a journalistic balance between those two opposing opinions. In response to McDowell’s aforementioned pleas to submit expressions of public opinion, the readers of the Jackson-based paper did not disappoint. McDowell, who took the lead in advocating an NCAA tournament appearance for the mighty Maroons, wrote and published what may be the most accurate gauge of public opinion in a February 15, 1959, article that featured nineteen different letters of opinion from across the state. McDowell wrote that the letters supporting an NCAA bid outnumbered the opposition at a 5-1 ratio and the correspondence “stressed that while Mississippi should preserve its segregation laws, the state should not be expected to abide by laws of the other states when playing in an athletic event which could bring national recognition to the Magnolia State.”<sup>287</sup> McDowell added that most of the correspondence indicated that other states in the South had no objection to playing integrated teams as long as the competition was out-of-state. As for the letters, an anonymous author who was a self-professed member of the Citizens’ Council found no harm in an NCAA tournament appearance by the Maroons, writing “Mississippi would not alter her position one iota on segregation if the Maroons play integrated teams. We must prove to the nation that we are not race bigots.”<sup>288</sup> Another letter from a “lifelong Mississippian, a segregationist, and a good Southern Baptist” out of Jackson called the agreement against MSU “childish, stupid, and utterly ridiculous.”<sup>289</sup> The anonymous writer continued, providing thirteen reasons why the team should accept an NCAA tournament bid, noting that Mississippi was the only state

in the South that had such a policy and that, by participating in the tournament, “we are merely accepting facts, not agreeing with the correctness of their ideas.”<sup>290</sup> The letter concluded by blaming the controversy and subsequent debate on state politicians who were “rebel rousing race haters.”<sup>291</sup> Another author from Mendenhall agreed but predicted that “the old soreheads of Mississippi will prevent them from going.”<sup>292</sup> Others, such as a citizen from Benton, supported the unwritten law, writing “I say don’t play any games with them or go to school with them until we are made to and I hope it will be a long time before we are forced to.” A Jackson resident followed suit, writing, “We are either loyal to the traditions and feelings of southern society or we are not. If our athletic teams play on an integrated basis we may as well abandon our past history, the memory of our valiant ancestors and go whole hog for race-mixing. This thing should of never been broached.”<sup>293</sup> Perhaps the most interesting perspective came from a Hazlehurst resident who noted that public opinion might be in favor of a Maroons tournament bid but put the responsibility of such debate squarely on McDowell. “I can’t help but feel that you are doing them an injustice in writing about their going to the tournament. I believe you would do them a favor to drop the subject.”<sup>294</sup> In total, fifteen of the nineteen letters supported a Mississippi State appearance in the NCAA tournament.

Days after McDowell published the nineteen submissions he had received, the *Jackson State Times* continued with its attempts to represent the varying opinions on the matter by publishing a letter from L. G. Patterson of Jackson, who opposed any threats of integration. “For our young College boys to play in National Sports where there might be a few Negroes, — well this just won’t do,” Patterson wrote. “You just can’t tell for sure, they might want to intermarry and equally as bad the Maroons might lose and that would be mighty embarrassing.”<sup>295</sup>

Presented as a news article in the February 23, 1959, edition of the *Jackson State Times*, former MSU basketball player Shelby Bailey voiced his support for a Maroon appearance in the NCAA tournament. Bailey, a member of the 1956-57 squad that played

against the integrated University of Denver, said it would be a greater crime to miss the tournament if invited. "I guarded one of them and it did not affect my feelings towards integration nor did it affect any of our boys on the team," the former basketball player wrote. "It only embarrassed us and Coach McCarthy in front of the people of Evansville and the other basketball teams and coaches represented there when we were forced to withdraw and come home."<sup>296</sup>

In the February 24, 1959, edition of the *Jackson State Times*, John Cook of Jackson not only attacked the MSU student body for its vote of support for an NCAA tournament bid but also compared the MSU's apparent lack of commitment to integration to veterans of the Korean Conflict. "They know what it is to sacrifice for a principle and they are not ashamed of the fact they did, in the words of an old cowboy, 'They so lived that they can look every man in the eye and tell him to go to hell,'" Cook wrote. "There ARE men in Mississippi who will sacrifice for a principle, but they are not always highly educated nor star athletes. But they are the only breed of men who will ultimately uphold the principles on which this State and nation are founded."<sup>297</sup>

Grover Collins of Jackson took a different stance in the February 25, 1959, edition of the *Jackson State Times*, writing that while he was "proud of the fine race relationship that exists in Mississippi," he did not agree with missing the tournament because "we do not refuse to send our representatives to the Federal Congress just because there are members of the colored race representing other states in that same capacity."<sup>298</sup>

Much like the article depicting the letter written by Bailey, the *Jackson State Times* again presented letters to the editor in the same fashion as they would a straightforward news article. Another former Maroon, 1925 freshmen team member Harrison Saunders, wrote a letter published in the February 27, 1959, edition of the *Times* and, in a personal appeal to the MSU president, asked for the team to be allowed to play in the NCAA tournament. "The only decision you can render will be a nod of approval for the Maroons to enter the

tournament with your best wishes along with the best wishes of us who do not see in the 'nod of approval' any relation to the question of segregation or integration, Saunders wrote. "To do less than this would place the Maroons at the bottom of the ladder in competitive sports. . . . This is no way a battle of the KKK and the big brother mouth organ called the Citizens Council against any group of people. PRESIDENT HILBUN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AN ATHLETIC CONTEST."<sup>299</sup>

The same approach was taken with letters from Citizens' Council member D. A. Hegwood and MSU graduate Buddy Graves. Hegwood, a self-professed "die-hard segregationist" and an active member of the Flowood chapter of the Citizens' Council, approved of a Maroon appearance in the tournament because the team was not "incapable of conducting itself when thrown into interracial athletic events. Some of the best friends I have are colored people and I can proudly say I am respected accordingly."<sup>300</sup>

Another letter, from alumnus Graves, also supported the Maroons. "The participation of the Mississippi State basketball team in the national tournament is only a step down from taking part in international Olympic games. This is not comparable to local integration race relations. Let us not focus the colored races of people of the world down on Mississippi by refusing our boys the privilege to participate, if the team so desires," Graves wrote via telegraph.<sup>301</sup>

### Conclusion

The close of Mississippi State's 1959 season would not be the last time in the calendar year that a challenge to the unwritten law would occur. In April 1959, the University of Mississippi's baseball team would win the SEC championship in baseball only to proudly reject participation in the College World Series. Many in the Mississippi press, including Ward, who hailed the Oxford team for honoring the unwritten law, viewed the actions of Ole Miss as positive. Meanwhile, Mississippi State would suffer a setback during the 1959-60

season but would again win the SEC title in 1960-61, 1961-62, and 1962-63 and foster subsequent debates about the merits of an NCAA tournament bid for the Maroons.

The 1959 Mississippi State University basketball season stood out for a number of reasons; however in the annals of Mississippi history, those reasons had little to do with the Maroons' play on the court. For weeks, journalists and editors debated the merits of an NCAA tournament berth for MSU and, for the most part, debated the social implications of the possible participation of one of its own college teams participating in integrated competition. The journalistic defenders of the Closed Society took to the front pages of Mississippi newspapers to defend their way of life and denounce any and all arguments for the Maroons. Unlike the events that have been reviewed in this dissertation to this point, the 1959 debate involving MSU, for the first time, had both support and opposition from the journalists in the Magnolia State. While the majority of editors followed the lead of Ward and the Hederman-owned newspapers out of Jackson, others such as Carter from the news desk and sports editor McDowell identified the Maroons' prospects for a national championship run as a positive for the state and challenged the segregationist cloud that hovered over the state. Others who argued for an MSU-NCAA bid, such as Lightsey and Ray, openly voiced their support for the Closed Society yet saw only positive repercussions for the very opposition that kept MSU from playing. In fact, both sports editors stated that MSU's participation would only help support Mississippi's white dominated ideology and potentially serve as a physical sign of the dominance of the Closed Society outside of the South. These minor differences of opinion would grow in the coming years to become cracks in the foundation of the Closed Society, culminating in the 1963 participation of MSU in the NCAA tournament. However, based upon the evidence presented in this chapter, the journalists in the state played an important part in the enforcement of the unwritten law in 1959. For the most part, the bulk of journalists denounced the notion of integrated play and almost mocked those who held out hope. Across every turn and win for the Maroons, writers used their work



to reaffirm their belief in the Closed Society and honored the premise of the unwritten law, despite its lack of legal legitimacy. In the back and forth wrangling between members of the State College Board, Hilbun and Coleman, it was the press in Mississippi that took issue with lack of a definitive voice and called for a single individual to enforce the unwritten law. Once Hilbun made his decision, most in the press instinctively flocked to protect the MSU president, despite their position on the issue. Rather than criticize their very way of life, in hindsight, most in the press simply wanted the Closed Society to be protected. The various differences expressed by members of the press in terms of protecting and enforcing the principles of the Closed Society would, over time and with the advancements in civil rights, become debates over the legitimacy of their very own white-dominated ideology.

Despite the social impact of the commentary of the Mississippi sports writer, Mosby, who left Nachez and Mississippi in early 1959, said the sports scribes of the day had little to no understanding of the social impact their work had.

“I covered games, wrote stories and columns and worked to satisfy my bosses. Outside of that, I worried about having enough money for the rent and the car payment and for groceries,” Mosby said. “Social issues were not priorities for me. But I was aware of what was taking place in my community and on a wider scene. Integration in athletics was a sometimes painful and stressful growing process. Maybe this is from left field, but integration in athletics was the teenage years for sports. They struggled, made it through and went on to bigger and better things.”<sup>302</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Lee Baker, “Maroons Beat Rebs 23 To 16 In Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1959, 1B.

<sup>2</sup> Mercer Bailey, “Maroons Meet Wildcats In Key SEC Tilt Tonight,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1959, 9; and “State Cagers Host Top-Rated Wildcats,” *Meridian Star*, 9 February 1959, 8.

<sup>3</sup> “Game at Starkville Is ‘Must’ for Both,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 9 February 1959, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1959, 10.

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert Fulton, "Mississippi State Overwhelms Top-Ranked Kentucky 66-58," *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1959, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Lee Baker, "State Maroons Hammer No.1 Kentucky, 66-58," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 February 1959, 6; Jim Roden, "Howell Leads State Over Rupp's Raiders," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 February 1959, 4B; "Mississippi State Romps Over No. 1 Kentucky Wildcats 66-58," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 10 February 1959, 5; "State Beats 'Cats; Howell Tallies 27," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 10 February 1959, 4; "Bailey Howell Fires Thunderous Claim To All American Basketball Honors As State Defeats Wildcats," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 10 February 1959, 9; and "Mississippi State Blasts Kentucky In Monday Contest," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1959, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Billy Rainey, "Maroons Upset Mighty Kentucky," *Meridian Star*, 10 February 1959, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Jim Roden, "McCarthy is Elated Over Great Victory," *Jackson State Times*, 10 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>9</sup> "Mississippi State Clubs Top-Ranked Kentucky," *Hattiesburg American*, 10 February 1959, 1B; "Maroons Can Beat Anyone At State Says McCarthy," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 10 February 1959, 6; "Maroons Toy Around With Kentucky In 66-58 Win," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 February 1959, 8; "Humble Happy McCarthy Praises Team; Lauds Big Bailey Howell," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 10 February 1959, 4; "Maroon Coach Says His Boys Can Win Over Any Team At Mississippi State," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 10 February 1959, 8; "McCarthy Believes State Best In Nation Following Triumph Over Wildcats," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1959, 14.

<sup>10</sup> "Hinny," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 February 1959, 1.

<sup>11</sup> "Upset Victory of 'Tucky Makes State Title Threat," *Meridian Star*, 10 February 1959, 8; "Maroon Stock Soars After Cat Conquest," *Jackson State Times*, 10 February 1959, 5B; and "Maroons Defeat Mighty Kentucky 66-58 As Howell Stars Again," *Commercial Dispatch*, 10 February 1959, 9.

<sup>12</sup> "State Cagers Want To Play," *Jackson State Times*, 10 February 1959, 5B.

<sup>13</sup> "Maroons Sparkle In Biggest Win," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 February 1959, 7.

<sup>14</sup> "McCarthy Says Maroons To Be Better Next Year," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1959, 15.

<sup>15</sup> "Rupp Believes Cats Will Get NCAA Bid," *Jackson State Times*, 11 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>16</sup> "Board Alone Decides Maroons' NCAA Play," *Jackson State Times*, 11 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>17</sup> "Coleman On State Going to NCAA Meet," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 11 February 1959, 1 and "Coleman Says He Hasn't Any Power To Act," *Commercial Dispatch*, 11 February 1959, 6.

---

<sup>18</sup> David M. Moffit, "Howell Proves He's Best," *Jackson State Times*, 11 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>19</sup> "Maroons Begin Season-Ending Road Journey," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1959, 8; and David M. Moffit, "It's a Tough League; Cats Lead Nation, Third in SEC," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1959, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Cliff Sessions, "Segregation Leaders Object to NCAA Trip," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1959, 15.

<sup>21</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 February 1959, 22.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Curtis Wilkie, *Dixie: A Personal Odyssey Through Events That Shaped the Modern South* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 139; and Orley B. Caudill, Interview with William J. Simmons, Mississippi Oral History Program of the University of Southern Mississippi, vol. 372, 26 June 1979.

<sup>24</sup> Joe Holley, "Cliff Sessions Dies; Civil rights-Era Reporter," *Washington Post*, 29 December 2005, 5B.

<sup>25</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 200-202.

<sup>26</sup> "Babe McCarthy Gets 'Feeler' From Texas," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1959, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Texas Courts Babe For Coaching Job," *Jackson State Times*, 12 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>28</sup> "Rebels, Maroons Play Road Games," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1959, 15; "Maroons Invade Florida Saturday," *Jackson State Times*, 12 February 1959, 5B; and "State Maroons Prepare For Five-Game Road Journey," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1959, 24.

<sup>29</sup> "Howell Gets 43 as State Wins 105-68," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1959, B1; "Howell Scores 43 In 105-63 Win Over Florida," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 16 February 1959, 5; and "Howell Sinks '43' As State Dumps Florida 105-68," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 February 1959, 11.

<sup>30</sup> "Maroons Win Lopsided Victory Over Florida," *Meridian Star*, 15 February 1959, 8; "Howell Sparks State Victory," *Jackson State Times*, 15 February 1959, 1D.

<sup>31</sup> Ed Wilks, "Auburn Team Seeks Top Spot This Week," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1959, 12.

<sup>32</sup> "Howell, State March on Georgia," *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1959, 4B; and "Maroons Face Georgia Five," *Commerical Dispatch*, 16 February 1959, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Mercer Bailey, "Southeastern Conference," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1959, 3B; Mercer Bailey, "Bailey Howell Led Maroons Eye Georgia as 21<sup>st</sup> Victim," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 February 1959, 6; Mercer Bailey, "Howell and Teammates March On

---

Georgia Bulldogs In Game Tonight,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 16 February 1959, 5; “Mississippi State Travels For Game With Georgia Bulldogs In Athens,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 16 February 1959, 6; and Mercer Bailey, “Mississippi State Slaughters Florida, Howell Stars,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1959, 19.

<sup>34</sup> “Howell Leads Maroons Over Georgians, 76-56,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1959, 13; “Howell Leads State Win Over Georgia,” *Meridian Star*, 17 February 1959, 8; Mercer Bailey, “Fight Enlivens State’s Win Over Georgia,” *Hattiesburg American*, 17 February 1959, 9; Mercer Bailey, “Georgia Bulldogs Fall To Maroons,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1959, 8; “Howell Survives Fight And 3 Man Defense To Guide Maroons To 21<sup>st</sup> Victory,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 February 1959, 8; Mercer Bailey, “Mississippi State Survives Fist Fight To Celebrate Another Win In Climb,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 17 February 1959, 6; and “Mercer Bailey, “Top Cage Powers Breeze In Monday Night Contests As Tourney Dates Loom Nearer,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 February 1959, 12.

<sup>35</sup> “Howell, Waters Top SEC Race,” *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1959, 5B; Leon Burnett, “Howell Sacks 33 In 76-56 Win,” *Jackson State Times*, 17 February 1959, 4B; and “State Survives Fight, Rigged Defense on Howell, To Whip Georgia, 76-56,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 17 February 1959, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Berry Reece, “J.P. Leaves NCAA Bid Up To Solons,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1959, 1.

<sup>37</sup> “Maroons Need Consent of State’s Legislature,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1959, 13; “Decision On Maroons Must Have Okay of Legislature,” *Meridian Star*, 16 February 1959, 1; “Miss. State And the NCAA Tournament,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1959, A8; “State Law Won’t Keep Maroons Out of NCAA Tourney,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 16 February 1959, 1; “Governor Get Mail On State-To-NCAA Hassle,” *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1959, 1; “Governor Says If MSU Plays In NCAA Tournament It Must First Consult The Legislature,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 16 February 1959, 1, 3; John Herbers, “Coleman Threatens To Campaign In ’59 Races,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 16 February 1959, 1; “Legislature Will Have To Be Consulted Before State Can Go To Tourney,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1959, 8; and “To Shun NCAA Hassle,” *Jackson State Times*, 17 February 1959, 1. In the *State Times* article, McKeigney is identified as interim president as Hilbun was unavailable for comment due to an unknown illness.

<sup>38</sup> “Maroons Need Consent of State’s Legislature,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1959, 13.

<sup>39</sup> “To Shun NCAA Hassle,” *Jackson State Times*, 17 February 1959, 1; “Board May Talk NCAA; Capital March Rumored,” *Jackson State Times*, 19 February 1959, 1, 2A; “NCAA Tourney Action Unlikely At Board Meeting,” *Meridian Star*, 17 February 1959, 8; and “Board Tells State To Decide NCAA On Own,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 19 February 1959, 1.

<sup>40</sup> David M. Moffit, “Bailey Howell Near 2 Scoring Records,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1959, 14; “Howell Holds Big Lead in Scoring Race,” *Meridian Star*, 16 February 1959, 8.

<sup>41</sup> “Howell Expected To Set New SEC Scoring Record Tomorrow Night at LSU,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1959, 6.

---

<sup>42</sup> David M. Moffit, "Kentucky Team Watching Mississippi Developments," *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1959, 12.

<sup>43</sup> "Opinion Vote On NCAA Trip Today At MSU," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1959, 31; "State Students Cast Votes On NCAA Tourney," *Meridian Star*, 18 February 1959, 9; "Miss. State Students Voting On NCAA Issue," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 February 1959, 8A; "State Students will Vote on NCAA Trip," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1959, 4; "Students Vote Feelings on NCAA Tourney Seat," *Enterprise-Journal*, 19 February 1959, 13; "State Students Vote on Team Going to NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 19 February 1959, 6; "State Students To Vote On Whether Team Should Go To NCAA Tournament," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 19 February 1959, 25; "State Students Vote 'Yes' For Integrated Tournament," *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1959, 1; "State Students Favor NCAA Tourney Entry," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1959, 1, 2; "State Students Vote 973-162 For NCAA Play," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 20 February 1959, 1, 2; "Most State Students For Play in Tourney," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 20 February 1959, 6; "Mixed Play For Cage Stars Is State Vote," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1959, 1; "State Students Favor Playing In NCAA Tourney," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 20 February 1959, 5; "Student Vote Favors NCAA Tourney Jaunt," *Enterprise-Journal*, 20 February 1959, 8; "One Fourth Of Students Vote," *Commercial Dispatch*, 20 February 1959, 1; "MSU Students Vote Heavily For NCAA Play," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 20 February 1959, 1, 3; and "State Students In Favor Of Maroons Going To NCAA," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1959, 18.

<sup>44</sup> "MSU Students Favor Trip to Tourney," *Jackson State Times*, 20 January 1959, 1, 2A.

<sup>45</sup> James C. Cobb, *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity* (New York: Oxford Press, 1994), 250; and Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 16.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Crespi, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 25. Crespi called Patterson's claims "at best, misleading; at worst, they were outright lies."

<sup>47</sup> "Mississippi State Student Vote Could be Misleading," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1959, 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> "Campus Election on Integrated Tourney Attracts Little Interest at Miss. State," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1959, 1, 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ray Sadler, "Southeastern Champion Maroons will not attend NCAA tournament," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 3 March 1959, 1.

<sup>52</sup> "MSU Students Favor Trip to Tourney," *Jackson State Times*, 20 January 1959, 1, 2A.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

---

<sup>54</sup> Dudley Doust, "Bouquets for Babe and His Bailey," *Sports Illustrated*, 23 February 1959, 50-52.

<sup>55</sup> "McCarthy Denies Rumor," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1959, 12; "Campus Election on Integrated Tourney Attracts Little Interest at Miss. State," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1959, 1, 2; "Board May Talk NCAA; Capital March Rumored," *Jackson State Times*, 19 February 1959, 1, 2A; and "State Students Might Converge on Capital," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1959, 12.

<sup>56</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Sports Illustrated State Story Is OK," *Jackson State Times*, 19 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>57</sup> "Jobe Denies Board 'Segregation Rule,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1959, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Berry Reece, "Board Member Dodge NCAA Tourney Queries," *Jackson Daily News*, 21 February 1959, 1,4.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> "The NCAA Question," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 21 February 1959, 13.

<sup>62</sup> "Maroon Cage Talent Causing Big Rhubarb," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1959, 7.

<sup>63</sup> John Herbers, "Sillers Says State Shouldn't; Hilbun In '57 Said they Wouldn't," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 February 1959, 1; and "Unwritten Law on Integrated Athletics Has Kept Mississippi Teams From Mixing," *Meridian Star*, 22 February 1959, 2.

<sup>64</sup> John Herbers, "Sillers Says State Shouldn't; Hilbun In '57 Said they Wouldn't," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 February 1959, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Lee Baker, "State Tips LSU Tigers In Rugged 75-67 Battle," *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 February 1959, 1B; and *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1959, 1B; "Maroons Cagers Score 75-67 Win Over Louisiana State," *Meridian Star*, 22 February 1959, 10; W. B. Ragsdale, Jr., "Kentucky Humbles Auburn; State Stomps LSU 75-67," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1959, 13; "Maroons Triumph Over LSU 75-67," *Commercial Dispatch*, 22 February 1959, 6; and Jimmie McDowell, "State 5 Socks Tigers," *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1959, 1D.

<sup>66</sup> Mercer Bailey, "Maroons, Auburn Tied For Southeastern Lead," *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1959, 9; Mercer Bailey, "State Tied For Lead Going Into Tonight's Tulane Game," *Hattiesburg American*, 23 February 1959, 2B; Mercer Bailey, "High Scoring Bailey Howell Goes After Big Record Against Tulane," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 23 February 1959, 4; Mercer Bailey, "Big Bailey Howell Goes Running For Scoring Record At Tulane Tonight," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 22 February 1959, 8; and Mercer Bailey, "State Whips LSU, Grabs Share Of SEC Basketball Lead," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 23 February 1959, 15.

<sup>67</sup> "Maroons Meet Wave," *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1959, 5B.

---

<sup>68</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Hilbun Walks A Lonely Street," *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1959, 2D.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Lee Baker, "Howell Scores 32 In Maroon Victory," *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1959, 6.

<sup>72</sup> "State Wins 65-51; Howell Scores 32," *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1959, 13; Vernon Butler, "Maroons Clinch Bid to NCAA," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 24 February 1959, 8; "Howell Sets New Conference Record As Maroons Take Over Lead," *Commercial Dispatch*, 24 February 1959, 6; Vernon Butler, "All Mississippi State Needs To Win Conference Crown Is Saturday Victory," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 24 February 1959, 8.

<sup>73</sup> "Hilbun Will Announce Decision After Reb Tilt," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1959, 1B.

<sup>74</sup> "Hilbun Will Decide On Tourney In 5 Days," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 24 February 1959, 1; "Hilbun To Decide Within Five Days On NCAA Tourney," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 25 February 1959, 9; and "Maroons Take Lead in SEC," *Meridian Star*, 24 February 1959, 8.

<sup>75</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Maroons Clinch NCAA Bid, Move Closer to SEC Crown," *Jackson State Times*, 24 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>76</sup> "Saturday Is Deadline," *Jackson State Times*, 24 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>77</sup> "No Playoff In SEC Needed If 3 Tied," *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1959, 13; and "No Playoff In SEC; State Is Champion," *Natchez Democrat*, 25 February 1959, 9.

<sup>78</sup> Vernon Butler, "State Takes Over First Place, Howell Breaks Scoring Record," *Hattiesburg American*, 24 February 1959, 6; Vernon Butler, "Maroons Need One Win For Title; Bailey Howell Sets Scoring Record," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 24 February 1959, 4; Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Grabs Lead In SEC Basketball Race," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 24 February 1959, 12.

<sup>79</sup> "Miss. State Maroons Between Two 'Fires,'" *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1959, 14; and "Maroons Caught Between Two Fires As Season Ends," *Natchez Democrat*, 25 February 1959, 9.

<sup>80</sup> "Tough Decision Is Planned By Hilbun On Tourney Trip," *Meridian Star*, 24 February 1959, 1, 2; "Hilbun's NCAA Tourney Decision Is Due Soon," *Hattiesburg American*, 25 February 1959, 8B; "Hilbun Considering Basketball Decision," *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1959, 1; "Hilbun Expected To Go Along Opposing Entry," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 25 February 1959, 9; "Maroon President Hilbun To Give Final Word Saturday," *Natchez Democrat*, 26 February 1959, 10; "President Must Decide State's NCAA Chances," *Enterprise-Journal*, 25 February 1959, 4; "Hilbun Expected To Reach Decision By Saturday If Maroons Can Go To NCAA," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 25 February 1959, 8; "Hilbun Must

---

Make Decision Soon ON NCAA Basketball Tournament,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 25 February 1959, 4; and “Hilbun Faces ‘Tough’ Move in Near Future,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 24 February 1959, 1.

<sup>81</sup> “Hilbun Will Announce Decision After Reb Tilt,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1959, B1; “State Expected To Turn Down NCAA,” *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1959, 8; “State’s Coach Asks People,” *Jackson State Times*, 25 February 1959, 1A; “President To Reveal It After Ole Miss Game,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1959, 7; “Thousands Welcome Maroons, Coach Asks Opinions on Tourney,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 25 February 1959, 1, 2; “Speak Out Cage Coach Says Today,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 25 February 1959, 1; and “Mississippians Fail To Answer Call For Opinion,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February, 1959, 1.

<sup>82</sup> “Hilbun Expected To Keep State Out of Tourney,” *Hattiesburg American*, 26 February 1959, A8; “State NCAA Play Up In Air; Ben Holds Decision,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 26 February 1959, 1; “Maroons Fate In Basketball Play Still Unknown,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 26 February 1959, 5; “Informed Sources Say State Not To Play In NCAA,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 26 February 1959, 16; “Ben Hilbun Will Give NCAA Decision Saturday,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 26 February 1959, 12; “State Prexy Says Will Decide If State Can Play,” *Natchez Democrat*, 26 February 1959, 11; “Hilbun Will Decide Whether State Can Go To NCAA,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 25 February 1959, 14; and “Still Mum At State On NCAA Tourney,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 February 1959, 24.

<sup>83</sup> “NCAA Decision to Come After Game,” *Jackson State Times*, 26 February 1959, 3A.

<sup>84</sup> “Maroons ‘Certain’ to Miss Tourney,” *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1959, 1.

<sup>85</sup> George Whittington, “Williams Would Shun NCAA Tournament,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 10A.

<sup>86</sup> “Rebels Hope To Knock State Out of SEC Lead,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1959, 2B; “Kentucky, Vols Vie, State Meets Rebels,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1959, 2; “Reb-Maroon Game Ends SEC Race,” *Jackson State Times*, 26 February 1959, 13C; and “Rebels Will Need All Out Effort To Upset Maroons,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1959, 8.

<sup>87</sup> “Rebels, Maroons Await Key Clash,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1959, 19; and “State Sets Trigger For Ole Miss Rebels,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1959, 6.

<sup>88</sup> “Ole Miss Braces For State Attack,” *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1959, 10; “State Seeks Win No. 24,” *Jackson State Times*, 26 February 1959, 14C; “Maroons Battle Rebs In Final Cage Game,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1959, 7; “State Ends Season At Oxford Saturday,” *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1959, 17; “Title Rides on State-Reb Cage Finale,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 4B; “Southeastern Conference Title on Line At Oxford,” *Meridian Star*, 28 February 1959, 7; “State-Rebs In Top Game Saturday Night,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 27 February 1959, 8; “Maroons Meet Ole Miss In Final Contest,” *Natchez Democrat*, 27 February 1959, 9; “State Favored To Claim 1<sup>st</sup> SEC Cage Crown Tonight As Battle Last Place Ole Miss,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 February 1959, 3; “State Can Wrap Up Conference Title In Game Tonight,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 28 February 1959, 8; “SEC Battle For Cellar As One For Conference Lead,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 25 February 1959, 6; “Maroons Cagers Reach End of Era Saturday,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 27



February 1959, 6; and "State Maroons Close Out Season Against Ole Miss Saturday," 27 February 1959, 19.

<sup>89</sup> "State Expected To Reject NCAA bid Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 28 February 1959, 13; "Maroons Expected To Take Ole Miss In Year's Finale," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 28 February 1959, 6; and "State Closes Out Cage Season Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 February 1959, 17.

<sup>90</sup> "McCarthy Given 4-Year Pact; Salary Increased," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1959, 5; "McCarthy Signs New State Pact," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1959, 3; "State Due to Edge Rebels, Wrap Up SEC Title and Reject NCAA Tourney," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1959, 9; "State Awards New Contract To McCarty; Mild Pay Hike," *Natchez Democrat*, 28 February 1959, 6; and "McCarthy Accepts Big Four-Year Maroon Contract," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 February 1959, 3.

<sup>91</sup> "McCarthy Signs New State Pact," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1959, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Cliff Session, "McCarthy Gets New Pact," *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1959, 7; and Cliff Session, "McCarthy Signs 4-Year Contract," *Meridian Star*, 28 February 1959, 6.

<sup>93</sup> Cliff Session, "McCarthy Gets New Pact," *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1959, 7.

<sup>94</sup> "Howell Is Not Through Yet," *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1959, 8.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Kentucky Seems Cinch for NCAA," *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1959, 7.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Bill Ray, "State Edges Rebs 23-16 For SEC Title," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1959, 3.

<sup>99</sup> Lee Baker, "Maroons Beats Rebs 23 to 16 in Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1959, B1; Lee Baker, "Maroons Beats Rebs 23 to 16 in Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1959, 1B; "Scores 23-16 Win Over Ole Miss in Slow Moving Tilt," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1959, 10; Jimmie McDowell, "State Nips Rebs For First SEC Cage Title," *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1959, 1D; and Bill Ray, "State Edges Rebs 23-16 For SEC Title," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1959, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Ben Hilbun Presidential Papers, File 6, Athletic Department, Document #340, Mississippi State University Archives. Hilbun's announcement could also be found published in the follow articles: "Mr. Ben Says No Trip," *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1959, 1; "Hilbun Refuses To Give Maroons NCAA Permission," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1959, 10; Hilbun Says Miss. State Maroons Won't Make NCAA Play," *Natchez Democrat*, 1 March 1959, 12A; "Maroons Turn Down NCAA Bid," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1959, 3; "State Not To Play In NCAA Meet," *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1959, 1; "Mississippi State Defeats Ole Miss To Win Their First SEC Title," *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1959, 6; Lee Baker, "Maroons Beats Rebs 23 to 16 in Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned," *Clarion-*

---

*Ledger*, 1 March 1959, 1B; Lee Baker, "Maroons Beats Rebs 23 to 16 in Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1959, B1; "Scores 23-16 Win Over Ole Miss in Slow Moving Tilt," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1959, 10; Jimmie McDowell, "State Nips Rebs For First SEC Cage Title," *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1959, 1D; and Bill Ray, "State Edges Rebs 23-16 For SEC Title," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1959, 3.

<sup>101</sup> Lee Baker, "Maroons Beats Rebs 23 to 16 in Deep-Freeze; NCAA Spurned," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1959, 1B.

<sup>102</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "State Nips Rebs For First SEC Cage Title," *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1959, 1D.

<sup>103</sup> Greg Rosa, *Football in the SEC: Southeastern Conference* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2007), 1-3 and Southern Conference, History of the Southern Conference, accessed on 18 March 2010, <http://www.soconsports.com/>. Mississippi State, then known as Mississippi A&M, joined the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association a year after its inception in 1895. The SIAA is considered the first major collegiate athletic conference. In 1920, the 30 members of the SIAA disagreed on whether or not freshmen should be allowed to participate in varsity sports, leading 14 of the schools, including Mississippi State, to leave the SIAA and form the Southern Conference in 1921. In December 1932, it was announced that 13 of the 23 Southern Conference members were breaking away to form the Southeastern Conference. The decision was based on geographical lines as the 13 schools selected were west and south of the Appalachian Mountains. Mississippi State has remained in the SEC ever since.

<sup>104</sup> Vernon Butler, "SEC's Champs Sit Home While 'Cats Go To NCAA," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1959, 9; Vernon Butler, "Maroons Win First SEC Title But Kentucky Goes To Tourney," *Hattiesburg American*, 2 March 1959, 2B; Vernon Butler, "Thanks to Miss. State, Kentucky Is in NCAA Again," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 March 1959, 7; Vernon Butler, "Coach Adolph Rupp Takes 'Cats To NCAA Tourney For 11<sup>th</sup> Contest," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 2 March 1959, 5; Vernon Butler, "Kentucky Gets 11<sup>th</sup> NCAA Trip," 2 March 1959, 4; Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Wins Southeastern Title But Wildcats Go To NCAA Event," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 2 March 1959, 8; and Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Claims SEC Title, Beats Ole Miss," 2 March 1959, 19.

<sup>105</sup> Hugh Fullerton, Jr. "'Cats 'Given' Chance To Defend NCAA Title," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1959, 10.

<sup>106</sup> "SEC Champion Maroons Victims of Integration Issue," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 March 1959, 5.

<sup>107</sup> Earl Wright, "Kentucky Defends Tournament Title," *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1959, 9; Earl Wright, "Kentucky Will Seek Fifth NCAA Crown," *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1959, 5B; and "Kentucky Wildcats To Defend Title In NCAA Basketball Tourney," *Commercial Dispatch*, 2 March 1959, 6.

<sup>108</sup> David M. Moffit, "Maroons To Celebrate At Home," *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1959, 5B; and "Two Events Dampen Maroon Cage Glory," *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1959, 8.

<sup>109</sup> "Kentucky Braces For NCAA Action," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1959, 10.

---

<sup>110</sup> Fans Hang Hilbun Effigy,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1959, 1.

<sup>111</sup> “State College Pres. Burned in Effigy,” *Jackson Advocate*, 7 March 1959, 1,4.

<sup>112</sup> Cliff Sessions, “It’s OK For Bailey To Play In Star Games,” *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1959, 4B; “Howell Is Not Through Yet,” *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1959, 8; “State Star Will Play In Post Season Classic,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1959, 10; and “Bailey Howell Plays Ball With Teamster Squad,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 9 March 1959, 4.

<sup>113</sup> David M. Moffit, “Howell Heads SEC Stars,” *Jackson State Times*, 5 March 1959, 7B; “Bailey Howell on SEC Team,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1959, 13; Ted Meier, “Bailey Howell, Cox Give SEC Two Slots on AP All-America,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1959, 20; Murry Olderman, “State Star Bailey Howell Is NEA All-American,” *Meridian Star*, 10 March 1959, 9; “Howell Voted MVP In SEC Basketball,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1959, 11; “Bailey Howell Selected As Most Valuable Player in SEC,” *Natchez Democrat*, 4 March 1959, 9; “Bailey Howell Again Voted SEC’s Most Valuable Player,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 March 1959, 7; “Bailey Howell Heads 1959 SEC Cage Squad,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 4 March 1959, 5; “Bailey Howell Named To All- American Basketball Team in Vote,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1959, 8; “For 4<sup>th</sup> Year Howell Voted Best In Circuit,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 2 March 1959, 9; “Howell and Cox Head All Stars In Southeastern,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 4 March 1959, 8; “Bailey Howell Is Named To 1959 AP All American Basketball Lineup,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 6 March 1959, 6; and “Howell Voted Most Valuable,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 2 March 1959, 5.

<sup>114</sup> “K-State Displaces ‘Tucky in AP Poll,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 March 1959, 13; and “Kentucky Wildcats End In First Of National Poll,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 3 March 1959, 6.

<sup>115</sup> “Maroon Cagers Dull Wildcats’ Claws In 66-58 Monday Win,” *Starkville News*, 13 February 1959, 4,6.

<sup>116</sup> “McCarthyism Leave For Cage Tilts With Florida, Georgia,” *Starkville News*, 13 February 1959, 4.

<sup>117</sup> “Louisiana Teams Next Foes for 5<sup>th</sup> Ranked State University Five,” *Starkville News*, 20 February 1959, 4; “State Basketballers Get Tenth SEC Win, Stop Georgia 76-56,” *Starkville News*, 20 February 1959, 4; and “Maroon Cagers Pile Up Points On Gators; Howell Sets Record,” *Starkville News*, 20 February 1959, 4.

<sup>118</sup> “Victorious State Cage Squad Gets Ovation Tuesday,” *Starkville News*, 27 February 1959, 1.

<sup>119</sup> “Maroons Meet Rebs Saturday Night In Cage Season Finale,” *Starkville News*, 27 February 1959, 4; “Howell Tops Scoring Record As Maroons Defeat Tulane 65-51,” *Starkville News*, 27 February 1959, 4; and “State Ends Best Cage Season In History; Defeats Rebels 23-16,” *Starkville News*, 6 March 1959, 4, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Ray Sadler, “Southeastern Champion Maroons will not attend NCAA tournament,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 3 March 1959, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse's Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi's Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 56-57, 86-87, and 226-227. In Weill's book, she detailed Harris' opposition to *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi, and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his column "Pencil Shavings." In an example of Harris' insensitivity to King's death, the segregationist openly attacked the martyr status bestowed to King after his death.

<sup>122</sup> David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 85-88 and Joseph B. Atkins and Stanley Aronowitz, *Covering for the Bosses: Labor and the Southern Press* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 86-87. Davies and chapter co-author Judy Smith cite 1967 comments from the *Columbia Journalism Review* that called Ward's *Jackson Daily News*, "the worst metropolitan newspaper in the United States" and a 1961 claim by *Time* magazine that the *Daily News* published "unabashed prejudice." Atkins and Aronowitz cited a 1966 speech from Claude Ramsey, president of the Mississippi AFL-CIO, who said, "The press in Mississippi has to be rated as the worst in the nation. This is especially true as far as the Hederman papers in Jackson are concerned. They have probably done more to retard this state than any other single institution." Ward had labeled Ramsey a communist in the past.

<sup>123</sup> John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 145; and Adam Nossiter, *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1994), 84. Perhaps one of the more egregious examples of Ward's editorial content in his column comes from the editor's work during the 1963 civil rights demonstrations in Jackson. Ward wrote, "Agitators who chant the 'freedom song' reminds us of the story about a chap who had just graduated, rushed out of the school shouting, 'I'm free, I'm free.' A little girl standing nearby said, 'So what? I'm four.'" Ward also wrote that comedian Dick Gregory, who was planning to make an appearance in Jackson during the demonstrations, would "parade up Capital Street barefooted. Throw him peanuts and he catches them between his toes."

<sup>124</sup> Weill, 85, 111, and 222-223.

<sup>125</sup> James Dickerson, *Dixie's Dirty Secret: The True Story of How the Government, the Media, and the Mob Conspired to Combat Integration and the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 23.

<sup>126</sup> Dickerson, 31.

<sup>127</sup> Dr. Douglas Starr, interview with author, 30 July 2009.

<sup>128</sup> Jimmy Ward, "Covering the Crossroads with Jimmy Ward," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1959, 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Exiting Public Policy To Settle This Matter," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 February 1959, 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

---

<sup>132</sup> “Don’t Accept Tournament Bid; Send Telegram, Maroons Told,” *Meridian Star*, 18 February 1959, 1; and “Editorial Has Good Solution,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 19 February 1959, 4.

<sup>133</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads with Jimmy Ward,” *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1959, 1.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads with Jimmy Ward,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> “Damaging An Institution,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 8.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Jimmy Ward, “An Essay On Ben Hilbun And the Basketball Issue,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1959, 8.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Orley B. Caudill, *An Oral History with Mr. Carl Walters: Eminent Mississippi Sports Columnist*, Mississippi Oral History Program of the University of Southern Mississippi, April 14, 1984, 56.

<sup>142</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s” *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1959, 16.

<sup>143</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1959, 32.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1959, 2B.

<sup>146</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1959, 13.

<sup>147</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1959, 3C.

<sup>148</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s” *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1959, 10.

<sup>149</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1959, 15.

<sup>150</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1959, 22.

<sup>151</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>152</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1959, 18.

- 
- <sup>153</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1959, 9B; and Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1959, 10.
- <sup>154</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 March 1959, 34.
- <sup>155</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 March 1959, 12.
- <sup>156</sup> Orley B. Caudill. *An Oral History with Mr. Carl Walters: Eminent Mississippi Sports Columnist*, Mississippi Oral History Program of the University of Southern Mississippi, April 14, 1984, 59-60.
- <sup>157</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>158</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 February 1959, 9; Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1959, 5; and Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>160</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1959, 11.
- <sup>161</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1959, 2B
- <sup>162</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>163</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1959, 16; and Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>164</sup> Mississippi Legislature, State Concurrent Resolution 571, accessed on 20 June 2009, <http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2004/html/SC/SC0571SG.htm>
- <sup>165</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.
- <sup>166</sup> "It's Our Bulldog Being Kicked," *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 8
- <sup>167</sup> Bob Howie, "Jump Ball!," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1959, 4.
- <sup>168</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1959, 12.
- <sup>169</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1959, 18.
- <sup>170</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1959, 15.
- <sup>171</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>172</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1959, 2B; and *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1959, 2B.
- <sup>173</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1959, 15.

- 
- <sup>174</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1959, 30.
- <sup>175</sup> Weill, 121.
- <sup>176</sup> Fitz McCoy, "Giving 'em Fitz," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 February 1959, 9A.
- <sup>177</sup> Fitz McCoy, "Giving 'em Fitz," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1959, 9.
- <sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>180</sup> Fitz McCoy, "Giving 'em Fitz," *Hattiesburg American*, 25 February 1959, 3B.
- <sup>181</sup> Fitz McCoy, "Giving 'em Fitz," *Hattiesburg American*, 2 March 1959, 1B.
- <sup>182</sup> Fitz McCoy, "Giving 'em Fitz," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 March 1959, 8.
- <sup>183</sup> "Fitz L. McCoy," *Hattiesburg American*, 22 October 2008, [www.hattiesburgamerican.com](http://www.hattiesburgamerican.com) (accessed on 18 August 2010).
- <sup>184</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., "Sports Talk At Big 8 Tourney," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1959, 8B.
- <sup>185</sup> Tom Ethridge, "Mississippi Notebook," *Clarion-Ledger* 19 February 1959, 3.
- <sup>186</sup> Charles M. Hills, "Affairs Of State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1959, 6.
- <sup>187</sup> "Mix, North and South," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 March 1959, 22.
- <sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>189</sup> Weill, 6 and 54.
- <sup>190</sup> Davies, 42; and Weill, 83, 93, and 111.
- <sup>191</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 10 February 1959, 9.
- <sup>192</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1959, 9.
- <sup>193</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1959, 9.
- <sup>194</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 24 February 1959, 9.
- <sup>195</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 25 February 1959, 11.
- <sup>196</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1959, 9.
- <sup>197</sup> Laura Richardson Walton, "In Their Own Backyard: Local Press Coverage of the Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Murders," *American Journalism* 23 (3), Summer 2006, 29-51.

---

According to Walton, Rainey, intentionally or unintentionally, made the search seem almost pointless in his copy and, at other times, went to great lengths to defend the community at large in an attempt to shield them from any sort of national criticism. Rainey also failed on numerous occasions to get comments from family members and/or civil rights worker who knew the three men giving his work a degree of balance. What was clear was that Rainey never believed that the missing civil rights workers were a part of an elaborate hoax.

<sup>198</sup> “Children In Students Clothing,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 23 February 1959, 4.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> “The NCAA Tournament,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 February 1959, 4; and “Carter Favors NCAA,” *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>201</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads with Jimmy Ward,” *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1959, 1.

<sup>202</sup> “It’s Up To Hilbun and You,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 25 February 1959, 4.

<sup>203</sup> “Good Luck Bailey,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 March 1959, 4.

<sup>204</sup> “The Only Decision,” *Natchez Democrat*, 3 March 1959, 4.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> Joe Mosby, email interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>207</sup> Don Guin, “On The Line,” *Natchez Democrat*, 27 February 1959, 9.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> Charles B. Gordon, “Sports Journal,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 23 February 1959, 3.

<sup>210</sup> Charles B. Gordon, “Sports Journal,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 27 February 1959, 4.

<sup>211</sup> “Consistent?,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 21 February 1959, 4.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010. A similar sentiment on McDowell’s work could be found in Charles W. Eagles, *The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: UNC Press Books, 2009), 106-109.

<sup>214</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.

<sup>215</sup> Jimmie McDowell, “Jimmie McDowell,” *Jackson State Times*, 10 February 1959, 4B.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*



- 
- <sup>217</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 11 February 1959, 6B.
- <sup>218</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 13 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>219</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.
- <sup>220</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>221</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 17 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>222</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 18 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>223</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>224</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 19 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>225</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>226</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1959, 2D.
- <sup>227</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>228</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1959, 2D.
- <sup>229</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 24 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>230</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 25 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>231</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>232</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>233</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>234</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.
- <sup>235</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.
- <sup>236</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 26 February 1959, 12C.
- <sup>237</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 4B.
- <sup>238</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1959, 4B.
- <sup>239</sup> "That's the Way the Ball Bounces," *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1959, 5B.
- <sup>240</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 11 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>241</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 13 February 1959, 18.

- 
- <sup>242</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1959, 22.
- <sup>243</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 18 February 1959, 14.
- <sup>244</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>245</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 19 February 1959, 24.
- <sup>246</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>247</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1959, 17.
- <sup>248</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 23 February 1959, 14.
- <sup>249</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 25 February 1959, 14.
- <sup>250</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 February 1959, 22.
- <sup>251</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>252</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1959, 18.
- <sup>253</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 March 1959, 26.
- <sup>254</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>255</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>256</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>257</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 19 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>258</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>259</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1959, 12.
- <sup>260</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>261</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 24 February 1959, 8.
- <sup>262</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 25 February 1959, 8.
- <sup>263</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 26 February 1959, 14.
- <sup>264</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1959, 8.
- <sup>265</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>266</sup> "Athlete's Feats," *Starkville News*, 13 February 1959, 4.

- 
- <sup>267</sup> “Putting the OK on Tibbeha,” *Starkville News*, 20 February 1959, 1.
- <sup>268</sup> “Putting the OK on Tibbeha,” *Starkville News*, 27 February 1959, 1, 6.
- <sup>269</sup> “Athletes’ Feats,” *Starkville News*, 27 February 1959, 4.
- <sup>270</sup> “Putting the OK on Tibbeha,” *Starkville News*, 6 March 1959, 1.
- <sup>271</sup> Athletes’ Feats,” *Starkville News*, 6 March 1959, 4.
- <sup>272</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>273</sup> Shirley Kempinska, “Examine Those Required Subjects,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 8.
- <sup>274</sup> Byron De La Beckwith, “Spare The Rod, Spoil The Student,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 8.
- <sup>275</sup> For more on De La Beckwith and the Evers murder, see Adam Nossiter, *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2002).
- <sup>276</sup> L. B. Goodwin, “State Policies Gain Support,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1959, 8.
- <sup>277</sup> Marlyn Sandifer, Herman Cooper, Jr., and Bill Hodnett, “‘Stay Home’ Says State Students,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>278</sup> W. M. Drake, “Segregation Stand Was Convincing,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>279</sup> A. J. Collins, “Appreciates Stand On State Issue,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1959, 8.
- <sup>280</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>281</sup> Grove Collins, “Voice of the People,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1959, 6.
- <sup>282</sup> State Observer, “Voice of the People,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1959, 10.
- <sup>283</sup> Ella Perry, “Voice of the People,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1959, 6.
- <sup>284</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>285</sup> A. S. Coody, “Voice of the People,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1959, 6.
- <sup>286</sup> A. M. Shirley, “The People Speak . . .,” *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1959, 4.
- <sup>287</sup> Jimmie McDowell, “Letters Pour In Favoring Maroons To Play, 5-1,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1959, 4D.
- <sup>288</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> “Letters From Readers,” *Jackson State Times*, 20 February 1959, 4A.

<sup>296</sup> “Ex-Maroon Cager Says State Should Go,” *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1959, 5B

<sup>297</sup> “Letters From Readers,” *Jackson State Times*, 24 February 1959, 6A.

<sup>298</sup> “Letters From Our Readers,” *Jackson State Times*, 25 February 1959, 6A.

<sup>299</sup> “A&M Frosh Urges Ben To OK NCAA Trip,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>300</sup> “Citizens’ Council Officer in Favor,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 6B.

<sup>301</sup> “State Grad In Favor of Tourney,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1959, 6B; and “Local State Ex Urges Tournament Play By Maroons,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1959, 2.

<sup>302</sup> Joe Mosby, email interview with author, 23 July 2009.

## CHAPTER V

## THE LESS SAID, THE BETTER

While the press in Mississippi debated the merits of the 1958-59 Mississippi State University basketball team's potential entry into the NCAA tournament and subsequent violation of the unwritten law, the Maroons flew under the sports and political radar during their 1959-60 campaign. McCarthy's team would finish with a 5-9 record in the SEC and resided in ninth place after the loss of graduating senior Bailey Howell. While the purveyors of the Closed Society were spared the inconvenience of validating and defending the unwritten law during the Maroons' 1959-60 season, the same could not be said for the 1960-61 MSU basketball team. Behind standouts such as Jerry Graves, W. D. "Red" Stroud, and Leland Mitchell, the Starkville contingent made another rise to promise in the difficult Southeastern Conference. On February 27, 1961, the Maroons defeated the Tulane Green Wave 62-57 to win their second SEC championship in three seasons and the right to participate in the NCAA tournament. However, citing the unwritten law, MSU declined sending the second-place University of Kentucky Wildcats into the national title tournament. When asked about State turning down another postseason opportunity, a dejected McCarthy told John Garcia of UPI, "We've accepted it and that's it. The less said the better."<sup>1</sup>

Less than 200 miles south of Starkville, another college basketball team in the Magnolia State was in the midst of a magical season. The Southerners of Mississippi Southern College in Hattiesburg were considered to be one of the top small school teams in all of college basketball. The Southerners, who were referred to as the "Golden Giants" by the press, were led by future University of Syracuse coach Fred Lewis and finished the 1960-61 season with a record of 23-3.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the Maroons, the Southerners did not turn down an opportunity to play for the NCAA small college national championship; rather an invitation was never extended. Lewis told the press that Wheaton College president and selection committee chairman Harvey Chrouser assumed MSC would turn down an invitation if one

were extend because the tournament would include integrated teams. Lewis, who said he felt his team and his program had been victimized by the unwritten law, told an anonymous UPI reporter, “I may just want to take the chance of being fired by going into the playoffs.”<sup>3</sup>

While a similar argument existed for journalists in the Magnolia State in terms of the merits of the unwritten law, in total, the passion and commentary from Mississippi State’s 1958-59 season was lacking as only a select few argued for MSU and/or MSC to participate in their respective postseasons, much less acknowledge the opportunity lost. Meanwhile *Jackson State Times* sports editor Jimmie McDowell argued for not only MSU and MSC to play in their national championship tournaments but the elimination of the unwritten law. The majority of his journalistic brethren ignored the issue altogether, offering silent support from the gentleman’s agreement and the Closed Society. The firm establishment of the unwritten law led to the press’s overall rejection of any sentiment that supported either teams’ NCAA tournament bids where the Mississippi contingents would have faced integrated foes. Like the 1959 season, the debate for an NCAA tournament berth for the Maroons emerged in the press in February after the team’s yearly, late-season match-up with the University of Kentucky. As detailed in this chapter, during the final month of the 1960-61 college basketball season for both the SEC champion Maroons and the record-setting “Golden Giants” of Mississippi Southern, Mississippi’s journalists supported and enforced the unwritten law and the Closed Society. The material covered in this chapter comes from all news articles, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor on the 1961 basketball-based Maroons and the Southerners that were published in the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson State Times*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Commercial Dispatch* in Columbus, the *Starkville Daily News*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, and the student-based *Student Printz* of Mississippi Southern College during February and March 1961.

These publications were examined because of their individual views on integration, their level of prominence within the state, and their proximity to Starkville and Hattiesburg.

In terms of a place in the history of the Magnolia State, the events of the 1960-61 season coincided with the attempted enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi and subsequent desegregation of that institution. While Meredith's entry in Ole Miss would not happen until September 1962, his initial inquiry in January 1961 and subsequent denial would ignite a powder keg of opposition to the Closed Society. Meredith's addition to the school would strike a damning blow to the foundation of racial discontent on which the Closed Society sat. In response, journalists and editors in the state banded together and, for various reasons, opposed the integration of state schools. During the 1960-61 season, as in 1959, a united front emerged in the press, again led by Carl Walters of the Hederman-owned *Clarion-Ledger*, which protected the Closed Society through expressed opposition towards integrated competition or editorial silence. The events in Starkville and Hattiesburg fueled debate within the state as to the merits of the unwritten law. It is that difference of opinion, as expressed by McDowell, which set the *State Times* editor apart from his fellow sports writers and earned the Mississippi native a rightful place with some of the Magnolia State's more progressive journalists such as Hodding Carter and J. Oliver Emmerich.

#### McCarthy's Charges Dominate the SEC

As of February 2, 1961, the Maroons sat deadlocked atop the SEC standings with the upstart University of Florida Gators.<sup>4</sup> Many newspapers reported that the 13-3 Maroons could wrap up the SEC championship if the team had a successful weekend home stand that featured the likes of Louisiana State University, Tulane, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The quartet of contests would be the team's last home stand before MSU closed the season with five games on the road.<sup>5</sup>

After a sound beating of the LSU Tigers 77-61 in Starkville, coupled with a Florida's 89-68 loss to the University of Kentucky, the Maroons found themselves alone in first place

with an upcoming match up against Tulane.<sup>6</sup> Sophomore W. D. “Red” Stroud paced the Maroons with 21 points while fellow sophomore Leland Mitchell and senior Jerry Graves scored 15 each.<sup>7</sup> An unknown author for the *Starkville Daily News* called it “one of the roughest games of the year” and added that “Babe McCarthy has some sensational sophomores of its own to counter with and they were in remarkable form Saturday night,” before citing the standout performances of Stroud, Mitchell, and senior guard Jack Berkshire.<sup>8</sup> MSU was now a conference best 6-0 and 14-1 overall.<sup>9</sup>

In a preview of local state basketball contests, *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer Van Savell focused more on the upcoming game between state rival Ole Miss and Rupp’s Kentucky squad than on the MSU squad. The Maroons, who were in first place of the “Dixie Dozen,” were noted only for their win versus the Tigers and their upcoming contest against Tulane.<sup>10</sup> Bobby Lollar of the *Commercial Dispatch* took a similar approach, calling the game against Tulane “a stern test,” but the Columbus-based sports editor wrote that, “Florida and Vanderbilt are the only obstacles between State and their second championship in three seasons. Bailey Howell’s fabulous five won the 1959 banner and Auburn copped the title last season.”<sup>11</sup> Lollar, despite the reference to the controversial 1959 MSU squad, never discussed the postseason possibilities for the Maroons. Ross Hagen of the Associated Press called the Tulane contest MSU’s “sternest test of the season.”<sup>12</sup>

The Maroons defeated Tulane 73-59 for McCarthy’s 100<sup>th</sup> victory as Mississippi State’s head coach.<sup>13</sup> Behind Graves’ 28 points, the Maroons increased their lead in the SEC to a full game over Florida and moved to 7-0 in conference play.<sup>14</sup> Baker, who covered the game for the *Jackson Daily News*, did not mention any potential NCAA bid in the article.<sup>15</sup> During Mississippi State’s various challenges to the unwritten law, McCarthy was often forced into the spotlight and made the focal point of most inquiries about the team and the potential of integrated competition. James Harrison McCarthy, who was affectionately known as “Babe,” never played college basketball. A former member of the U.S. Air Force,



McCarthy was in active duty during both World War II and the Korean Conflict. A former high school basketball player, McCarthy picked up his coaching skills while he was in the Air Force coaching base basketball squads. A native of Baldwin County, McCarthy returned to Tupelo after his Air Force days were behind him and took a job coaching basketball at a local middle school and served as a basketball referee for the SEC. McCarthy then worked with an oil firm in Clarksville until he interviewed and received the position of head coach at Mississippi State College.<sup>16</sup> As of 1961, McCarthy's record at State was 100-42 with a .704 winning percentage.

#### The Press Assumes an NCAA Bid for Second Place

The Maroons were heading toward the final stretch of its home schedule with a February 11, 1961, match-up against the University of Tennessee before a battle with Kentucky two days later. McCarthy's troops had won nine straight and were still undefeated in conference play.<sup>17</sup> Many journalists claimed that it was a foregone conclusion that MSU would win another SEC title. David M. Moffit of UPI wrote that the only team that had a chance of catching the sophomore-laded Maroons was Vanderbilt University, which boasted a record of 14-2 and 5-2 in conference play.<sup>18</sup> Moffit was one of the first journalists to deal with a possible revisit to the racial strife that saturated both the front page and sports sections across the state only two years earlier. In his February 11, 1961, preview of SEC conference play and the title chances for Vanderbilt, Moffit wrote, "Even if the Commodores don't catch the Maroons, they are still the most likely choice to represent the Southeastern Conference in the postseason NCAA playoffs. Segregation feelings are expected to keep the Maroons out of the playoffs just as they did two years ago when Mississippi State won the league championship."<sup>19</sup> The same sort of commentary was found in Vernon Butler's article for the Associated Press, who called the Maroons a "solid favorite to win their second SEC title in three years" but added that MSU was unlikely to play "in tournaments involving Negro players because of the state's position on racial matters."<sup>20</sup>

The team's final home games against the Volunteers and the Wildcats, respectively, were both viewed by the press as difficult match-ups for the SEC leaders. According to a February 9, 1961, article written by Moffit, the Tennessee contingent was a team on the rise, having won three straight games and were tied with the aforementioned Commodores for second place in the "Dixie Dozen." Meanwhile, Rupp's Kentucky squad was 4-4 in the conference and 10-7 overall going into its impending weekend battles with the 7-10 Rebels and the Maroons. Moffit identified the fifth-place "Ruppmen" as a contender for a NCAA bid but failed to mention State's status as the conference leader and never discussed the NCAA tournament hopes for the Starkville contingent.<sup>21</sup> In a separate article by an unknown reporter, the Wildcats were identified as having a real chance at the NCAA tournament because of the unwritten law. "It looks like Mississippi State will take its second conference crown but, due to racial restrictions, have to pass the main event, thus placing the runner-up team in the main slot," wrote the anonymous author. "This has happened before a couple of years back when the Wildcats competed for the NCAA crown after losing to the Maroons in the conference scramble."<sup>22</sup>

The season's success seemed to put a spotlight squarely on the coaching prowess of McCarthy, who was only two seasons removed from the NCAA controversy of 1958-59. AP writer Ed Tunstall detailed McCarthy's journey to the head coaching position at MSU on February 9, 1961. Tunstall wrote that the 37-year-old McCarthy's success during the 1960-61 campaign "would start fans wondering about Maroon chances for the NCAA title," but the AP writer would paint a grim picture for the MSU faithful, adding "There aren't any," in terms of the team's chances of playing in the postseason.<sup>23</sup> "Unwritten law in Mississippi prohibits State colleges from playing teams with Negro players. The great 1958-59 squad, with All-American Bailey Howell its hub, went through the same experience and read about the NCAA Championships in the newspapers," Tunstall explained.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly enough, the previous passage appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger* under the subheading "NO CHANCE,"

expressing an editorial-like statement on behalf of the Hederman-owned newspaper.<sup>25</sup>

Tunstall's brief profile on the MSU leader provided the audience with a degree of background information on McCarthy, but it also served as a reminder to the reading public that, despite the team's success, an NCAA berth was not in the cards.

On February 11, 1961, the Maroons defeated the University of Tennessee 72-67 for their tenth victory in row in preparation for its showdown with the University of Kentucky. Robert "Steamboat" Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger* wrote that the Maroons "strided within smelling distance of their second SEC title in three years" with the victory.<sup>26</sup> McCarthy's team had a 39-28 halftime lead thanks to the physical play of the Volunteers, who sent Graves to the charity stripe for 11 points, Mitchell for 10, and sophomore Joe Dan Gold for eight before the intermission. MSU had a 15-point lead at one point during the contest before McCarthy emptied his bench. Mitchell, Gold, and Stroud each finished with 17 points against the Volunteers.<sup>27</sup>

#### State Suffers a Setback

Going into the Maroons' February 13, 1961, contest against the Wildcats, it was again assumed by many of Mississippi's sports writers that the Starkville contingent would yield to the unwritten law. In an article for UPI, Moffit wrote that while MSU was identified as the favorite to win the SEC title, there was "little likelihood that the Maroons will get a chance to extend their regional holdings. The same unwritten state law that kept them out of the integrated NCAA playoffs two years ago still abides."<sup>28</sup> Don Weiss of the Associated Press expressed a similar sentiment, writing, "State, like two years ago, will pass up the NCAA under an unwritten state law forbidding competition against Negroes."<sup>29</sup> Other articles made a similar statement through omission. In previewing the week ahead in the SEC, an anonymous Associated Press reporter wrote that the Commodores, not the Maroons, were looking for an NCAA bid and failed to explain State's inability to play on the national stage despite identifying the team as the SEC leader.<sup>30</sup> Fulton's pregame work for the *Clarion-*

*Ledger* took a similar approach, making no mention of the NCAA tournament for either State or Kentucky.<sup>31</sup> In Scotty Hargrove's account for the *Starkville Daily News*, MSU was identified as "being within striking distance of its second Southeastern Conference title in two years." Hargrove described the contest with Kentucky as a grudge match of sorts between McCarthy and Rupp, who took issue with the fans' use of cowbells and MSU's strength of schedule, to which the Kentucky leader said, "We can't go around playing a bunch of patsies like Mississippi State does."<sup>32</sup> Hargrove ignored the NCAA tournament aspirations of both MSU and UK. Lollar's article for the *Commercial Dispatch* also overlooked any championship or postseason hopes for either team and served, more or less, as an ode to Kentucky's Adolph Rupp, who Lollar called "The Man who built basketball in the South" before he referenced "The Barron's" various accolades and awards.<sup>33</sup> Other media accounts of the upcoming battle with the Wildcats, such as those from the Associated Press, failed to mention the NCAA tournament.<sup>34</sup>

The Maroons suffered a setback on their road to conference dominance when they lost to the Wildcats 68-62 in Starkville on February 13, 1961. The first half of the game was closely contested, with Kentucky taking a 33-31 lead after the Wildcats' Larry Pursiful hit two free throws. State began the second half cold as Rupp's charges sped out to a 54-46 lead with 7:45 to play. State closed it to 64-62 with two free throws from Graves with six seconds left, but Pursiful hit two more free throws to close the scoring for both teams. An unknown AP reporter likened the Maroons' loss to the Wildcats to "a jaded star stealing the scene from the leading character."<sup>35</sup> *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker wrote that Kentucky smashed MSU's "myth of invincibility."<sup>36</sup> Fellow Hederman sports reporter Fulton wrote, "Hell hath no fury like a Wildcat scorned and so determined."<sup>37</sup> McCarthy told the press that the standout performance of Kentucky's Roger Newman, who scored 24 points, was the difference in the contest. In the aftermath of the Maroons' defeat, Butler wrote that Kentucky had a viable shot at the NCAA tournament because, "Mississippi State, the likely SEC

winner, won't participate in the postseason competition because of the state's racial feelings."<sup>38</sup> Graves led the State with 27 points in the senior's last home contest and the team's first 1960-61 SEC loss.<sup>39</sup> The Maroons still seemed to have a firm grip on the top spot in the SEC. While the Maroons fell to 8-1 in the conference, there was a three-way tie for second place between Vanderbilt, Florida, and LSU, all of which had three conference losses.<sup>40</sup>

Rather than bask in the spoils of victory, Rupp told McDowell he was appalled with the behavior of MSU's student body, which placed a dead skunk under the Wildcats' bench. "There absolutely should not have been any booing or noise during free throw shooting," Rupp said. "The officials should have called a technical foul each and every time. I'd sure like to know who the hell put that damn dead skunk under our bench."<sup>41</sup> Kentucky Athletic Director Bernie Shively added, "If Kentucky students ever acted in that manner, I'd hope we give up basketball."<sup>42</sup> Both the AP and UPI would later report that MSU Athletic Director Wade Walker apologized to Shively for the conduct of the student body and that the school would investigate the matter.<sup>43</sup>

MSU's attention then turned to the final five games, all on the road against Florida, Georgia, LSU, Tulane, and Ole Miss. Sports writer Jack Wardlaw of the *Meridian Star* wrote that Kentucky "was still in the race for a NCAA tourney berth, since State will not enter the meet in any case."<sup>44</sup> The Associated Press also reported on the tightening race in the conference as an anonymous author wrote that MSU was "the likely SEC winner, (but) won't participate in the postseason competition because of the state's racial feelings."<sup>45</sup> UPI followed suit, reporting that the Maroons would have a large stake in the determination of the SEC's NCAA representative because if the Maroons were to win the SEC, "the same racial situation will exist that kept the Maroons home in 1959."<sup>46</sup>

As the Maroons marched towards another conference championship and a possible NCAA debate, McCarthy was rewarded on February 15, 1961, with a new four-year contract

and a pay raise from the State College Board, just as he had been two years earlier.<sup>47</sup> The *Jackson State Times*' McDowell wrote that the extension was "a token of appreciation for the wonderful job he has done at Mississippi State in making the Maroons a national major basketball power."<sup>48</sup> McDowell later identified MSU's first place status in the SEC but also identified other challengers to the conference NCAA tournament bid, adding, "Florida is currently tied with LSU and Vanderbilt for second place in the SEC behind State and seeks to earn the Dixie Dozen NCAA berth in national competition in Louisville, Ky."<sup>49</sup>

The news of McCarthy's new deal overshadowed the Maroons upcoming contest against second-place Florida. As UPI's Moffit reported, the Gators hoped for a second-place finish and a bid to the NCAA tournament because they held little chance of catching and overtaking the Maroons. The UPI sports reporter claimed that State was "prohibited by an unwritten law from playing in tournaments which include Negro players and this would keep the Maroons out of the NCAA playoffs as it did in 1959."<sup>50</sup> Moffit continued to stress the existence of the unwritten law and the probability that the Maroons would skip the NCAA tournament in his articles on MSU's February 20, 1961, contest against the University of Georgia and in his preview of the Maroons' title-clinching win over Tulane.<sup>51</sup>

In other previews of the Florida contest penned by anonymous authors, the NCAA tournament or State's chances for tournament play were not discussed.<sup>52</sup> However, a similar article that appeared in the *Daily News* and the *Daily Herald* from Butler of the AP on February 18, 1961, noted that Florida, LSU, Vanderbilt, and Kentucky had a chance at the NCAA tournament as MSU "won't represent the conference in tournament activity because the state has an unofficial policy against competing with teams having Negro players."<sup>53</sup> Much like his UPI counterpart Moffit, Butler often stressed the likelihood that MSU would be kept out of the NCAA tournament due to the unwritten law.<sup>54</sup>

As for the game, a desperation shot from Florida center Cliff Luyk with four seconds left in the contest handed the Maroons their second conference defeat 59-57 on February 18,

1961.<sup>55</sup> State, who held a 40-39 lead, was “in trouble from the start” according to UPI sports writer Andrew J. Reese, Jr.<sup>56</sup> The win gave the Gators a 7-3 conference record, keeping Florida in the running for the conference’s NCAA tournament bid because “State is prohibited by an unwritten law from playing in events which include Negro players, and this would keep the Maroons out of the NCAA playoffs.”<sup>57</sup> Soon after the loss to Florida, the Associated Press reported that Mississippi State had fallen out of favor as the potential champion of SEC play because of its two-game losing streak.<sup>58</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*’ Bob Howie reiterated that point in a cartoon for the February 20, 1961 issue. Howie’s work, titled “Athens Cliff Hanger,” depicted a State basketball player hanging on to a cliff as a Georgia Bulldog stood over him with a piece of the player’s shorts in its mouth.<sup>59</sup>

#### The Maroons Rebound

In previewing the Maroons’ next game, a February 20, 1961, contest against the University of Georgia, the *Clarion-Ledger*’s Scotty Hargrove ended his article by assuming MSU’s absence from the postseason was a foregone conclusion. “All eyes in the conference are on the Maroons, for if they should come out on top, the second place team gains the right to represent the SEC in the NCAA tournament as State would probably turn the bid down because of the racial situation.”<sup>60</sup> The Columbus-based Lollar did not reference the NCAA tournament or the SEC title with the exception of identifying State as the SEC frontrunner in the standings.<sup>61</sup>

The Maroons snapped their two-game losing streak, as they beat Georgia 99-77 behind Graves’ 34 points. State moved to 9-2 in the conference and 17-5 overall, still ahead of Florida by one game. Regardless of the victory, MSU was never mentioned in most media accounts of the game as a viable NCAA contender and only one writer, Hugh Fullerton, Jr., of the Associated Press, acknowledged MSU’s potential abstention from the national championship tournament.<sup>62</sup>

The following day, Kentucky defeated Vanderbilt 60-59 on center Ned Jennings' basket with 12 seconds left in regulation to give Rupp's charges "a chance for the Southeastern Conference berth in the NCAA tournament."<sup>63</sup> Kentucky was 7-4 in the conference, but the Wildcats had a head-to-head edge over the Commodores, who were also 7-4 in conference play behind the 8-3 Gators. In UPI accounts of the game, MSU was not mentioned as a potential NCAA participant or SEC champion. A February 23, 1961, AP article claimed that Kentucky stood the best chance of representing the SEC in postseason play because "the Maroons have barred themselves from NCAA tournaments because of their refusal to compete with Negroes."<sup>64</sup> Martin Lander of UPI made a similar statement, writing, "Although Mississippi State is expected to win the Southeastern Conference title and an automatic bid to the NCAA, it is believed the Maroons will pass up the invitation because of segregation problems."<sup>65</sup>

Following the victory over Georgia, the Maroons were faced with the task of going to the Bayou and playing both Louisiana State and Tulane. In an article published by multiple Mississippi newspapers, including the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson Daily News*, and the *Daily Herald*, an anonymous author looked towards the February 24, 1961, contest between MSU and LSU with only a nod to the team's chances of winning the SEC.<sup>66</sup> No mention of the NCAA tournament was made.

Despite trailing for the majority of the game, MSU would go on to beat LSU 56-54 on February 25, 1961, behind a Mitchell jump shot with three seconds left, securing a share of the conference championship for the Maroons.<sup>67</sup> MSU moved to 10-2 in the conference, yet it was still assumed by many journalists that MSU would not participate in the NCAA tournament. Hugh Schutte of the Associated Press wrote that an NCAA tournament spot would be given to Vanderbilt, Kentucky, or Florida as MSU did not plan to "participate in the NCAA's racially integrated tournament."<sup>68</sup> Fellow AP sports scribe Butler wrote that, while the Maroons had won a share of the title, the conference representative to the NCAA



tournament was still in question.<sup>69</sup> While the presentation of Butler's work in the *Starkville Daily News* may have supplied some false hope to the MSU faithful, utilizing a subhead that read, "NCAA Entry For Group Undecided," Butler claimed that the Maroons "won't take part in postseason doings because the tournaments are integrated."<sup>70</sup> While a UPI account of the MSU-LSU contest never mentioned the NCAA tournament and only referenced the SEC title, an article on Vanderbilt's victory over Florida from the wire service called the Commodores the likely recipient of an NCAA tournament invitation because MSU was "unwilling" to play integrated foes.<sup>71</sup> Despite Fulton's claims to an MSU championship, the NCAA tournament was never mentioned in his account of the victory over LSU.<sup>72</sup>

#### MSU Wins the SEC Title, Stays Home

The Maroons were two games ahead of the second place Wildcats and Commodores with two games left to play, beginning with their late February contest in New Orleans against Tulane. A win would lock up the SEC title for MSU, yet it was clear from the perspective of journalists, McCarthy's squad would go no further than the SEC crown. On February 27, 1961, the Maroons defeated Tulane 62-57 to win the SEC title. Fulton called the team "a gutty, courageous bunch" who overcame a 12-point deficit to defeat the Green Wave, yet the Jackson-based sports writer failed to reference the NCAA tournament.<sup>73</sup> The *Clarion-Ledger* also included a brief sidebar to Fulton's work that indicated segregationist Governor Ross Barnett wired the team a telegram to congratulate it on its conference title. Rather than explain Barnett's views on an NCAA bid, the article irrelevantly focused on the governor's love for basketball, explaining that Barnett "was a pretty fancy basketball player in his college days, with a mean hook shot."<sup>74</sup> Barnett would wait one day before speaking out on the Maroons and the NCAA tournament.

The *Jackson State Times* published an article from an anonymous UPI reporter that claimed the Maroons would skip the NCAA tournament "because of a ban on racially-mixed

games.”<sup>75</sup> Other accounts from UPI took a similar route, conceding the NCAA tournament berth to the conference’s second-place team as MSU was barred due to “the state policy against playing teams with Negro players.”<sup>76</sup> Phil Wallace of the *Jackson Daily News* penned two articles on the Maroons’ conference championship after the win over the Green Wave but neither referenced the NCAA tournament.<sup>77</sup> The same could be said for an article in the *Starkville Daily News* by an anonymous author.<sup>78</sup> Butler reported that, because of Florida’s 52-50 loss to Georgia Tech, that Kentucky and Vanderbilt would participate in a playoff game to determine the conference’s representative to the NCAA tournament because “Mississippi State won’t go to the NCAA meet at Louisville next month because the tournament is racially integrated.”<sup>79</sup> Similar material could be found in an article from UPI journalist Gary Kale indicating that Kentucky “may sneak into a postseason playoff berth” because of the unwritten law.<sup>80</sup> Despite MSU’s SEC championship win, UPI did not consider the Maroons one of the top 27 teams in the nation as the team was absent from the wire service’s weekly coaches poll.<sup>81</sup> SEC runners-up Kentucky and Vanderbilt came in at 17 and 18, respectfully.

Although a majority of journalists wrote as if the rejection of an NCAA bid on behalf of MSU was a foregone conclusion, UPI’s Berry Reese reported that Barnett was opposed to playing in the NCAA tournament if it meant violating the unwritten law.<sup>82</sup> Barnett told Reese that racially integrated athletics could lead to social integration in the Magnolia State. “If there were half a dozen Negroes on the team, where are they going to eat? Are they going to go to the dance later and want to dance with our girls,” Barnett explained.<sup>83</sup> McCarthy also chimed in, telling UPI, “We aren’t counting on playing in the tournament. There has been no talk of it.” McCarthy added that the team understood and had “no hopes of playing for a national title.” Reese also quoted star Maroons Graves, Stroud, and Mitchell, who said they thought they would not go. “I don’t find anything wrong with them (Negroes). I played baseball and basketball with them in Texas. But if I thought it would encourage them to want

to come to our school, I wouldn't want to go," Mitchell told the UPI reporter. Stroud added that the team considered lobbying McCarthy but thought it was a no-win situation. The last paragraph of the article explained that there was no law prohibiting state teams from competing in integrated contests, "But it was agreed in 1955 that they would not after Jones Junior College touched off disapproval among segregation leaders by playing an integrated football team in the Junior Rose Bowl."<sup>84</sup> Of all the newspapers examined, only the *Jackson State Times* published the article on the front page of its newspaper.<sup>85</sup> The *State Times* also published the UPI article with a letter from MSU student G. J. Pope, who requested that Barnett use his executive powers to allow the Maroons to participate and, ultimately, win the NCAA tournament. Pope then made an impassioned plea to the governor to allow the MSU squad to physically demonstrate the dominant nature of the Closed Society for the rest of the nation.

The time has come for Mississippi to show the nation by action — rather than words — that we are indeed superior: that we are second to none: and that we are willing and able to prove this superiority. During these days, when Mississippi is being assaulted from all corners, and accused of isolationism, I urge you to encourage the Maroons to win this honor for the great sovereign state of Mississippi.<sup>86</sup>

While the placement of the Barnett article and the publishing of Pope's letter seemed like a socially progressive decision by the Jackson-based newspaper, Pope's letter was a plea for Barnett to show the rest of the nation that Mississippi's belief in states' rights and the Closed Society was correct. What better way to demonstrate the effectiveness of a caste system that placed blacks in a subservient position to whites than to have an all-white basketball team enter an integrated tournament and win the national championship? The work of the *Jackson State Times* was advanced from an equality standpoint versus other newspapers in the Magnolia State; however, Pope's plea was a call for a physical extension of white Mississippi's beliefs rather than a nod to human and civil rights.

The *Jackson Daily News*, the *Starkville Daily News*, and the *Commercial Dispatch* reported that over 4,000 students greeted the Maroons upon the team's return to Starkville.<sup>87</sup>

Starkville Mayor Hayden Reynolds gave McCarthy a key to the city. None of the articles made any mention of the NCAA tournament.

Previews for the MSU-Ole Miss contest overlooked any NCAA tournament talk and, for the most part, focused more on Ole Miss because the Maroons had already clinched the SEC championship.<sup>88</sup> The *Jackson Daily News* featured two previews of the final contest, one from each school's perspective. Although the Maroons' status as conference champions was prominent in the MSU-based article, neither account mentioned the NCAA tournament.<sup>89</sup> The same could be said for previews that appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson State Times*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, the *Starkville Daily News*, and the *Daily Herald*.<sup>90</sup>

An anonymous account from the Associated Press that previewed the entire slate of SEC contest for March 3, 1961, focused more on the open NCAA tournament spot, which could have been won by Kentucky, Vanderbilt, or Florida. MSU was identified as the conference champion, but the school had "rejected a chance to play for national honors due to its policy of not competing against Negroes."<sup>91</sup> Howie contributed to the *Jackson Daily News*' coverage of the contest through a cartoon that depicted an MSU basketball player wearing a crown and yelling into a cellar, asking if the "Colonel" was in there again, a reference to the mascot of the last-place University of Mississippi Rebels.<sup>92</sup>

John Garcia of UPI reported that McCarthy was named SEC Coach of the Year by the wire service. While the majority of Garcia's article discussed McCarthy's accomplishments during the season, the UPI reporter noted, "The state's 'unwritten law' regarding segregation will keep the Maroons out of the NCAA playoffs this year and probably for years to come."<sup>93</sup> McCarthy, in response to the NCAA tournament, told Garcia, "We've accepted it and that's it. The less said the better."<sup>94</sup>

The Maroons would lose to Ole Miss in the season finale 74-70, a team an unknown Associated Press scribe wrote that was "among the lowly" in the SEC.<sup>95</sup> Baker described the contest in a March 5, 1961, article in the *Jackson Daily News* as "an ambush."<sup>96</sup> The Rebels'

Jack Walters scored 22 points and helped orchestrate a 37-22 lead at halftime. The Maroons, who were led by Graves' 22 points, mounted a furious comeback in the second half, cutting the lead to 72-70 with just 24 seconds left. Reserve Maroons guard George Oakley's shot with seconds left drew iron, and the Rebels closed out the scoring on a lay-up by Sterling Ainsworth, which pushed the final count to 74-70.<sup>97</sup> Both Kentucky and Vanderbilt won their respective games and would have to face each other in a playoff game for the right to appear in the NCAA tournament.<sup>98</sup>

The Maroons finished their championship season with an 11-3 record in the SEC, 19-6 overall, and a glaring absence in the NCAA tournament. In the season's aftermath, Garcia of UPI wrote that State could be on its way to replacing Rupp's Wildcats as the predominate basketball power in the SEC due to the team's two conference titles in three seasons.<sup>99</sup> While writing of MSU's potential conference dominance, the UPI scribe failed to reference the Maroons' inability to play for the NCAA championship. Kentucky would go on to defeat Vanderbilt 88-67 in a playoff game to determine the conference's NCAA tournament representative, which was eventually won by the University of Cincinnati.<sup>100</sup>

#### Silence Comes from Mississippi's News Desks

While the Closed Society dealt with State's challenge of the unwritten law, what was lacking from the press during the 1960-61 season as opposed to 1958-59 argument was the *Jackson Daily News*' Jimmy Ward and his strident protection of the Closed Society. While Ward was prominently featured in Chapter IV for his furious defense of the unwritten law, Mississippi's most notorious journalist chose to sit on the sidelines. No issue of the *Jackson Daily News* examined from February 8, 1961, through March 3, 1961, featured Ward's comments on the threat of integrated athletics, placing the segregationist with his journalistic brethren who simply assumed that the Maroons would bow to the unwritten law. The silent approach to a controversial issue involving race was a tactic the *Daily News* editor would later employ with the approval of the Citizens' Council.<sup>101</sup> Ward's derogatory commentary

aside, his absence meant that some of the passion and debate from February 1959 was missing. Furthermore, notable journalists from Mississippi's past, including the *Delta Democrat-Times*' Hodding Carter, *Clarion-Ledger*'s Tom Ethridge, the *Hattiesburg American*'s Andrew Harmon and Fitz McCoy, *Meridian Star* editor James B. Skewes, *Natchez Democrat* editor James Lambert, and sports editor Charles B. Gordon of the *Enterprise-Journal*, all of whom commented on the Maroons' postseason hopes in 1959, failed to supply any commentary during the debate that engulfed the end of the 1958-59 season.<sup>102</sup> The lack of commentary from the news desk indicated that most of Mississippi's prominent editors and, with the exception of Carter, strident defenders of the Closed Society and the unwritten law did not see the Maroons as a legitimate threat to their way of life. Additionally, unlike the 1959 debate, public opinion in the form of letters to the editor was, for the most part, absent in 1961. Because of the sheer numbers of letters and correspondence sent to newspapers during the 1959 and 1963 seasons, it was possible that these newspapers received letters, but the editors simply chose not to publish them.

Despite the absence of some of the Magnolia State's more historically prominent journalists, a few editors and reporters, including Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the *Jackson Daily News*' Lee Baker and the *Clarion-Ledger*'s Carl Walters, would again roll up their sleeves and dive into the debate surrounding integrated athletics. However, no journalists, sports or otherwise, stood out like "Mississippi Red."

#### McDowell Battles the Unwritten Law

While journalists like Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* and J. Oliver Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal* have received praise for their brave stands against the Closed Society, and rightfully so, one reporter who has yet to receive such recognition is Jimmie McDowell. McDowell, affectionately known as "Mississippi Red" to his readers and fellow reporters, wrote with a fiery mix of truth and passion that was indicative of the red hair that became his trademark. While McDowell was never an open advocate of integration, the

Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer's work was never the less impactful. A native of Brookhaven and a graduate of the University of Mississippi, McDowell's media-based career took him through Hattiesburg as the director of public relations and athletic publicity at Mississippi Southern College from 1951 through 1955 before he would move to the Hederman-owned *Jackson Daily News* where he worked under Frederick Sullens. After a year, McDowell moved to the *Jackson Daily News*' rival the *Jackson State Times* as the paper's sports editor. At every turn during the debates surrounding the unwritten law and Mississippi's abstention from integration competition, McDowell served as opposition. In his mind, the fields of competition should have been free and clear of the political and social issues of the day. By his own admission, McDowell felt that any debate surrounding Mississippi's potential participation in mixed competition should have excluded any conversation about integration. McDowell proved to be, not only one of the more outspoken sports writers in the Magnolia State, but one of the more socially progressive journalists in Mississippi as he served as the primary voice of opposition against the unwritten law.

While the charismatic McDowell discussed the Maroons' successful season in both the February 3, 1961, and February 6, 1961, editions of the *Jackson State Times*, the NCAA tournament and the SEC championship were never mentioned.<sup>103</sup> In the latter column, McDowell noted the surprise ascension of the Maroons to the top of the SEC class, writing, "You really have to tip your hat to McCarthy and his sophomore-studded warriors which came out of nowhere to take over the conference lead."<sup>104</sup>

Well in advance of any potential controversy surrounding the accolades of the 1961 Maroons, McDowell argued for an NCAA tournament appearance by MSU if they were to win the SEC title. In the February 7, 1961, edition of the *State Times*, after the MSU's victory over Tulane, McDowell wrote, in light of the University of Memphis State's acceptance to participate in the integrated National Invitational Tournament at the conclusion of the season, that it was time for teams in the Magnolia State to have the same opportunity.

Is Memphis State any different from Mississippi State, Mississippi Southern or Ole Miss? Is this not a Deep South school also? The answer, of course is no. At the same time, Mississippi State should be allowed to seek the NCAA title if it wins the Southeastern Conference and if Mississippi Southern is also granted an invitation to the Madison Square Garden cage classic they should be allowed to compete, just as Ole Miss should have gone to the Rose Bowl this past January 2. Mississippi should play by its own rules in Mississippi but should not cut off its nose to spite its face when the national scene is involved. . . . Let's not build a brick wall around Mississippi.<sup>105</sup>

McDowell quickly refocused his column back to the Maroons' trek through the SEC gambit and its February 11, 1961, contest against Tennessee. McDowell mocked Rupp and his comments from the 1960 season when he referred to MSU as a "Cow College." McDowell wrote that McCarthy was "just back from plowing the South 40 before breakfast."<sup>106</sup> In a more serious tone, McDowell stressed McCarthy's respect for Rupp and a win against the Wildcats would give the MSU head coach a 3-3 record against the legendary coach. Despite his efforts days earlier, McDowell did not reference an SEC title or an NCAA tournament bid for the Maroons.

In the aftermath of MSU's victory over the University of Tennessee, McDowell talked to Rupp about the February 13, 1961, game with the Maroons. The colorful and, at times, perturbed Rupp told McDowell that MSU was "not invincible" and, referring to Kentucky's 31-point victory over the Maroons in 1960, Rupp said, "We could have really poured it on but we really didn't want to embarrass Babe."<sup>107</sup> McDowell wrote that there was "little love lost between the Poppa Bear of the SEC and the new hairy-chested would-be king of the mountain, James Harrison McCarthy."<sup>108</sup> Again, SEC and/or national laurels for MSU were not discussed.

Following Kentucky's victory over MSU, McDowell wrote that McCarthy was philosophical in defeat, telling the *State Times* editor that Kentucky still had to catch-up to MSU in the standings. What may have been of greater significance were the comments made by Rupp when McDowell asked about his team's chances to get to the NCAA tournament. "The conference should be represented by the best team," Rupp said. "If you're not going to



participate in the conference's championship playoffs, you ought to get out of the league."<sup>109</sup>

While McDowell expressed no opinion on Rupp's commentary, the ornery coach took the opportunity to denounce his primary rival's view of the NCAA tournament and the enforcement of the unwritten law.

After Luyk's last second basket in Gainesville gave his Florida Gators the final second win over the Maroons, McDowell wrote that the team had to refocus for its February 20, 1961 game against the University of Georgia. While McDowell called MSU the front-runner to take home the SEC crown, he said its hold on the top spot was shaky at best. In terms of the NCAA tournament, McDowell looked at Rupp's Kentucky team as the likely selection despite his written support for the Starkville contingent. "Baron Rupp may have the hole hard and may yet wind up as the SEC's representative in the NCAA tournament in Louisville," he wrote.<sup>110</sup>

After the Maroons clinched at least a tie for the conference title with their victory over LSU, McDowell said there was still life in a national championship opportunity for MSU. The Jackson-based sports editor wrote that Vanderbilt, Florida, and Kentucky should hope that the Starkville contingent would be "denied permission to compete in the District NCAA duel in Louisville, throwing the national invitation wide open."<sup>111</sup> While McDowell's belief in integrated athletic competition was clear, his presentation of said belief was, at times, confusing. On multiple occasions, the *State Times* sports editor implied that an NCAA bid was out of reach for MSU because of the unwritten law, yet he proudly claimed that both the Maroons and the Mississippi Southern basketball team should be allowed to play in integrated postseason tournaments. In his February 22, 1961, column, McDowell told his audience that there was a chance MSU would have accepted an NCAA berth if they were to win the SEC title. While there is no doubt the trailblazing McDowell objected to the gentleman's agreement, it is not clear if he ever viewed a chance for MSU or Mississippi Southern to win their respective national championships as feasible.

Despite the mixed signals of McDowell's February 22, 1961, musings, there was no denying where the *Jackson State Times* sports editor stood on an NCAA tournament berth after the Maroons claimed the SEC championship. Citing the work of *Atlanta Journal* sports editor Furman Bisher, who wrote that despite winning the SEC title, the team had done little to advance basketball in the South because of "tradition, custom, prejudice, politics and other such factors," McDowell agreed with the Atlanta-based Bisher and argued that the Maroons had earned a chance at the national crown. "If ever a Cinderella team, a never-say-die group of basketball players deserved a shot to bring the national championship to Mississippi, the 1961 Maroon hoop unit is such a team," he wrote.<sup>112</sup>

In an attempt to relate to Mississippi's segregationist governor, McDowell compared the Maroons' quest for a national title to Barnett's failed attempt to secure a presidential nomination from the Democratic Party at the integrated Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 1960. According to McDowell, both efforts were done to garner positive publicity and attention to the Magnolia State. Despite his logical argument, the fiery McDowell seemed almost offended at Barnett's objections to MSU's participation in the racially integrated tournament and the line of commentary offered to the press by the segregationist governor.

The Governor expressed fear yesterday that by playing against integrated competition in the North it would mean that integrated teams would want to play in Mississippi . . . Barnett clouds the issue by saying "If integrated teams played in Mississippi where would they eat? Are they going to dance later and want to dance with our girls?" The national tournament isn't and never will be held in Mississippi. Mississippi State's basketball team isn't interested in going to a dance. They're not interested in playing footsie with anyone. They're interested in whipping the daylights out of any opponent they play, that's all.<sup>113</sup>

McDowell's comments not only diffused the governor's objections to integrated competition but did so logically, making Barnett look foolish. While it was clear that McDowell supported a MSU berth in the NCAA tournament, the justification for such support was not necessarily expressed in his writing. In a 2010 interview, "Mississippi Red"

said he thought sports should have been treated separately from politics and, in his opinion, the argument for an NCAA tournament appearance was quite simple. “They won the SEC, so they deserved a chance to play,” McDowell said.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, unlike his sports writing brethren in Vicksburg, Biloxi, and Meridian, “Mississippi Red” never felt the need to offer a definitive stance on segregation. In his mind, the merits of the unwritten law had little to do with it.

McDowell’s last editorial commentary on the 1961 MSU team came in the aftermath of the team’s upset loss to Ole Miss. While McDowell used the bulk of his daily column to focus on the effort of Bonnie “Country” Graham’s Ole Miss team, the opinionated McDowell attributed the Maroons’ defeat to human emotion. “The Maroons had the championship won, which Babe McCarthy admitted earlier in the week was probably a blessing in view of the upcoming invasion in Oxford,” McDowell wrote. “The champions also had been denied the right to represent the SEC in national regional competition in Louisville. Any group of American-born champions couldn’t help but be disappointed at not getting the opportunity to try and win the national title.”<sup>115</sup>

McDowell left Mississippi abruptly in January 1962 after the *State Times* was purchased and closed by the Hederman family. “I didn’t even get a final column,” McDowell quipped in a joking manner.<sup>116</sup> The need for a job took the legendary sports scribe to the *Trenton Times* as the paper’s sports editor. Despite his exit from the state, “Mississippi Red” was still honored as Mississippi’s Sportswriter of the Year in 1962. McDowell would return to the south in 1964 as sports editor of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. From 1964 until 1991, McDowell worked as director of public relations for the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame. A southeastern representative of the Heisman Trophy Trust, McDowell was inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 1999.

As for McDowell’s impact on the sports writing community in Mississippi, a number of the editors in the state would go on and write complimentary columns on “Mississippi

Red,” despite their differences of opinion. McDowell’s counterpart at the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, Billy Ray, congratulated the former *State Times* sports editor as the recipient of the 1962 Mississippi Sportswriter of the Year by the National Sportscaster and Sportswriting Award Committee.<sup>117</sup> Charles B. Gordon of the McComb-based *Enterprise-Journal* went further, admitting in the following passage of his “Sports Journal” column on March 20, 1962, that he missed the work of “Mississippi Red” despite their philosophical differences of opinion.

Does that mean that, if the *State Times* had not met its untimely, greatly lamented end, I would be agreeing with McDowell more often than in the past? No it doesn’t — not by a long shot, if I felt it necessary to differ with him. People don’t have to agree with me or have me agree with them, for me to like, admire and respect them. In the case of McDowell, I liked the fact he worked hard at his trade and turned out a lot of stuff — the bigger part of it eminently readable and correct. There is simply nothing else in Mississippi that gives or even pretends to give, the kind of scope of the information McDowell dished out day after day.<sup>118</sup>

Although McDowell’s work in 1961 was not as consistent in terms of disdain for the unwritten law, overall, his work was just as defiant and thought-provoking as his previous efforts discussed in Chapter IV. His opinion on the unwritten law notwithstanding, McDowell said he would not categorize his writing as liberal. Furthermore, his years of defiance in the face of the Closed Society never subjected the former Navy veteran to any of the scare tactics employed by organizations such as the Citizens’ Council. “If they disagreed or were unhappy with my opinion, no one ever said anything to me,” McDowell said in an August 12, 2010 interview. “I was never pressured or influenced to writing anything or change my opinion on an issue. (And) I really didn’t think about it. I figure if I could handle the Navy, then I could deal with just about anything.”<sup>119</sup> McDowell objected to the premise of the unwritten law, and his support of integrated athletics for the sake of competition was as progressive in terms of human and social rights as any other reporter in Mississippi. McDowell’s frequent challenges of the unwritten law and, in turn, the Closed Society, should

place “Mississippi Red” in the state’s annals as one of the more progressive journalists of the civil rights era.

#### A Mixed Reaction from Mississippi’s Sports Desk

Biloxi-based *Daily Herald* sports editor Dick Lightsey, who was an outspoken critic of the unwritten law in 1959, took a step back in 1961, maintaining a degree of silence when it came to whispers of a postseason appearance for the Maroons and, when he did express support for McCarthy’s squad, did so well after a decision had been rendered. In Lightsey’s February 1, 1961, column, “Bunts, Boots and Bounces,” the sports editor did not address the NCAA tournament possibilities for the surprising Maroons, but he did tell his audience that MSU and the University of Florida, not the Kentucky Wildcats, were the favorites for the SEC championship.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, Lightsey’s next two columns on State, which appeared on February 2, 1961, and February 6, 1961, in the *Daily Herald*, focused on the Maroons’ subsequent win over LSU and made no reference the NCAA tournament.<sup>121</sup>

Lightsey’s first reference to the Maroons and the integrated postseason appeared in the February 10, 1961, edition of “Bunts, Boots and Bounces” and, unlike 1959, Lightsey conceded the berth to the SEC’s second place finisher. Lightsey wrote that the University of Kentucky’s fan base was hoping for, at the least, a second place finish for the Wildcats because, “It now appears that Mississippi State will take the loop title but, due to racial restrictions, will have to pass up the NCAA tourney.”<sup>122</sup> The Biloxi sports editor wrote of both MSU and the 18-1 “Golden Giants” of Mississippi Southern College, “It’s a shame that neither will get the opportunity to participate in postseason tournament activity which could lead to national titles.” Lightsey, who stressed his status as a segregationist in 1959, seemed to take a passive approach to the NCAA tournament issue, a stark contrast to his previous columns, which advocated a tournament berth for the Maroons. Rather, Lightsey had already dismissed any chances of a Mississippi-based national basketball championship.

After his passive approach to MSU and the NCAA tournament, Lightsey focused more so on Mississippi State's chances at a SEC title. In the February 11, 1961, edition of the *Daily Herald*, Lightsey briefly discussed the upcoming conference schedule, including State's matchup with the University of Tennessee, before predicting a future win against Adolph Rupp's Wildcats in Starkville.<sup>123</sup> The NCAA tournament was never referenced in the column. Lightsey continued this trend in his next column, never mentioning any postseason hopes for the Maroons, but he called the team the "odds-on choices to win the SEC crown" if they were to defeat Kentucky.<sup>124</sup> After the team's 68-62 loss to the Wildcats, Lightsey wrote on February 15, 1961, that the Maroons were simply outplayed by Rupp's charges and that the team needed to win at least three of their five remaining games to claim the top prize in the SEC. Again, any hopes of an NCAA tournament bid were absent from Lightsey's work.<sup>125</sup>

Two days later, Lightsey said that McCarthy's contract extension was well deserved but, even when discussing both MSU's 1958-59 and 1960-61 seasons, no reference to the NCAA tournament was made.<sup>126</sup> During the aforementioned 1958-59 campaign, sports writers in Mississippi wondered in unison if McCarthy looked to leave Starkville because the school would refuse an NCAA tournament bid, denying the competitive MSU coach a chance to prove his worth on a national stage. While McCarthy eventually was given a new contract that season, the absence of any such commentary a mere two seasons later was perplexing.

Lightsey's focus on SEC laurels for the Maroons continued in the aftermath of the team's last-second loss to Florida. The *Daily Herald* sports editor ignored the possibility of a tournament bid for MSU, writing that Kentucky's basketball contingent should be happy with the team's defeat, as it cut the Maroons' conference lead to one game and increased Kentucky's chances of playing for the national title as "it has a good chance of representing the loop in the NCAA playoffs — even if State should win the crown."<sup>127</sup>

Fresh off the Maroons' title-clinching victory over Tulane, Lightsey made an interesting journalistic decision in his March 1, 1961, edition of "Bunts, Boots and Bounces." Rather than discuss the obvious topic, MSU's SEC title, Lightsey began his column by focusing on MSU's chief basketball rival Kentucky and hailed the Wildcats, as the team was a victory away from an NCAA tournament berth.<sup>128</sup> Lightsey wrote that few thought the Wildcats could catch MSU for the SEC title or Vanderbilt for the NCAA bid, yet Rupp had the team in a position to do just that. Lightsey then turned his attention to the Maroons and wrote that the sophomore-laden squad was in the midst of something special. "This is no 'fluke' championship ballclub, even though it is composed largely of sophomores. State is the only SEC team which has been able to consistently win on the road this season and is richly deserving of the title," Lightsey wrote.<sup>129</sup> Lightsey's work lacked the resolve he displayed just two years earlier when he advocated an NCAA appearance by the Maroons for the sake of a national championship for Mississippi. While he hailed the efforts of MSU, Lightsey put the emphasis on Kentucky and its efforts to lock up the NCAA bid, never once acknowledging that the Maroons, as the SEC champion, were a worthy and just selection. The same could be said for Lightsey's work going into the season finale against Ole Miss. While Lightsey again praised the title-winning campaign for the Starkville contingent and noted the dominance of Mississippi's SEC members in football, basketball, and baseball, he made no reference or comment towards an NCAA appearance for MSU. Rather, he wrote that the "grudge match" against Ole Miss was no longer under the "must-win category" due to MSU's title-clinching victory days earlier.<sup>130</sup>

Only after editor J. Oliver Emmerich of the McComb-based *Enterprise-Journal* voiced his support for Mississippi State's participation in the NCAA tournament did Lightsey address the matter in the *Daily Herald*. Lightsey published verbatim Emmerich's column, who wrote that there would be nothing wrong with the MSU contingent playing against integrated teams out of state. "There is a strong force of public opinion in Mississippi that we

should insist that others respect our own internal affairs but that we cannot attempt to change the concepts, of people, in other states,” Emmerich wrote. “These Mississippians feel that the proposition of integration in Mississippi has nothing whatsoever to do with the way people in other states handle their athletic events.”<sup>131</sup>

Lightsey revisited his argument from 1959 and supported a national title run for the Maroons. “Although State’s current basketball team may not be great, we feel it has the right — and should be allowed — to take part in the national tournament,” Lightsey wrote. “A couple of years ago when Bailey Howell led the Maroons to their greatest season it was a shame the team had to stay home. That team, we felt, would have won the national title. And this year’s addition could probably make quite a good showing.”<sup>132</sup>

At the conclusion of the NCAA tournament, which was won by the University of Cincinnati, Lightsey would lament for the Maroons’ lost opportunity at national prominence. “It’s a shame that Mississippi State, as champions of the SEC, did not get a chance to participate in the NCAA event,” he wrote in the March 27, 1961 edition of the *Daily Herald*. “The Maroons had a sound ball club.”<sup>133</sup> While Lightsey’s commentary seemed progressive, his timing and relative silence in comparison to his work only two years earlier emphatically said otherwise. In both 1959 and 1961, Lightsey’s work comes on the heels of another journalist in the Magnolia State taking a stand. In 1959, it was Jimmie McDowell and in 1961, it was J. Oliver Emmerich. In 1961, while any progressive voice or commentary in the Closed Society was a rarity, Lightsey’s support of an NCAA tournament berth came well after any decision could be made, negating its potential significance.

Another vocal supporter of a Maroon 1959 tournament appearance was Billy Ray, sports editor of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*. Like Lightsey, Ray’s commentary was tempered to some extent from 1959. In his February 8, 1961, edition of “Press Box View,” Ray wrote that the Maroons had an “easier than expected win” over the Green Wave and were in control of the SEC championship picture, but he did not discuss the team’s chances at a postseason



berth.<sup>134</sup> Ray would again neglect the possibility of a postseason tournament appearance for the Starkville-based contingent in the aftermath of the team's triumph over the Green Wave, writing only of Tulane head coach Cliff Wells' complimentary remarks about the MSU team as told to Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>135</sup>

In his February 15, 1961, column following the team's loss to Kentucky, Ray made his first comments on an NCAA tournament bid, writing that the Wildcats needed the victory over MSU to remain in the hunt for a national title opportunity. "Kentucky, now 6-4, could gain the NCAA spot usually reserved for the conference champion, but of course should the Maroons win it, they still could not go — just like two years ago — because of the 'unwritten law' which prohibits Mississippi teams from participating in sports with teams that play Negroes and the NCAA certainty does not prohibit the use of Negroes," Ray explained.<sup>136</sup> Later in his column, Ray wrote that beating Kentucky was the team's primary goal and "the next best thing is winning the SEC title and that's what the Maroons are going after."<sup>137</sup> While his commentary may have been his most extensive on the unwritten law during the 1961 season, at no point did Ray advocate an NCAA appearance by MSU, a noticeable difference from his work in the 1959 season when he argued that the Maroons should have been allowed to play in the tournament. Ray's work painted an NCAA tournament berth as a non-existent goal for the MSU team. Much like Lightsey, Ray also missed the opportunity to make a case for the Maroons, therefore making a supportive statement for the unwritten law.

The following day, Ray continued ignoring the chances of an NCAA berth for the Maroons when, in his February 16, 1961, edition of "Press Box Views," the Vicksburg sports editor focused on Rupp's many complaints about the behavior of the MSU student body. While Ray agreed with Rupp's assessment of the MSU faithful, he said that the legendary coach brought such a reaction on himself with his negative comments about Mississippi State.<sup>138</sup> Days later, Ray published parts of an editorial from sports editor Bill Ross of the Tupelo-based *Daily Journal*, who hypothesized that Rupp planted the skunk under his team's

bench in order to generate bad publicity for the state of Mississippi and MSU. Ray wrote that Ross' commentary was "food for thought."<sup>139</sup>

Ray would return to more logical matters after MSU defeated the University of Georgia on February 20, 1961. Ray wrote that the remaining foes on the Maroons' schedule — LSU, Tulane, and Ole Miss — had already tasted defeat at the hands of the Starkville five earlier in the season and a win, on their opponents' home floors, would bring the team its second SEC title in three seasons. "The next three are 'must' games for the Maroons and their outcomes will be eagerly awaited, by friend and foe alike," Ray wrote.<sup>140</sup> Postseason play for the Maroons was never referenced, despite the clear commentary on the team's championship aspirations.

After the Maroons' title-clinching victory over Tulane, Ray referenced the NCAA tournament in his March 1, 1961, edition of "Press Box Views" and wrote with a sense of remorse for MSU's absence from the national championship tournament. After noting Mississippi's new-found dominance in SEC's football and basketball circuits, Ray admitted that, in his opinion, the SEC champions were not the best team in the country and were inferior in comparison to the 1959 Mississippi State team.<sup>141</sup> However, he still wondered how the Maroons would perform on a national stage. "It's too bad McCarthy won't be able to take his fine bunch of boys to the NCAA tournament, which they automatically won a bid to for winning the SEC, but are forced to stay home because of the 'unwritten law,'" he wrote. "We'd just like to see how this young bunch would fare with the real 'veterans.'"<sup>142</sup>

While Ray's commentary, albeit brief, could be viewed as progressive, the Vicksburg sports editor quickly reverted back to his cautionary ways, writing his March 5, 1961, column on the team's upcoming banquet and McCarthy's SEC Coach of the Year honor.<sup>143</sup> Although Ray discussed the Maroons' championship season, he again ignored postseason play for the Starkville contingent. Two days later, Ray wrote about the Maroons' loss to Ole Miss and placed the defeat in a positive light, citing the work of the *Clarion-Ledger's* Carl Walters,

who wrote that the absence of MSU guard “Red” Stroud due to an injury and the fact they were playing on the Rebels’ home court were the primary reasons the Maroons fell. Ray also touched upon the impending battle for the SEC NCAA bid between Vanderbilt and Kentucky and, rather than advocating an MSU entry into the tournament, simply acknowledged that MSU was not “allowed to play for national championships.”<sup>144</sup>

An interesting response to the building controversy was that of James B. Skewes’ sports editor, Billy “Sunshine” Rainey of the *Meridian Star*. Rainey, who in 1959 expressed a combination of wishful hope for the Maroons’ participation in the postseason and his own expectations of the team’s compliance with the gentleman’s agreement, published only two columns on the Starkville contingent, and neither referenced the NCAA tournament as an opportunity for the SEC champions. While Rainey wrote in his February 3, 1961, edition of “Sunshine on Sports,” that MSU had an excellent opportunity to win the SEC for the second time in three years, he never mentioned the postseason.<sup>145</sup> The same could be said for his February 6, 1961, column, which focused on the team’s game with Kentucky.<sup>146</sup>

Like a number of his fellow sports writing brethren, *Delta Democrat-Times* sports editor Charles Kerg also neglected to mention the NCAA merit of the Maroons. In Kerg’s February 26, 1961, edition of “Kerg’s Korner,” the Greenville-based editor focused on the conduct of Kentucky’s student body after the team’s 60-59 victory over Vanderbilt, which “sprinkled the gym playing floor with paper cups.”<sup>147</sup> Kerg went on to criticize Rupp for comments he had made weeks earlier about the conduct of Mississippi State’s students and their conduct during the Wildcats game in Starkville, writing “if Rupp is such a great sport wonder why doesn’t he dig his own Kentucky fans about their conduct.”<sup>148</sup> While Kerg may have made a valid point in illustrating the hypocrisy of Rupp’s criticisms of MSU, a more pertinent news item would have been the NCAA chances of the Maroons.

In Columbus, the *Commercial Dispatch* published little editorial commentary on the Maroons and the plight of the 1960-61 basketball campaign. Sports writer Herb Phillips

composed his first column on the Maroons in the February 16, 1961, edition of “‘N In This Cornah!” and focused on the efforts of Maroon head coach McCarthy, whom Phillips called one of the more personable and polite individuals in sports. In discussing McCarthy’s coaching prowess, Phillips referenced the NCAA tournament and explained, “The Babe can’t participate in postseason activity. The reason: basketball’s national championship (NCAA) is decided by virtue of down-to-the-wire playoffs between the leading contenders. Therefore, because of Mississippi’s unwritten law against white athletes of state institutions playing in sports competition with negroes, State can never be ‘Number One.’”<sup>149</sup> In Phillip’s effort to praise McCarthy, the sports writer missed an opportunity to support a tournament bid for MSU and, in turn, a chance to denounce the unwritten law.

Ben Lee, Jr., the sports editor at the *Hattiesburg American*, never expressed a clear opinion on the matter. The Hattiesburg-based Lee, Jr., penned only one editorial on the Maroons during the examined period and, much like his sports brethren, wrote about the team’s upcoming banquet and McCarthy’s laurels as SEC Coach of the Year.<sup>150</sup> He simply stated that the team had won the conference title and offered little in terms of commentary on the season in general let alone anything resembling an opinion on an NCAA berth.

#### Hederman’s Sports Scribes Toe the Segregationist Line

Much like the 1959 season, the writers and editors of the Hederman-owned newspapers in Jackson did their best to protect the Closed Society by enforcing the unwritten law through omission. During the course of the Maroons’ run to another SEC championship, the possibility of an NCAA title was rarely mentioned, negating any legitimacy to MSU’s possible participation in integrated play and giving credence to the gentleman’s agreement.

*Clarion-Ledger* columnist Carl Walters, in his February 5, 1961, edition of “Shavin’s,” neglected to mention the Maroons and their win over LSU; rather he focused on MSU’s acceptance of another invitation in the 1961 Sugar Bowl basketball tournament to take place the following basketball season.<sup>151</sup> *Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker followed

suit, leading off his “Baker’s Dozen” column with the news of the Maroons’ Sugar Bowl invitation.<sup>152</sup> Two days later, Baker again neglected any chances of an NCAA berth while he looked forward to MSU’s upcoming games against Tulane and Kentucky.<sup>153</sup> *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Arnold Hederman referenced the Maroons’ upcoming game against Tennessee, but the success of the team and any references to an NCAA tournament bid were missing from the column.<sup>154</sup> Walters also noted the team’s victory over Tulane, but despite the Maroons’ two game lead on second place Vanderbilt, the chances of an NCAA tournament bid were missing from his commentary.<sup>155</sup>

Going into the Maroons’ February 13, 1961, battle with Kentucky, Walters did not mention the possibility of an NCAA bid; rather, the dean of Mississippi’s sports journalists focused on Rupp’s comments to *Sports Illustrated* about the current state of SEC play, to which Rupp told the magazine, “Hell, we could do well in the conference if we warmed up against a bunch of teacher’s colleges. We can’t go around playing a bunch of patsies like Mississippi State.”<sup>156</sup> Walters then addressed Rupp’s argument that many of the better teams in the south were using segregation as a way of avoiding tougher competition. “On the off chance that Rupp was to include Mississippi State when he insinuated that some SEC schools are ‘hiding behind segregation to keep from playing worthy opponents’ we would simply remind him that no Mississippi team — because of ‘established policy’ — can compete against Negroes at home, away, or anywhere and he (Rupp) is well aware of that fact,” he wrote.<sup>157</sup> Walters went to point out that the only reason Rupp’s charges made it to the 1959 NCAA tournament was because MSU “COULDN’T enter it because of that previously mentioned established state policy against integrated athletic competition” and Kentucky’s 1961 hopes hinged on MSU winning the conference so the second place Wildcats could take their place in the tournament.<sup>158</sup> Despite his pro-Maroon stance, Walters stopped at advocating an MSU appearance in the NCAA tournament. In the same edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Hederman mentioned that Kentucky was “aiming for a second place and a

possible berth in the NCAA tourney.”<sup>159</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*' Bob Howie commented on the Maroons' success in a cartoon on February 13, 1961, that depicted a smaller University of Kentucky player overshadowed by an MSU player with the words “Current SEC Power” prominently displayed next to the Maroon.<sup>160</sup> Three different members of the *Jackson Daily News*' staff essentially dismissed the potential legitimacy of MSU's participation in integrated athletics and, clearly, served as another cog in the Closed Society.

After the Maroons' loss to Kentucky, Baker refrained from mentioning any NCAA aspirations for MSU in his February 14, 1961, edition “Baker's Dozen.” While the *Jackson Daily News*' sports editor discussed the constant state of chaos in the Southeastern Conference and the first-place status of the Starkville contingent, Baker did not reference the NCAA tournament.<sup>161</sup> Baker continued to ignore any postseason possibilities for the Maroons in his column the following day. Rather, Baker wrote on the behavior of the student body against Rupp.<sup>162</sup> In the February 19, 1961, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Baker predicted that the Maroons would face a difficult time with the University of Georgia in Athens' Woodruff Hall, “burial place of many another dream quite as lovely as the SEC championship hopes so bright in Maroon minds.”<sup>163</sup> Baker called the Maroons' upcoming game against the University of Georgia a “must win” in his February 20, 1961, column, but again, failed to mention the NCAA tournament.<sup>164</sup>

Baker proclaimed the Maroons the number one team in the SEC, at least in the minds of Georgians, in his February 22, 1961, edition of “Baker's Dozen.” Calling MSU's 99-77 victory over the Bulldogs, “a slaughter,” Baker wrote that McCarthy was pleased with the teams efforts “that shook off some doubts which accumulated after two straight losses.” Baker did not mention the postseason.<sup>165</sup>

Despite MSU clinching at least a tie for the conference title, Baker again overlooked the team's chances of playing in the postseason in his February 27, 1961, edition of “Baker's Dozen.” Baker wrote that MSU needed only a victory against either Tulane or Ole Miss to

win the conference title outright, but he preferred for the Maroons to take the title in New Orleans rather than chance an upset at the hands of their in-state rivals from Oxford. Baker cited the Maroons final game in 1959, a close 23-16 win over the Rebels, as justification as the last time MSU had won the SEC and an invitation to the NCAA tournament was extended.<sup>166</sup>

Baker hailed the Maroons after their title-clinching victory over Tulane, writing, “The Cinderella Maroons came flat out of nowhere to win,” but he never specifically mentioned the NCAA tournament. Making a vague reference to any postseason possibilities, Baker wrote, “While this presumably is just as far as the kids will go in 1961, there is reason for great pride and rejoicing throughout Mississippi that the Maroons were able to achieve such a pinnacle with a team so young.”<sup>167</sup> Despite ignoring the postseason possibilities for MSU, the Jackson-based sports editor took United Press International to task for the news service’s ranking of the Maroons, who, despite the SEC win, were not ranked in the UPI top ten poll. Baker claimed that members of the UPI voting committee, including Rupp and Wells, were responsible for “downgrading the Maroons,” thus leading to the team’s exclusion from the rankings.<sup>168</sup> Baker went on to write that the SEC title “means a whole lot more than any national rating ever could anyway, particularly since it’s performance, not prejudice, that earns it.”<sup>169</sup> Baker ignored the obvious reason for State’s less-than-stellar reputation outside of Mississippi: The team’s refusal to play integrated foes and participate in the NCAA tournament.

Baker’s neglectful commentary took a considerable change in the March 1, 1961, edition of “Baker’s Dozen” when the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor dismissed any sentiment of an NCAA berth. “Mississippi State’s biennial problem has cropped up again,” Baker wrote in a dismissive tone, referring to the unwritten law and the allure of the NCAA tournament.<sup>170</sup> Baker noted that either Kentucky or Vanderbilt would go to the tournament in State’s place but added that neither school had “any respect or our way of life.”<sup>171</sup> Baker

claimed that missing the tournament was nothing new for MSU and attacked proponents of integrated completion, writing, “At least all of the troublemakers who think that all segregation barriers would not crumble if a Mississippi athletic team would participate against an outside opponent with Negroes, are decently quiet this time around.”<sup>172</sup>

Going into the contest with the Rebels, Howie used his editorial cartoon, “Hinny” to congratulate McCarthy for winning SEC Coach of the Year in the March 4, 1961, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. In the cartoon, Hinny told readers that McCarthy’s award meant little because “he don’t face his biggest test until the game tonight.”<sup>173</sup> While the rivalry between the Maroons and the Rebels was the most heated in Mississippi college sports, the notion that in an SEC championship-winning season, the last place Rebels posed as MSU’s biggest test was absurd. Contests that would have tested MSU’s real worth awaited in the NCAA tournament, yet the editors of the *Jackson Daily News* would have its audience believe that it was the in-state Rebels that could put a blight on the Maroons’ season. If anything, Kentucky, not Ole Miss, proved to be MSU’s biggest test. Howie would again pen a cartoon on the Maroons in the March 9, 1961, issue of the *Jackson Daily News*, and, in a nod to MSU’s refusal to play in the NCAA tournament, the cartoonist depicted an MSU player wearing a crown labeled “SEC Champ” putting away his basketball equipment while two other players, each labeled Kentucky and Vanderbilt, fight one another for second place. The Maroon was shown saying, “Aw, those guys don’t know when to stop!”<sup>174</sup>

In the aftermath of MSU’s loss to Florida, neither Walters nor Hederman of the *Clarion-Ledger* addressed the Maroons’ NCAA tournament chances.<sup>175</sup> The following day, in the February 20, 1961, issue of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Walters wrote about the “severe blow” the Gators handed to the Starkville contingents’ conference title hopes, but the sports columnist did not mention the team’s chances of an NCAA tournament berth.<sup>176</sup> Despite Walters’ negative tone, the Maroons were still in first place.



Hederman took a more positive approach than his fellow sports writer Walters in his February 22, 1961, column when he wrote that the MSU win over Georgia, coupled with Ole Miss' victory over the Gators, assured the Maroons a share of the SEC title. Hederman, who again ignored any chance of a Maroon appearance in the NCAA tournament, wrote about the Magnolia State's chances for SEC athletic dominance, as Ole Miss won the conference football championship, MSU was in first place in basketball, and both the Rebels and the Maroons had a chance to win the title in baseball. "It would be hard for any other state to come through in loop championships as that. . . . So, we will just sit here and keep our fingers crossed,"<sup>177</sup> Hederman wrote, preferring regional dominance over any hopes of a national title.

Walters also ignored the NCAA tournament in the aftermath of MSU's victory over UGA. The long-time Mississippi sports writer focused on the team's dominating win over the Bulldogs but only addressed the chances for a conference title.<sup>178</sup> In Walters' February 23, 1961, edition of "Shavin's," the veteran sports scribe confidently repeated his prediction of an SEC title for the Maroons; however, any discussion of a national championship was reserved for the second place team. "We're not going to try to guess which one of the runner-up squads will be designated as the Dixie Dozen entry in the NCAA national championship tourney," Walters wrote, missing an opportunity to argue for the merits of MSU's place in the NCAA tournament, thus protecting the Closed Society from another public debate.<sup>179</sup>

Walters again skirted the issue in his February 24, 1961, column when he predicted that the Maroons would win two of its remaining three games to take the title and Kentucky and Vanderbilt would play for the right to go for the national championship.<sup>180</sup> Rather than seizing the moment to address MSU's place in the tournament or the unwritten law, Walters identified the 11-11 LSU Tigers as State's biggest upcoming obstacle. Walters' neglect of the issue was obvious, as he debated the national championship merits of the other conference members rather than the Maroons. Hederman, who continuously failed to express a public

opinion on the matter, again kept his journalistic eyes on an SEC title for the Maroons, calling their February 25, 1961, match-up with LSU a must-win while never mentioning the NCAA title.<sup>181</sup>

After MSU captured the SEC title, Walters offered McCarthy and his team congratulations in his March 1, 1962, edition of “Shavin’s.” Ever neglectful, Walters focused more attention on MSU’s basketball future and the school’s mascot switch from the Maroons to the Bulldogs than the team’s hopes for an NCAA opportunity.<sup>182</sup> Towards the end of his column, Walters did discuss, in a brief fashion, MSU’s tournament hopes and the unwritten law. “Unfortunately, Mississippi State cannot bid for the national laurels as the SEC representative in the NCAA tournament, and that honor will go to either Kentucky or Vanderbilt after a playoff tussle. We pick Kentucky,” he wrote, failing to express an opinion on MSU’s national title merits.<sup>183</sup> In the last paragraph of the lengthy column, Walters referenced the unwritten law and how it was keeping both State and Mississippi Southern out of their respective NCAA tournaments, yet he voiced no opinion on the matter. Based on his past commentary, both from 1959 and from 1961, Walters’ words echoed a hollow tone. The segregationist and supporter of the Closed Society, at no time, voiced any sort of support for the Maroons and a national championship with his trend of journalistic condemnation and neglect. For Walters to call MSU’s tournament absence unfortunate made the veteran journalist look hypocritical.

Unlike Walters, Hederman refused to shed crocodile tears for McCarthy’s club. While the *Ledger*’s sports editor did congratulate the team for its conference championship, Hederman did not reference the NCAA tournament. Rather, he minimized the importance of the team’s match-up with rival Ole Miss and predicted conference championship opportunities for the Maroons in the future.<sup>184</sup>

While his coverage of the Maroons filled the pages of both the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, Robert Fulton did not publish a column until the March 1, 1961,

issue of the *Clarion-Ledger*. While the sports writer recapped MSU's SEC title-winning campaign, Fulton also painted the Maroons as a miracle team of sorts due to the previous year's poor performance.<sup>185</sup> Despite the presence of a new voice in the *Clarion-Ledger's* realm of athletic commentary, Fulton followed in the neglectful footsteps of Walters and Hederman, never acknowledging the NCAA tournament nor expressing an opinion on the matter. Fulton, who was known as "Steamboat" by his fellow journalists and readers alike, would be a present editorial voice during the 1962 and 1963 debates surrounding Mississippi State and the NCAA tournament.

#### Harris Takes Over in Starkville as Silence Reigns

As the local paper in Starkville, it was expected that the *Starkville Daily News* would have its fair share of editorial content, especially with opinionated editors and journalists like Sherrill Nash and Henry Harris at the helm. The *Starkville Daily News* was established in 1960 after Henry and Morris Meyer sold the *Starkville News* to segregationist *West Point Times Leader* editor and publisher Harris.<sup>186</sup> Harris appointed Nash editor of the Starkville-based newspaper but published his daily musings in both the *Times Leader* and the *Starkville Daily News* while Nash composed all other editorial content.<sup>187</sup> The bulk of articles published in the *Starkville Daily News* were from wire accounts; however, original writing came in the form of a daily column titled "Time Out For Sports" with the byline, "By the Daily News Sports Staff." The first of these columns that appeared during the examined time period was published in the February 1, 1961, edition of the *Starkville Daily News* and focused on the team's upcoming game against the LSU Tigers. The staff cautioned the Maroons' fan base as to the obstacles the Baton Rouge-based Tigers posed to McCarthy's team and wrote that a win was needed to stay in first place in the conference. The column then indicated that continued success by the basketball team in Starkville would allow the team to "pick its tournaments next season," a reference to regular season tournaments rather than the year-ending NCAA joust.<sup>188</sup>

After MSU defeated the Green Wave in Starkville, the *Starkville Daily News* staff penned a column on the Maroons' field general McCarthy on February 8, 1961. The staff credited McCarthy for putting "Mississippi State University on the basketball map" and painted the team's head coach as humble and personable. The column called McCarthy a "fierce competitor, and (McCarthy) has the knack — so necessary to any successful coach — of instilling spirit and desire in his players."<sup>189</sup> When asked how the 1960-61 team compared to the 1958-59 squad led by Howell, McCarthy said, "What has amazed me is that we've gotten such consistent play out of this group."<sup>190</sup> Despite McCarthy's success, the column never referenced "Babe's" chances at a second SEC title or an NCAA tournament berth.

In the February 10, 1961, edition of "Time Out For Sports," the *Starkville Daily News* staff previewed the Maroons' upcoming contest with both the University of Tennessee and the University of Kentucky. While Tennessee was regarded as a dangerous foe, much of the attention in the column went to Rupp and the Wildcats, in part for Rupp's past comments about McCarthy and his team in the press. Unlike past columns, the *Starkville Daily News* staff identified the conference championship as a feasible goal for the Maroons, especially if they could win both games against the Volunteers and the Wildcats.<sup>191</sup>

After Rupp's troops handed MSU its first conference defeat, the *Starkville Daily News* staff wrote that the Maroons' "bubble of an undefeated conference slate was pricked by the suddenly sharpened claws of the Wildcats."<sup>192</sup> The column claimed that the "ambitious young Maroons may be wiser for the loss" but would quickly exchange that wisdom for a victory. While the staff identified that the Maroons were in the stretch run for the SEC title, any and all postseason aspirations for either team were neglected.

In light of State's last-second loss to Florida, the *Starkville Daily News* staff wrote that the Maroons had the more difficult road of the SEC's title contenders to the conference crown with all of the team's remaining games away from Starkville. In its first reference to the NCAA tournament, the *Starkville Daily News* staff wrote that a Maroon victory over LSU

would likely create a tie for second place between Kentucky, Vanderbilt, and Florida “in a three-way scrap for the NCAA tournament berth.”<sup>193</sup> By acknowledging that the second place team would represent the conference in the NCAA tournament, the *Starkville Daily News* had already assumed that, if MSU were to win the conference title, the Maroons would yield to the unwritten law. Plus, the opportunity for the national championship was placed in a secondary position to the SEC title, theoretically making it less likely that Starkville readers would take issue with MSU’s adherence to the unwritten law.

*Starkville* editor Nash chimed in during State’s run to the conference title, but his initial work focused on the behavior of the MSU student body during the team’s game against Kentucky. Nash defended the Maroon faithful, writing that the incident had been exaggerated and pointed to the lack of obscene signs or litter on the court after the game as evidence. Nash attributed the negative attention on MSU’s students to members of the sports press. “Had sports writers reported the complete story, fans who did not see the game would know that Kentucky players were applauded for their efforts in a sportsman-like manner . . . the jabs were directed at Coach Adolph Rupp, and being the showman he is, he loved every minute of it. Sportswriters seeking the calm, unperturbed atmosphere of a tidily-wink game, should stay away from the Maroon gym. There is a rumbling there of the old Bulldog Spirit coming to life and it is sure to warm the hearts of thousands of old grads wherever they are.”<sup>194</sup>

The sports staff of the *Starkville Daily News* predicted in the February 24, 1961, edition of “Time Out For Sports,” that the Maroons would sweep their upcoming contests with LSU and Tulane to wrap-up the SEC title for Mississippi State, citing McCarthy’s track record of getting good results from his team away from the friendly confines of Starkville.<sup>195</sup> Also in the column, the staff recognized and cited the column written by Furman Bisher of the *Atlanta Journal*. While the *Starkville Daily News* staff quoted excerpts from Bisher’s work about the on-court abilities of the Maroons, they failed to print or acknowledge Bisher’s

opposition to the unwritten law and his argument that the team belonged in the NCAA tournament.

On March 1, 1961, Nash would again write on the MSU's title-winning season; however, the segregationist never referenced the NCAA tournament or made an argument for or against a Maroon national championship. Rather, Nash boldly claimed that Starkville was "the center of the finest collegiate and high school basketball in the entire nation" with State's SEC title win and Starkville High School's successful 29-4 season and upcoming appearance in the state high school championship game.<sup>196</sup>

Surprisingly, the *Starkville Daily News* sports staff identified both the NCAA tournament and the argument for MSU's participation in its March 3, 1961, edition of "Time Out For Sports." The staff claimed that, if a playoff were necessary, it would take place at the University of Tennessee "despite efforts from numerous corners to get approval for the Maroons to claim their rightful championship prize."<sup>197</sup> This surprisingly bold statement was followed by an admission that, despite the previous claim, an appearance in the national title tournament was never a consideration. "There has been little talk on the campus of the playoffs since, following the considerable debates of two years ago, everyone has accepted all along that the team wouldn't be allowed to go."<sup>198</sup>

In total, the editorial commentary from the 1960-61 season was, with the exception of the work of McDowell, far less impactful in terms of the amount of contributing opinions to the debate and support for the Maroons. While Ray and Lightsey both offered support for the Maroons, their comments came well after a decision by the powers at State had made a decision. Others, such as Walters, openly denounced the Starkville contingent's hopes for a postseason opportunity. With the exception of the work of McDowell, most of the editors simply ignored the chances of integrated competition by a team from the Magnolia State, offering support to the unwritten law and the Closed Society.

The "Golden Giants" Take their Place Among Small College Elite

While the Maroons were occupying the state's front pages and providing editorial fodder for Mississippi's journalists with the controversy surrounding the NCAA tournament, a quiet threat to the unwritten law was building in Hattiesburg. The Mississippi Southern College Southerners<sup>199</sup> were in the midst of a record-breaking campaign that would lead to the best record in school history at 22-3 and a two-year run of 45 wins and only five defeats. Led by head coach Fred Lewis, the Southerners, who were anointed the "Golden Giants" by *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker, built a resume fit for a NCAA small college national tournament berth. However, any aspirations of a small college national title were quickly silenced, as the Southerners were not invited by the NCAA to vie for the championship because, as Lewis told Cliff Sessions of UPI, it was assumed that the team would reject such an invitation because of the unwritten law. Lewis lashed out in the press, denouncing the gentleman's agreement only to retract his statements the following day. This section examined the season of the "Golden Giants" through the work of the journalists in the Magnolia State. Unlike the Maroons, the Southerners seemed to be forgotten by Mississippi's sports press as they were, for the most part, covered by way of the Associated Press and United Press International and were the focus of few opinion-based articles. By ignoring MSC's cries for an NCAA tournament opportunity, the press in Mississippi again supported the unwritten law and the Closed Society through silence and helped maintain the social status quo in the Magnolia State.

#### The Southerners Taste Success

Going into Southern's 1960-61 season, Lewis was coming off the most successful basketball campaign in the school's history. Lewis, who had played basketball at both Long Island University and Eastern Kentucky University where he averaged 23 points per game, came to Hattiesburg in 1958 after stops in New York at Amityville High School, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Hawaii as an assistant coach. His initial campaign in

the “Hub City” was his first losing season as a coach at 12-13. The following season proved to be the best in school history as MSC finished 23-2.<sup>200</sup>

The unstoppable force that was Mississippi Southern basketball began the 1960-61 season with a winning prowess the likes of which the Hattiesburg campus had never seen. Until a December defeat at the hand of the Tigers of Memphis State University, Lewis’ charges had won 26 straight games dating back to the 1959-60 basketball season and entered February on a four-game winning streak. The team’s success could be attributed to both Lewis and, according to *Student Printz* sports editor James Cleveland, the team’s “abundance of height,” led by Bill Lundberg, Don Clinton, and Alex Delia.<sup>201</sup> It was the team’s tall nature that led to the unofficial nickname, the “Golden Giants,” which was used by reporters from across the state during the course of the season.<sup>202</sup> After back-to-back victories over Mercer University and Louisiana Tech, Mississippi Southern was considered the second best small college team in the country by United Press International behind only Tennessee State University and was ranked third by the Associated Press, trailing the 16-1 Tigers and undefeated Prairie View A&M.<sup>203</sup>

Much like Cleveland, other reporters took note of the basketball revival in Hattiesburg. In a February 4, 1961, article with no byline or wire affiliation published in the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, and the *Jackson State Times*, the author indicated that the “Golden Giants” were 38-3 since the 1959-60 basketball season, and Lewis’ successful 1960-61 campaign was based upon his use of the “Magnificent Seven,” Southern’s top seven players, five of which were averaging double digits in points during the season. Richie Goldberg led the Southerners with 14.3 points per game, followed by Roy Danforth with 14, Lundberg with 12.1, Delia with 11.6, and Ben Gantti with 11.5. MSC had also dominated in the rebound department, averaging 53.5 per game versus 36.3 for their opponents.<sup>204</sup>



Behind the scoring of Delia and Goldberg, the “Golden Giants” defeated Jacksonville University 72-62 on February 4, 1961. In an account written by *Clarion-Ledger* correspondent Don Myers, the Hattiesburg-based squad was down 34-31 at halftime and came out hot, gaining a 46-44 lead that they would never relinquish.<sup>205</sup> Delia scored 25 points in the victory, 18 of which came in the second half.<sup>206</sup> On the next leg of their trek through the Sunshine State, the Southerners defeated Florida Southern in overtime 74-62 behind the scoring of Delia and Goldberg, who had 16 points each. Southern scored 12 points in the extra period and held the Mocs scoreless.<sup>207</sup> Despite MSC’s stellar record of 16-1, no journalist mentioned any postseason opportunities for the Golden Giants.

During the Southerners’ run through the 1960-61 season, an interesting and, at times, more personal perspective on the team could be found in the *Student Printz*, the student newspaper of Mississippi Southern College. One such example would be sports editor James Cleveland’s feature on Lundberg in the February 10, 1961, edition of the *Printz*. Cleveland wrote that the center was Lee Baker’s inspiration for the nickname “Golden Giants,” while the married, physical education major told Baker that the 1960-61 team was better than the 1959-60 version. Lundberg added that he would like to give professional basketball a try. “It’d be great and it would sure help feed the wife and kids,” he said.<sup>208</sup> Cleveland did not reference the NCAA tournament.

After dominating Spring Hill College in a convincing 87-54 win in Mobile, Alabama, behind Richie Goldberg’s 20 points, the 17-1 MSC team remained in the number two spot nationally in the UPI poll while the AP had the Southerners ranked fifth going into their contest with the Buccaneers of Christian Brothers College of Memphis.<sup>209</sup> In a preview found in the *Hattiesburg American*, the 12-6 Bucs, much like Southern’s starting five, had four players averaging double figures in points. The only common opponent between the two teams, Spring Hill College, was dominated in all three meetings with the Southerners and the Bucs.<sup>210</sup>

An 83-67 victory over Christian Brothers College gave the Southerners a 19-1 record as Goldberg led the way with 20 points while Lundberg had 19 points.<sup>211</sup> According to *Hattiesburg American* sports editor Ben Lee, Jr., the “Golden Giants” put on “a whirlwind finish” to break open what was a close game in the second half to defeat their foe from Tennessee.<sup>212</sup> Southern was down 38-37 at halftime but, according to Don Meyers, a correspondent with the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, the “Golden Giants” rode the hot shooting of Goldberg, who scored 16 of his 20 points in the second half.<sup>213</sup>

In order to get its 20<sup>th</sup> victory of the season, the MSC contingent was going to have to defeat a game Centenary College squad, which had defeated major conference opponents like Rice University, Texas Christian University, Tulane University, and Louisiana Tech University. While most publications and journalists had ignored MSC’s chances at postseason competition and a national title, an article published on February 16, 1961, with no byline or wire affiliation stated that Southern was in the midst of making “a determined bid for the national ‘small college’ championship.”<sup>214</sup> In a preview of the match-up with Centenary College penned by an anonymous *Hattiesburg American* writer, the Southerners were going up against their first foe all season who fielded a bigger and taller team. “At least the fans will be looking up if they want to see any action, as the lanky specimens from the long-time rivals take to the hardwood,” the unnamed author wrote.<sup>215</sup> While UPI still considered the “Golden Giants” the second-best small college team in the nation, the Associated Press ranked the 19-1 team as fourth best in the nation behind Prairie View, Tennessee State, and Southern Illinois University.<sup>216</sup> Both Tennessee State and Southern Illinois had four losses on the season.

After Southern dropped a highly contested game against the Shreveport, Louisiana-based Centenary team 73-71 in Hattiesburg, *Jackson* sports editor Baker wrote that “hulking” Gentlemen of Centenary did not play like a 7-11 ball club.<sup>217</sup> Lee wrote that the “Golden Giants” were “slapped down” in what would be Southern’s first defeat in Hattiesburg in over

two years and their first loss in five overtime contests during the 1960-61 season.<sup>218</sup>

Centenary was down by nine points but mounted a furious comeback to take the lead late in the second half. Southern's Danforth, who led all scorers with 22 points, tied the game at 65-65, and the two teams went into overtime. In the extra frame, the Gents scored first and stayed ahead. Other than Baker's efforts for the *Jackson Daily News*, most state newspapers published wire content from either the AP or UPI.<sup>219</sup>

The *Student Printz* published Mary Lou Jones' feature on MSC's Don Clinton in the February 17, 1961, edition of the student newspaper. Clinton, a native of Oak Grove, told Jones that, despite the squad's excellent record, there was room for improvement. "I think we have yet to reach our peak as a team," he said. "We can do even better, I feel, as the season goes on."<sup>220</sup> In the same edition, Cleveland credited the "Golden Giants" ability for coming from behind in close games to Lewis and his tutelage. "The Giants are getting expert coaching," Cleveland wrote.<sup>221</sup> Again, neither student journalist mentioned the Southerners' merits for a postseason berth.

MSC would attempt to rebound from its second loss of the season against the 14-9 Northwestern Louisiana State Demons on February 18, 1961, in Hattiesburg. An unknown author previewed the game for the *Hattiesburg American* and indicated that Lewis felt the Demons, who had lost in their last game to Louisiana College, were looking ahead in that contest to their game against the "Golden Giants."<sup>222</sup> The Southerners would defeat the Demons 68-54 for the team's 20<sup>th</sup> victory of the season. *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer Robert Fulton wrote that Lewis' squad had "atoned for Thursday night's upset loss to Centenary by running the Northwestern Louisiana Demons slap out of the Sports Arena."<sup>223</sup> Lundberg had 20 points and 16 rebounds in the dominating effort.<sup>224</sup>

Lewis, who addressed the Hattiesburg Optimist Club on February 20, 1961, demonstrated his outspoken and candid nature in an article for the *Hattiesburg American* penned by an anonymous author. When asked about the level of local and student-based

support, Lewis pulled no punches on the matter. “Our team has had pathetic town support and the school spirit lags. Many people wonder why our schedule has only six home games, with 14 on the road,” Lewis said. “The truth of the matter is that we have not played one game at home that measures up to the road games. We get much better support from spectators in New Jersey and other far distant places than we get on the home court.”<sup>225</sup> Lewis then moved to the performance of his “Golden Giants” and told the crowd, “I did not anticipate doing as well as we have done. We are 13 points away from the top of the small college teams,” a reference to the number of votes the team needed to move to the top of the small college basketball rankings.<sup>226</sup>

While there had been few references to Southern’s chances at a small college national championship, one was made in an article without a byline or wire affiliation that appeared in newspapers across the state on February 21, 1961, and February 22, 1961. Going into the team’s contests against Georgia Southern College and Delta State College, the unknown writer stated that the Southerners were “battling for the national ‘small college’ championship,” acknowledging the possibility that MSC could be invited to play in the integrated small college NCAA tournament.<sup>227</sup> The version of the article that was published in the *Jackson State Times* was void of any references to Georgia Southern as it was published the day after the game. Lewis, who watched the Georgia contingent defeat Spring Hill College only days earlier in Mobile, Alabama, said he was impressed by the team’s height and balanced scoring attack.<sup>228</sup> The Statesboro, Georgia-based Eagles would go on to lose to the “Golden Giants” by 20 points on February 21, 1961. Lee, Jr. wrote that the team’s tough defense and surprising 14-rebound performance of Danforth netted the victory for the Southerners.<sup>229</sup> The game was a close affair in the first half as no team led by more than five points with Southern leading 32-28 at halftime.<sup>230</sup> Both Lundberg and Delia scored 13 points in the second frame and MSC ran away with the victory, the team’s 21<sup>st</sup> on the season.

Despite the team's loss to Centenary, MSC moved to third place in the AP poll and remained second in the UPI version.<sup>231</sup>

Mississippi Southern's next foe was in-state rival Delta State College, which was led by Mississippi State transfer Jack Case, who "was a demon for an outstanding Mississippi State freshmen team last season [in 1959-1960]."<sup>232</sup> MSC followed with their 22<sup>nd</sup> victory of the season, defeating the Statesmen in Hattiesburg 74-56.<sup>233</sup> According to Paul Morgan, Jr., of the *Hattiesburg American*, the team "combined superior rebounding strength with a hot second half scoring percentage to trounce" their foe from Jackson.<sup>234</sup> "With hustling, scraping 6-foot guard Roy Danforth leading the way," Southern pulled away after a 21-6 run in the first half and never looked back.<sup>235</sup> Anointed the "littlest Golden Giant of them all" by Baker, Danforth led all scorers with 24 points.<sup>236</sup> With two games remaining, the independent Southern squad seemed to have a legitimate chance at receiving a small college NCAA tournament bid.

In an article in the *Jackson State Times* previewing the upcoming contest against Centenary, the anonymous author stated that the Hattiesburg-based team had a must-win game against the Gents from Shreveport. Secondary in the account was the NCAA title tournament, to which the author wrote the team was "also in the thick of the battle for the national 'small college' championship."<sup>237</sup>

On the same day fellow Mississippi basketball power Mississippi State clinched the SEC championship in New Orleans by defeating Tulane, the "Golden Giants" lost another close contest to rival Centenary in Shreveport 67-63. Lewis' troops were down 13 points at halftime but closed the gap to 62-60 with 1:51 remaining in the game on a Clyde Mills layup. After the Gents scored on a jump shot, Southern's Ben Gantt scored on a three-point play to move MSC within a single point at 64-63. Centenary would play ball control for the final minute, forcing the "Golden Giants" to foul and, after hitting three free throws, the Giants simply ran out of time.<sup>238</sup> According to Baker's account in the *Jackson Daily News*, "close

wasn't enough."<sup>239</sup> MSC had a 22-3 record on the season heading into the team's final contest in Hattiesburg against Belmont Abbey, who had already accepted an invitation to the NCAA tournament.<sup>240</sup> Despite the defeat, Southern would remain the third-best small college team in the nation according to the Associated Press.<sup>241</sup>

Jones' feature work on the "Golden Giants" continued in the March 3, 1961, edition of the *Student Printz* as she focused her attention on Danforth. Danforth, a native of Indiana, served in the Army after high school and was married with two children. Yet the guard was the Giants' second leading scorer at 15 points per game.<sup>242</sup> However, Jones did not ask Danforth about the chances of a small-college NCAA title or his opinion on the possibility of playing in an integrated postseason tournament.

In the 1961 finale for Mississippi Southern, the Belmont Abbey Crusaders of coach Al McGwire, who were riding an eight-game winning streak and had already punched a ticket to the NCAA tournament, provided stiff competition for the "Golden Giants."<sup>243</sup> The same could not be said of Lewis' MSC team, which was dealt a damning blow by the NCAA that put the final game of the season in a secondary news position.

Mississippi Southern, despite being one of the top three teams in the nation with a record of 22-3, were not extended an invitation to play in the small college national championship tournament. A distraught Lewis claimed that his Southerners squad was denied the invitation because of the unwritten law, a point verified to the coach by tournament committee chairman and president of Wheaton College Harvey Chrouser. "(He) didn't know whether we would accept it or not," Lewis said. "I may just want to take the chances of being fired by going into the playoffs."<sup>244</sup> The outspoken Lewis knocked the rest of the tournament field and, more importantly, attacked Mississippi's gentleman's agreement for hurting the team's ability to recruit and schedule opponents. "I could get us a good schedule if it weren't for the racial integration policy," he told reporters. "Most major teams in the south are afraid

to play us and there just aren't enough majors elsewhere without colored boys." The article appeared in the *Jackson Daily News* under the headline "Southern Hates Being Ignored."<sup>245</sup>

While the UPI version of Lewis' comments was published in four newspapers in Mississippi, the *Hattiesburg American* was the only newspaper to publish a rebuttal on behalf of the "Golden Giants" leader. Lewis told the *American* that he was "misquoted in an United Press International story concerning his team's failure to receive a bid to the NCAA college division playoffs."<sup>246</sup> Lewis said he never told UPI reporter Cliff Sessions anything about Chrouser or that he was willing to risk his job to play in the tournament. However, Lewis admitted that he said the NCAA should have extended a bid to his squad. "The kids here deserve to know they were considered good enough to enter the playoffs," Lewis said.<sup>247</sup> The fiery MSC coach also took issue with Sessions' use of his comments on the unwritten law, telling the *Hattiesburg American* that his team had "no intention of violating state tradition."<sup>248</sup> No other newspaper in Mississippi published an article on Lewis' denouncement of the UPI story, surprising considering that the *Hattiesburg American* was one of the Hederman newspapers along with the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*.

Southern finished the season with a 23-3 record after a last-second victory over McGwire's Belmont Abbey team 56-54.<sup>249</sup> Gantt, who scored 14 points in the game, hit two free throws in the closing seconds to put the Southerners up for good. Gantt then deflected the subsequent Belmont Abbey inbounds pass as time expired, preserving the win. In the UPI article on the contest, an anonymous author wrote that "Mississippi Southern, owner of one of the nation's top basketball records, stashed its gear away for another season today while its latest victim prepared for a trip to the NCAA small college tournament."<sup>250</sup> The author later wrote that MSC "was not invited to the NCAA playoffs, and Lewis has said the reason was the state's unwritten law against integrated athletics."<sup>251</sup> The Associated Press also referenced the unwritten law in its article on the game, writing, "Southern won't play in the NCAA tourney because of Mississippi's segregation rules."<sup>252</sup> Unlike the article penned for

UPI, both Baker and *Hattiesburg's* Ben Lee, Jr., failed to reference the NCAA tournament snub of Mississippi Southern.<sup>253</sup>

In a wrap-up of the “Golden Giants” season, an anonymous author wrote that the team closed out the season with “an exciting 56-54 victory over NCAA tournament bound Belmont Abbey,” and one of the team’s three losses came at the hands of “nationally-ranked, NIT bound Memphis State.”<sup>254</sup> While MSC was excluded from postseason play, the anonymous author clearly found the tournament prospects for Southern’s foes significant. MSC’s absence from the small college NCAA tournament was not specifically referenced in the article. The “Golden Giants” would conclude its basketball season as the third-best small college team in the nation according to the AP.<sup>255</sup>

Lewis’ frustrations with the unwritten law would only last another season. The head basketball coach of MSC left the school at the end of the 1961-62 season to accept the head coaching job at Syracuse. The Southerners finished that season with a 13-13 record, bringing Lewis’ totals at the school to 89-38.<sup>256</sup>

With the exception of a few reporters, the bulk of the material on the “Golden Giants” and their dominant season was reported via wire services, a rather neglectful approach to covering the Hattiesburg-based team. The journalists and editors of the Magnolia State continued this trend of neglect, writing little on the successful campaign of the Southerners with few reporters in the sports ranks devoting column-based material to MSC.

#### Editors Ignore the “Golden Giants”

Much like the 1960-61 Mississippi State Maroons, few sports writers commented candidly, if at all, on the “Golden Giants” and the argument for or against the unwritten law. Most sports writers in the Magnolia State took a silent approach to the issue and failed to offer any opinions on the matter. One such newspaper was the Hederman-owned *Hattiesburg American*.



For the readers of the *Hattiesburg American*, the MSC campaign of 1960-61 carried greater significance, as the “Hub City” was the home base of the Southerners. During the latter months of the collegiate basketball season, the *American*’s sports staff devoted the bulk of its attention to the Southerners and published original material for the *American* staff rather than relying on wire service articles. Leading the charge in these efforts was *American* sports editor Ben Lee, Jr. Lee covered the vast majority of “Golden Giants” and would occasionally muse about the MSC team in his “Jus’ Ben Thinkin’ About Sports” column. However, while Lee did a solid job covering the MSC from a sports reporting perspective, his opinion-based commentary offered very little to the tale of the 1960-61 Southerners.

Lee first wrote about the MSC team in his February 10, 1961, column and briefly addressed the fifth-place status of the Southerners in the Associated Press small-college national ranking. Lee pointed to Tennessee State’s three losses and wrote, “We figure the Giants are a shade better than the team now at the top of the heap.”<sup>257</sup> In the same column, Lee wrote that the Mississippi State team was the favorite to win the SEC conference championship, but the Maroons “would be unable in any event to participate in the NCAA tournament.” Much like other sports writers who complained about the Maroons’ place in the AP and UPI polls, Lee failed to acknowledge that MSC’s lack of a number-one ranking could have been because of the team’s refusal to play integrated teams.

After his comments on Southern’s place in the polls and MSU’s inability to accept an NCAA tournament bid, Lee’s remaining columns offered little in terms of opinion and, in turn, lacked historical significance. In the February 23, 1961, edition of his column, Lee looked towards the “Golden Giants” game against Belmont Abbey, which was not until March 3, 1961, and the team’s opportunity to play past members of the MSC basketball squad at the college’s yearly alumni game.<sup>258</sup> After Lewis’ comments to UPI went public and the coach’s subsequent denial appeared in the pages of the *Hattiesburg American*, Lee, rather than writing a column on the controversy, focused on the level of excitement provided by the

game against Belmont Abbey.<sup>259</sup> In total, the work of Lee expressed little to no opinion on the unwritten law and offered no social support for the “Golden Giants.” Based on his forum and the opportunity to offer opinion-based commentary to his audience, the *American* sports editor ignored the issue and, in turn, effectively served both the Hedermans and the Closed Society.

As for fellow sports scribes and Jackson-based journalists Walters and Hederman of the *Clarion-Ledger* and Baker of the *Jackson Daily News*, the triad failed to provide interesting and significant commentary on the MSC season and, ultimately, supported the unwritten law and the Closed Society.

Walters, considered one of the deans of Mississippi sports journalism, first wrote of Lewis’ “Golden Giants” in his February 2, 1961, edition of “Shavin’s.” After the team pushed its record to 13-1, Walters wrote that the MSC contingent was making a strong case to be considered the best small-college team in the nation.<sup>260</sup> Southern was ranked third at the time. Despite his claim that MSC should have sat atop the college basketball world, Walters made no mention of postseason opportunities for the “Golden Giants.”

Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* also noted Southern’s place in the UPI poll, writing that Lewis told the Jackson sports editor that he was pleased with MSC’s status in the ranks of small-college basketball. “Without a conference championship to win or a chance to play in any of the postseason tournaments for us, the polls give the boys something to play for,” Lewis told Baker, acknowledging that the MSC coach was aware that the unwritten law could keep his team at home.<sup>261</sup> Less than a month later, Lewis would openly attack the NCAA and the unwritten law for his team’s absence from the postseason.

After Southern’s victory over Jacksonville University, Walters wrote that the Southerners “proved once again Saturday night that they are not ‘wilters’ by staging a hot last-half rally for a convincing 72-62 victory over the strong Jacksonville University Dolphins.”<sup>262</sup>

In the February 7, 1961, edition of “Baker’s Dozen,” Baker acknowledged the unwritten law and Southern’s perceived inability to play against integrated foes. After writing that Memphis State had accepted an invitation to play in the integrated National Invitational Tournament at the conclusion of the season, Baker wrote, “Too bad Southern’s Golden Giants can’t accept such a bid . . . and get another shot at the Tigs, perhaps.”<sup>263</sup> While on the surface Baker’s commentary seemed progressive, like a number of his fellow sports writers, his commentary rang hollow. Baker assumed that the unwritten law would keep MSC in Hattiesburg, thus his empathetic wish that a postseason opportunity would be available to the Southerners was meaningless.

In the February 13, 1961, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Walters focused the bulk of his work on the upcoming Mississippi State-Kentucky game. In the last section of his column, Walters congratulated Lewis and his team on their 19-1 record. Walters wrote that the Giants’ victory “proved to the satisfaction of this writer, at least, that Southern deserves to be in the No. 1 spot in the nation among the so-called ‘small college’ squads.”<sup>264</sup> Citing the team’s comeback against the Buccaneers, Walters wrote, “It takes a champion to win when the going is rough.” While Walters claimed that Southern should have been number one in the nation, the seasoned sports writer hardly made a convincing case. Like Lee’s argument, justification for the national second-place perception of Lewis’ team could have easily come from the unwritten law and Southern’s lack of integrated foes. Walters’ contention could have been stronger had he pointed to an obvious conclusion: An NCAA tournament appearance for the Hattiesburg-based Southerners. Rather, Walters made a somewhat hollow claim without demonstrating any knowledge of the other independent small college teams and MSC’s basketball worth in comparison.

*Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Hederman followed Walters’ commentary by making a similar argument for a number-one ranking for the “Golden Giants” in his February 15, 1961, edition of “Highlights In Sports.” However, unlike his fellow Jackson-based sports scribes,

Hederman based his case on number one Tennessee State's four losses compared to MSC's single defeat at the hands of a ranked Memphis State team. "So, why shouldn't the team be right there on top? We can't see why they are not roosting right there in that No. 1 spot at this time," Hederman wrote.<sup>265</sup> Hederman would also cite the accomplishments of Lewis and his two-year record of 42-3 and the team's balanced scoring attack. "So, from all the info we have on hand and from other sources, we still figure that Southern should be atop the smaller college standings," he wrote. Like Walters, Hederman avoided the obvious justification for MSC's second-place status: the lack of integrated foes on the Golden Giants' schedule. Also, while the *Ledger's* sports editor deserved more credit than Walters in that he at least provided some information on the team and its players, Hederman still did not demonstrate any sort of knowledge on the small college basketball scene and MSC's opposition, even admitting that the team should be number one based on information from others who followed the Giants. In total, Hederman blindly cited numbers and offered little context to his argument.

In light of MSC's second-place status in the national UPI basketball poll, Baker wrote in his February 16, 1961, column that Lewis was pleased with his team's gradual move towards the top spot. Citing the Giants' gain in points in the UPI poll, Lewis told Baker, "I can't see how Tennessee State stays in first place week after week even after losing four games. . . . I sure do wish I knew how some of those votes are going though."<sup>266</sup> Baker never acknowledged the lack of integrated teams on MSC's season schedule as a feasible reason for its second place status.

After the "Golden Giants" crushed Delta State, Baker, who also covered the contest for the *Jackson Daily News*, wrote on February 24, 1961, that MSC would be an inspired squad going into their rematch with Centenary. Despite the difficult task of going on the road, Baker wrote that "the Giants both want revenge so much they can think of little else" and predicted an MSC victory.<sup>267</sup> What was more significant in terms of MSC and postseason play was Baker's comments on the selection of 10-15 Evansville College to the small college

NCAA tournament. Baker quipped that tournament officials were “hard up for teams when it takes Evansville with a 10-15 record for a regional.”<sup>268</sup> Despite his derogatory comments, Baker never referenced or argued for MSC’s selection into the small college national title tournament despite the obvious merits of its 22-2 record. Rather, Baker’s silence suggested support for the unwritten law and the Closed Society in general.

Howie also chimed in on the MSC’s excellent season with a cartoon in the February 27, 1961, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* going into the team’s contest with Centenary. Howie depicted a “Golden Giant” telling a Centenary “Gentleman,” complete with a tuxedo, top hat, and a monocle, “That ‘Gentlemen’ Business Ain’t Foolin’ Me This Time!”<sup>269</sup> Howie’s work did not reference any aspirations of a national title for MSC or the unwritten law.

Meanwhile, in the *Clarion-Ledger*, Hederman focused on *The Weekly Basketball Record*’s work on Lewis and his team, which the magazine identified as one of the best teams in the nation. Hederman said Mississippi Southern’s 23-2 record was a noteworthy accomplishment, but like the MSU debate, never mentioned the prospects for an NCAA bid for Mississippi Southern.<sup>270</sup>

At the conclusion of the “Golden Giants” 1960-61 campaign, Baker wrote about the team’s record-breaking season and what the future would hold for Lewis’ team. In looking at the team’s 46-5 record over the previous two seasons, Baker wrote, “To be precise, there’s no other college around the state anywhere close to that record. . . . The past two (seasons) have been so brilliant, as a matter of fact, that the question now looms large on what new worlds remain to be conquered? Major college status perhaps would be the most welcome thing still left to achieve. That and a chance at gaining national recognition by playing in the likes of Madison Square Garden or delivered exquisitely under a major tournament.”<sup>271</sup> Baker, in direct acknowledgement of the unwritten law, advised proponents of the gentleman’s agreement, including the disgruntled Lewis, to exercise patience. “The limbo in which

Mississippi athletic teams currently finds themselves will not go on forever,” Baker wrote. “The opportunities now being lost never can be recaptured but the day will come when new chances can be grasped. It is for that time that Fred Lewis can continue his building of basketball at Mississippi Southern.”<sup>272</sup>

To some extent, the lack of an invitation on behalf of the NCAA let a lot of individuals in Mississippi, including the sports press, off the hook for having to address the merits of accepting or rejecting said invitation. Baker, who never argued for Mississippi State’s participation in the NCAA tournament, seemed to make a bold and encouraging statement to the masses. However, Baker never openly supported MSC’s presence in the postseason because that opportunity was never extended, making it somewhat easy for the Jackson-based sports editor to offer such encouraging commentary.

After Southern’s season-ending victory over Belmont Abbey 56-54, the *Clarion-Ledger’s* Walters briefly congratulated Lewis and his team in the March 6, 1961, edition of “Shavin’s.”<sup>273</sup> The NCAA controversy surrounding Lewis and his “Golden Giants” was never referenced, ending the work of the Hederman empire on the MSC contingent.

In Biloxi, Dick Lightsey, in his last ode to both the successful campaigns of the Southerners and the Mississippi State Maroons, wrote it was a shame that neither school would have an opportunity to play in the postseason, although the unwritten law or the banning of integrated athletics was never referenced.<sup>274</sup> Lightsey, who advocated an MSU national championship run in 1959, also addressed Mississippi Southern and its excellent season. In fact, the Biloxi-based sports editor statistically compared Lewis’ “Golden Giants” with the Maroons of MSU and pointed out that Southern was outrebounding the Maroons 856-779 and had a more balanced scoring attack as five “Golden Giants” averaged double figures in points compared to three for MSU. Lightsey stopped short of claiming that the Hattiesburg contingent was the superior basketball team in the Magnolia State.<sup>275</sup>

While not identifying any sort of postseason aspirations for the “Golden Giants,” Lightsey again discussed the successful season of the Mississippi Southern team against that of Mississippi State. Lightsey called the MSC’s season remarkable, considering the team had played 13 of their 19 games on the road and had only a single loss on their record. Lightsey also dismissed any chance the team had at the small college national title, writing that it was a shame that neither the “Golden Giants” nor the Maroons would play in their respective NCAA tournaments. “Maybe Southern and State should get together after the regular season ends. Such a contest could decide the ‘mythical’ Magnolia State collegiate roundball championship.”<sup>276</sup>

After the Southerners ran their record to 17-1, Lightsey mentioned that Lewis told the Biloxi sports editor that a representative with the National Invitational Tournament watched the team work out at Madison Square Garden earlier in the season while the Southerners were on an eastern road trip. Lewis told Lightsey that the representative wanted to extend an invitation to the postseason tournament to MSC, but “because Mississippi teams, by unwritten law, are not allowed to participate against teams with Negro members, the invitation will not be extended.”<sup>277</sup> Although he did not advocate an appearance in the integrated tournament, Lightsey closed by writing, “Southern would really be a sleeper in the NIT.”<sup>278</sup>

Like Baker and Walters, Lightsey also took issue with the ranking of Southern in the national wire service polls. In his February 16, 1961, edition of “Bunts, Boots and Bounces,” Lightsey wrote that while the 19-1 “Golden Giants” were not considered a “major college basketball power,” the work of Lewis and his two-year record of 42-3 would change national perceptions. Lightsey added that scheduling big name schools to play MSC would be difficult considering the team’s winning ways. Lightsey then advocated a Southern and Mississippi State match-up at the conclusion of their respective campaigns “since Southern and State will not be allowed to complete in postseason tournaments.”<sup>279</sup> Again, rather than lobby for

postseason play for the Southerners as he did in the past for Mississippi State, Lightsey safely assumed that the opportunity for integrated competition and championship laurels was non-existent. Much like his commentary on the Maroons' 1960-61 season, overall, his middle-of-the-road approach did little to usher in changes in the Closed Society.

*Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray did not address MSC's stellar campaign until the team defeated Belmont Abbey in the season finale. While Ray wrote of the merits of the Golden Giants' 23-3 record and the outstanding play of "the magnificent seven," Ray also cited UPI's account of Lewis' comments towards the NCAA and the unwritten law. Under the heading, "Southern Coach Blasts NCAA," Ray wrote that Lewis "laid it on the line in not too friendly tones to the National Collegiate Athletic Association for not inviting his Mississippi Southern cagers to the small college basketball tournament."<sup>280</sup> However, Ray then repeated verbatim the material in the UPI account and failed to offer an opinion on the matter either way, a surprising move for one who was so outspoken on Mississippi State's rejection of the 1958-59 NCAA tournament bid.

The *Jackson State Times*' Jimmie McDowell, a longtime supporter of integrated competition in the Magnolia State, took a similar position when it came to the "Golden Giants." McDowell first wrote of the Southerners in the February 3, 1961, edition of his daily column. The *State Times* sports editor identified the team's 15-1 record as being a point of excitement, but wrote the lack of attention being played to Lewis' squad was based on the team's schedule.

"Unfortunately, the only 'name' teams the Southern cagers have met this year are Alabama and Memphis State. It's too bad that with such a fine group of players the team didn't get a chance to go against true first-rate nationally or sectionally recognized opposition. It's a tragedy indeed that this team won't likely get the opportunity to compete on a national tournament level. As it is, they apparently will be remembered as true giants among mere boys," McDowell wrote.<sup>281</sup>



While McDowell's commentary was the first to deal with postseason play and Mississippi Southern, the *State Times* sports editor's assumption that the possibilities of national tournament play was already out of reach damaged its progressive persona.

In the February 5, 1961, edition of the *State Times*, McDowell again discussed the merits of Mississippi Southern's basketball team by claiming that the team was justifiably overlooked with its omission from the Sugar Bowl Basketball Tournament, which extended an invitation to Mississippi State's Maroons from Starkville. McDowell again blamed the team's schedule, calling the Southerners' opponents "minor league." McDowell also sympathized with the "Golden Giants" leader. "Surely it is a frustrating thing for Fred Lewis and his hoopsters. They'd give their eye teeth for a chance to win recognition for their school, but because they cannot compete on a national level and are not invited to top tournaments because of their 'small college' status, it's a real headknocker-against-a-brick-wall setup."<sup>282</sup> McDowell did not identify the unwritten law as the reason the team could not play in national tournaments.

In the February 10, 1961, edition of the *State Times*, McDowell wrote that MSU leader James "Babe" McCarthy told him that Lewis "had done an excellent job this year" and characterized McCarthy's opinion of Lewis' work as exceptional.<sup>283</sup> Unlike the aforementioned February 7, 1961, column, McDowell did not advocate an NIT or NCAA tournament appearance for the "Golden Giants."

McDowell would later take the UPI polls to task for the ranking of the 19-1 "Golden Giants" behind 19-4 Tennessee State, which was in the midst of a three game losing streak. Calling the Southerners one of the best small-college basketball teams in the country, McDowell wrote, "Once again, it proves what a hill a Mississippi team has to climb where national honors are concerned."<sup>284</sup> McDowell, who a week earlier advocated a postseason appearance and integrated competition for the Mississippi Southern squad, appeared to be making a vague reference to the unwritten law and the national perception that, without

integrated foes on their schedules, sports teams in Mississippi would continue to fight an image issue from outside the state.

After Southern lost to Centenary, McDowell seemed baffled at the Southerners' place in the UPI poll, which continued to put a four-loss Tennessee State team in first place, ahead of MSC. "How four-times spanked Tennessee A&I [State] can still rate ahead of Southern, Prairie View or Rostra or even thrice-whipped Southern Illinois is beyond comprehension," McDowell wrote.<sup>285</sup> However, much like his fellow sports writers, McDowell's questioning of the polls could logically be answered by the absence of integrated schools on the Southerners' schedule.

Going into MSC's final against Belmont Abbey and after the announcement of the pairing for the small-college NCAA tournament, McDowell discussed neither, focusing more on Centenary's dominance over the "Golden Giants," writing that the Gents were simply a better team due to their two victories over the Hattiesburg contingent. Although McDowell had, on a number of occasions, advocated integrated competition and a tournament berth for the "Golden Giants," he failed to address Lewis' comments on the perceived snub from the NCAA and the unwritten law.

Even the *Student Printz* of Mississippi Southern College expressed an opinion on the "Golden Giants'" season but did not address the NCAA tournament and the Southerners' subsequent snub until after the team's season finale. Going into the contest against Belmont Abbey, sports editor James Cleveland wrote that the "brash" team from North Carolina would be a tough task for the MSC contingent, which would "doubtlessly be in hot water again."<sup>286</sup> Cleveland recognized that Belmont had received and accepted an NCAA small college tournament bid but failed to comment on the absence of MSC or Lewis' comments. The same could be said for a staff editorial that appeared in the following edition of the *Printz*, which noted the improved show of school spirit at MSC's final contest of the season.<sup>287</sup>

In a single acknowledgment of the small college NCAA tournament in his March 10, 1961, column, Cleveland wrote, “The spellbinding 56-54 Southern victory over the skyscraperic Crusaders will be remembered too. Southern will get valuable publicity when announcers at the NCAA tourney recount the slight spanking handed their tough entry by the Golden Giants.”<sup>288</sup> While Cleveland’s commentary could have been interpreted as criticism aimed towards the NCAA’s selection of Belmont Abbey and the absence of the “Golden Giants,” the *Printz*’ sports editor never directly addressed the NCAA decision nor argued for MSC’s presence in postseason play. The student newspaper also failed to publish any articles and/or commentary dealing with Lewis’ remarks on the NCAA tournament or the unwritten law. While Cleveland’s views on race relations in the Magnolia State were never explicitly stated in the pages of the *Student Printz*, the student editor once wrote in support of changing the team’s name from Southerners to “Golden Giants” that he loved “Mississippi, segregation, conservative government and cornbread.”<sup>289</sup>

#### Conclusion

The 1960-61 season for both the Maroons of Mississippi State and the “Golden Giants” of Mississippi Southern College ended in the same manner and with the same lingering questions as past challenges to the unwritten law. Regardless of whether or not it was written opposition to both Mississippi State and Mississippi Southern or an objection through silence, in total, Mississippi’s journalists did little to challenge the gentleman’s agreement and, again, acted as an extension of the Closed Society. Of greater significance to the history of the sports scribes in the Magnolia State was the continued emergence of McDowell as a progressive voice in state journalism. Regardless of his motives or beliefs, “Mississippi Red” tried to give the Magnolia State a perspective counter to that of the Closed Society, often leaning on logic and reason as justification. While McDowell never fought, specifically, for integration, his commentary and opposition to the unwritten law still merits a greater historic place in the annals of the Magnolia State for “Mississippi Red.”

Mississippi was on the verge of entering a very tumultuous time in U.S. history as the impending challenge of James Meredith and his admission to the University of Mississippi would force a gradual social and ideological change in the white-dominated state. All the while, Mississippi State would again challenge the unwritten law and the Closed Society. While McDowell would leave the state in 1962, other sports scribes would take up his fight and, again, pose a legitimate threat to the Closed Society.

---

<sup>1</sup> John Garcia, "Babe Is Coach Of The Year," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 3B; "McCarthy Again 'Coach of Year,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 10; and John Garcia, "Babe McCarthy SEC Coach Of The Year," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1961, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Trotter, "Let's Make It Golden Giants," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 13 January 1961, 2. The *Student Printz* editor, in debating the merits of the school's nickname "The Southerners," argued for *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker's MSC basketball moniker, "The Golden Giants." Trotter wrote, "Lee Baker gave them the nickname and it's stuck." While MSC and later, the University of Southern Mississippi would never adopt the "Golden Giants" name; the school would change its mascot and nickname to the "Golden Eagles."

<sup>3</sup> "Team Snubbed, Says MSC's Fred Lewis," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 4B.

<sup>4</sup> "Trip Of Decision Awaiting Gators," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 February 1961, 10; "Miss. State Could Wrap Up SEC, Florida On Road," *Commercial Dispatch*, 2 February 1961, 2B; "Maroons To Host LSU Tigers On Saturday," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 February 1961, 2; "Tigers Invade MSU On Saturday Night," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 February 1961, 2; and "State Faces Rugged LSU Tigers Saturday," *Jackson State Times*, 2 February 1961, 4C.

<sup>5</sup> "State can clinch SEC title at home," *Meridian Star*, 4 February 1961, 5; "Maroons To Open Final Home Stand," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 February 1961, 29; "Maroons Open Crucial Home Stand Against LSU Tonight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1961, 5; "Maroons Hope To Regain SEC Cage Lead Saturday By Beating LSU Tigers," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 February 1961, 22; "It's a 'Must Win' For State Over LSU Tigers Saturday," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 February 1961, 17; Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State and Florida in key SEC battles tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 February, 1961, 6; Vernon Butler, "Maroons, Gators Tie For First In SEC Conference," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 4 February 1961, 8; "Tigers Invade MSU On Saturday Night," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 February 1961, 2; Vernon Butler, "MSU Aims at Tigers 4-Game Win Streak," *Starkville Daily News*, 4 February 1961, 2; "Tigers, MSU Battle It Out Here Tonight," *Starkville Daily News*, 4 February 1961, 2; "Maroons And Rebs Await Louisianans," *Jackson State Times*, 3 February 1961, 4B; and David M. Moffit, "SEC Lead At Stake Tonight," *Jackson State Times*, 4 February 1961, 4A.

<sup>6</sup> Lee Baker, "Maroons All Alone Atop SEC; They Win And Gators Don't," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1961, 1B; George Anderson, "Maroons Take SEC Lead, Rebels Lose," *Jackson State Times*, 5 February 1961, 1D; "State Moves Back Into

---

Lead in SEC,” *Meridian Star*, 5 February 1961, 1; “State Is All Alone in First Place,” *Meridian Star*, 5 February 1961, 8; “Maroons Are Out Front in SEC Basketball Race,” *Meridian Star*, 6 February 1961, 11; Bobby Lollar, “Maroons Move Step Closer To Conference Title, Rap LSU Tigers 77-61,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 February 1961, 8; and “Steamed-Up Maroons Cool Tigers,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 February 1961, 13.

<sup>7</sup> Lee Baker, “Maroons All Alone Atop SEC; They Win And Gators Don’t,” *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1961, 1B.

<sup>8</sup> “MSU Tops Tigers As Florida Falls Back,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 February 1961, 2.

<sup>9</sup> “Maroons Riding High In SEC Cage Chase,” *Jackson State Times*, 6 February 1961, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Van Savell, “Ole Miss vs. Kentucky State’s Top Attraction,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 February 1961, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Bobby Lollar, “Maroons To Face Tulane In Crucial SEC Battle,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 February 1961, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ross M. Hagen, “Maroons All Alone Atop SEC Standings,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1961, 18; Ross M. Hagen, “State Meets Tulane Tonight In Big One,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 February 1961, 5; and Ross M. Hagen, “Maroons Rule Conference Lead; Meet Tulane Greenies Tonight,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 6 February 1961, 5.

<sup>13</sup> “Maroons Move Away In Conference Basketball Race,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 February 1961, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Wins Again; Vols Top Florida,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1961, 11; “State Stretches SEC Lead; Rebels Bow to LSU Tigers,” *Meridian Star*, 7 February 1961, 10; Vernon Butler, “Mississippi State Widens Lead In SEC Cage Warfare,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 February 1961, 14; Vernon Butler, “State Presents McCarthy 100<sup>th</sup> Victory,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 February 1961, 8; Vernon Butler, “Maroons Hand Coach McCarthy 100<sup>th</sup> Win; Heads For SEC Title,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 7 February 1961, 5; and “2<sup>nd</sup> Division SEC Clubs Battle Tonight,” *Jackson State Times*, 7 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>15</sup> Lee Baker, “Maroons Power By Green Wave,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1961, 7, 8.

<sup>16</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, “Time Out For Sports,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 February 1961, 2.

<sup>17</sup> “Maroons Seek 10<sup>th</sup> Straight Win on Home Court Saturday Night,” *Meridian Star*, 8 February 1961, 10; “Maroons Reach Crucial Stage,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 February 1961, 10; “Nine-Game Win Streak To Be Placed On Line When Maroons Meet Tennessee,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 February 1961, 18; “Maroons Close Season At Home,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 9 February 1961, 10; “Vols, Wildcats Will Close Out MSU Stand,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 February 1961, 2; and “Maroons Wait On The Vols,” *Jackson State Times*, 9 February 1961, 9A.

<sup>18</sup> David M. Moffit, “State Cagers End Home Play with Tennessee and Kentucky,” *Meridian Star*, 9 February 1961, 7.

- 
- <sup>19</sup> David M. Moffit, "Maroons Seek Eight Straight Win in SEC Play," *Meridian Star*, 11 February 1961, 6.
- <sup>20</sup> Vernon Butler, "Kentucky-Rebs In Jackson; Vols at State," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 February 1961, 3; and Vernon Butler, "Vandy, Florida Take To Road Over Weekend," *Starkville Daily News*, 11 February 1961, 2.
- <sup>21</sup> David M. Moffit, "State Ready For Clutch Home Stand," *Jackson State Times*, 9 February 1961, 11A; "SEC's Leaders Play at Home," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1961, 1D; and "Kentucky Cagers Fight For Spot in NCAA Play," *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1961, 15.
- <sup>22</sup> "Kentucky Still Eyeing NCAA Crown Despite Poor Record," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 February 1961, 6.
- <sup>23</sup> Ed Tunstall, "Success Story for Babe, State," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 February 1961, 9; Ed Tunstall, "Babe McCarthy Does OK For Country Boy," *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 9 February 1961, 18; "Babe McCarthy Coaches Maroons To SEC Lead," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 9 February 1961, 6; Ed Tunstall, "McCarthy Says He Treats His Boys As Human Beings," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 February 1961, 17; and Ed Tunstall, "Babe McCarthy Coaches Winners From Long Way," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 9 February 1961, 7.
- <sup>24</sup> Ed Tunstall, "Success Story for Babe, State," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 February 1961, 9.
- <sup>25</sup> Ed Tunstall, "Maroon Coach Takes 'em As They 'Come,'" *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1961, 21.
- <sup>26</sup> Lee Baker and Robert Fulton, "'Tucky Mutilates Rebs; Maroons Hold Off Vols," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1961, 1B.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid; Billy Rainey, "State Maroons Win," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1961, 8; "State Stops Tennessee 72-67 Maintaining SEC Lead Pace," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 February 1961, 10; and George Anderson, "Rebs Bow To 'Cats; Maroons Top Vols," *Jackson State Times*, 12 February 1961, 1D.
- <sup>28</sup> David M. Moffit, "Maroons Face Mighty Challenge From 'Cats," *Jackson State Times*, 13 February 1961, 4B; and "Kentucky invades Mississippi State," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1961, 8.
- <sup>29</sup> Don Weiss "College Basketball Moves into Showdown Week," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1961, 8A.
- <sup>30</sup> "Rupp Setting Sights on Mississippi St.," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1961, 13.
- <sup>31</sup> Robert Fulton, "Maroons and Kentucky Collide At State Tonight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1961, 11.
- <sup>32</sup> Scotty Hargrove, "MSU Nearing Second SEC Basketball Title," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1961, 2.

- 
- <sup>33</sup> Bobby Lollar, "Babe vs. Baron Tonight As Maroons Host 'Cats," *Commercial Dispatch*, 13 February 1961, 3.
- <sup>34</sup> Ross M. Hagen, "State, Kentucky Collide Tonight In Key SEC Cage Contest At State College," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1961, 15; "'Tucky Gunning For State Tonight," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1961, 10; "State-Kentucky Game Tonight At Starkville Is Tops In SEC," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 13 February 1961, 7; Ross M. Hagen, "Maroons Rule Conference Roost; To Meet Kentucky Wildcats Next," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 13 February 1961, 5; Ross M. Hagen, "Maroons and Kentucky In SEC spotlight tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1961, 8A; and "Rupp Seeks To Avoid Being Ninth Victim," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1961, 2.
- <sup>35</sup> "Vandy, LSU, Florida Tied For 2<sup>nd</sup> In Hot SEC Roundball Race," *Jackson State Times*, 14 February 1961, 5B; and "Maroons Hold Tight Grip on First Despite Defeat," *Meridian Star*, 14 February 1961, 7.
- <sup>36</sup> Lee Baker, "Kentucky Breaks State Win Streak," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 February 1961, 10.
- <sup>37</sup> Robert Fulton, "'Tucky Wildcats Upset SEC Leading Maroons," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1961, 13.
- <sup>38</sup> Vernon Butler, "'Tucky Wins But State Loses No Ground," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 February 1961, 8; Vernon Butler, "Kentucky Wildcats Beat Maroons; Leaves Conference In Tight Race," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 14 February 1961, 7; and Vernon Butler, "Wildcats Hand MSU First Defeat, 68-62," *Hattiesburg American*, 14 February 1961, 11.
- <sup>39</sup> Hugh Fullerton, Jr. "Mississippi State, Kansas State Bow, But Buckeyes Continue Winning Ways," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 February 1961, 15; Bobby Lollar, "Maroons Bow To Kentucky: District Tournaments Start Wednesday," *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 February 1961, 3; and Scotty Hargrove, "Kentucky Colonels Defeat High Flying Maroons," *Starkville Daily News*, 14 February 1961, 5.
- <sup>40</sup> "Vandy, LSU, Florida Tied For 2<sup>nd</sup> In Hot SEC Roundball Race," *Jackson State Times*, 14 February 1961, 5B; and "Maroons Hold Tight Grip on First Despite Defeat," *Meridian Star*, 14 February 1961, 7.
- <sup>41</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Rupp Blasts State Students' Antics," *Jackson State Times*, 14 February 1961, 4B; "Rupp Blasts Miss. State After Win," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1961, 13; and "Conduct of Students at Mississippi State Criticized by Rupp," *Meridian Star*, 14 February 1961, 1.
- <sup>42</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Rupp Blasts State Students' Antics," *Jackson State Times*, 14 February 1961, 4B.
- <sup>43</sup> "Behavior At State Cage Tilts Blasted," *Jackson State Times*, 19 February 1961, 2D; "Walker Apologizes To Kentucky U. For State Game Conduct," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 February 1961, 8; and "State Apologizes To Kentucky For Student Behavior," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1961, 10.

---

<sup>44</sup> Jack Wardlaw, "Wildcat Defense Too Much for MSU Sophs; State Holds Loop Lead," *Meridian Star*, 14 February 1961, 7.

<sup>45</sup> "SEC Chase Gets Wilder," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 February 1961, 10; and "Wildcats Take First Half Lead To Get Win," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 14 February 1961, 5.

<sup>46</sup> "Maroon Touring Starts Saturday," *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1961, 12, 13; "SEC's Top Miss. State Begins Long Run," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 16 February 1961, 6; and "No. 2 Team in SEC Gets the NCAA Bid," *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1961, 2.

<sup>47</sup> "Babe McCarthy Rewarded; MSU Signs Donahue," *Meridian Star*, 16 February 1961, 1; "Babe McCarthy is given new four-year contract," *Meridian Star*, 17 February 1961, 8; "Board Boosts Babe's Pact 2 More Years," *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1961, 13; "Babe McCarthy Given Two-Year Extension," *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1961, 17; and "McCarthy Gets New Contract," *Starkville Daily News*, 18 February 1961, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "New Contract For McCarthy," *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1961, 1C.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> David M. Moffit, "State Invades Florida To Play SEC Feature," *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1961, 8; David M. Moffit, "Maroons Set For Crucial Road Jaunt," *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1961, 5C; and "Maroons Out to Break Gators' Home Win Streak," *Meridian Star*, 18 February 1961, 6.

<sup>51</sup> David M. Moffit, "Kentucky Moves Back Into NCAA Spotlight," *Jackson State Times*, 20 February 1961, 4B; David M. Moffit, "Strange Bounces Around SEC, Kentucky Contender," *Commercial Dispatch*, 20 February 1961, 3; "Kentucky in the running for NCAA berth," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1961, 10; David M. Moffit, "Maroons Considered Cinch To Win Crown," *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1961, 3B; and David M. Moffit, "Maroons Can Win SEC Title Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1961, 8.

<sup>52</sup> "State Moves Out on Road," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1961, 8; "MSU In Crucial Games With Georgia, Florida," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 17 February 1961, 7; "State Five Hits Road For Crucial SEC Tilts," *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1961, 20; "State Begins Long Season Trip To Wind Up Season," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 18 February 1961, 11; "Road Running Maroons Tangle With Tough Gators," *Commercial Dispatch*, 17 February 1961, 6; "Maroons Are Set To Travel," *Jackson State Times*, 15 February 1961, 1C; and "Maroons Face Florida, Georgia In Cage Tilts," *Starkville Daily News*, 16 February 1961, 2.

<sup>53</sup> Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Faces Florida Five In Key SEC Contest," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi) 18 February 1961, 11; Vernon Butler, "SEC Spotlight Tonight On Miss. State-Gator Contest," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 18 February 1961, 3; "Uneasy Maroons Invading Gators," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 February 1961, 2; and Vernon Butler, "Uneasy Maroons Play Florida Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 18 February 1961, 11.

<sup>54</sup> Vernon Butler, "Kentucky Making Big Comeback Bid," *Hattiesburg American*, 22 February 1961, 4B; "Kentucky Eyes NCAA Berth," *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1961,



9; "Rupp's Cats Stay In NCAA Contention," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1961, 10; Vernon Butler, "LSU Could Narrow Maroons' SEC Lead With Win Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 25 February 1961, 12; Vernon Butler, "Cold, Cold Road For State And Florida Tonight As Kentucky, Vandy Eye NCAA," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 25 February 1961, 3; and Vernon Butler, "Top Maroons To Meet LSU," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 25 February 1961, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Ross M. Hagen, "Florida Dumps State In Key SEC Contest; Shakes Up Standings," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi) 19 February 1961, 14; "Mississippi State Takes Second Defeat Of Southeastern Season 59-57," *Commercial Dispatch*, 19 February 1961, 8; "Gators Edge State 59-57," *Vicksburg Sunday Post*, 19 February 1961, 12; Ross M. Hagen, "SEC Title Up For Grabs As State Falter," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1961, 6; Ross M. Hagen, "Maroons Lose Second In Row; Race On For Number One Spot," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 20 February 1961, 5; and Ross M. Hagen, "Maroons Falter Against Florida," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1961, 5B.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew J. Reese, Jr., "Gators defeat Maroons, 59-57," *Meridian Star*, 19 February 1961, 10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Vernon Butler, "Florida Gators Still Alive in SEC By Topping Maroons," *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1961, 11; "SEC Cage Battle Growing Hotter," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1961, 10; "SEC Race Goes Down To Wire," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 20 February 1961, 8; Vernon Butler, "Maroons protect one-game edge," *Hattiesburg American*, 21 February 1961, 11; and Vernon Butler, "Reports of Gators' Death In SEC Wrong," *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1961, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Bob Howie, "Athens Cliff Hanger," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1961, 10.

<sup>60</sup> Scott Hargrove, "State Maroons Seeking Victory Over Georgia," *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1961, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Bobby Lollar, "Maroons Meet Georgia Lead SEC by One Game," *Commercial Dispatch*, 20 February 1961, 3.

<sup>62</sup> Scotty Hargrove, "Maroons Keep Lead In SEC with Victory," *Starkville Daily News*, 21 February 1961, 2; "Maroons defeat Georgia; Florida edges Ole Miss," *Meridian Star*, 21 February 1961, 16; Lee Baker, "Maroons March Through Georgia," *Jackson Daily News*, 21 February 1961, 9; "Maroons Stay Ahead As Graves Scores 34," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 21 February 1961, 5; Scott Hargrove, "Maroons Run Again; Rout Georgia 'Dogs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1961, 32; Vernon Butler, "Florida Bumps Ole Miss in Overtime, Stays Second," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 21 February 1961, 18; "Maroons Defeat Bulldogs, Florida Eases By Rebels," *Commercial Dispatch*, 21 February 1961, 7; Vernon Butler, "State Keeps SEC Lead, Trounce Georgia," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 21 February 1961, 8; Vernon Butler, "Florida Gators Take Top Spot in Conference," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 21 February 1961, 5; Hugh Fullerton, Jr., "Jerry Graves Scores 34 points To Lead Maroons Over Bulldogs," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 21 February 1961, 5; and "Graves Leads State; Florida Edges Rebs," *Jackson State Times*, 21 February 1961, 5B.

<sup>63</sup> United Press International, "Kentucky Wildcats," *Meridian Star*, 22 February 1961, 16.

<sup>64</sup> Ross M. Hagen, "'Tucky Stands Better Than Even Chance To Represent SEC In Big NCAA Tourney," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 23 February 1961, 15; Ross M. Hagen, "Kentucky Cats Moves Toward Tourney Play," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 23 February 1961, 5; and "Kentucky May Be SEC's Team in NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 23 February 1961, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Martin Lader, "Baron May Have Last Laugh Yet," *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>66</sup> "Maroons Go Into Bayous," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1961, 10; "State Five Plays Pair Of Key SEC Road Tilts," *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1961, 14; "State Maroons Need Two More Cage Wins To Claim SEC Title," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 24 February 1961, 19; "Maroons Embark On Trip To Determine Loop Play," 24 February 1961, 6; "State Begins Crucial Two Game Trip Into Louisiana," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 24 February 1961, 9; "State Cagers Ready For Louisiana Trip," *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1961, 3D; and "MSU Needs Two Wins To Clinch SEC Title," *Starkville Daily News*, 23 February 1961, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Fulton, "Mitchell's Jump Shot Knocks Off LSU, 56-54," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1961, 1B; "Maroons rally, edge LSU, 56-54," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1961, 8; "Lee High Finishes Basketball Play; Maroons Defeat Tigers 56-54," *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February 1961, 8; "Maroons Nip Tigers 56-54," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 26 February 1961, 11; "Vandy Tames Gators to Tie for Second Place," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1961, 8; and "State Nips LSU; Wave Tops OM," *Jackson State Times*, 26 February 1961, 1D.

<sup>68</sup> Hugh Schutte, "State Downs LSU, Clinches At Least A tie For SEC Cage Crown; Faces Green Wave," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1961, 19; Hugh Schutte, "Maroons Out To Wrap-Up SEC Title Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1961, 6; Hugh Schutte, "Three-Way Playoff Expected Now For Spot In Basketball Tourney," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 27 February 1961, 5; and Hugh Schutte, "Maroons Cinch Tie for Championship," *Hattiesburg American*, 27 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>69</sup> Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Grabs Share of SEC Title Saturday," *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1961, 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> "Vandy Tames Gators to Tie for Second Place," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1961, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Fulton, "Mitchell's Jump Shot Knocks Off LSU, 56-54," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1961, 1B.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Fulton, "State Defeats Tulane 62-57 To Clinch SEC Cage Crown," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1961, 11.

<sup>74</sup> "Governor Wires Congratulations to Maroon Five," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1961, 11.

---

<sup>75</sup> “State Nips Tulane 62-57 For SEC Title,” *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1961, 1C.

<sup>76</sup> “Maroons are SEC Champions,” *Meridian Star*, 28 February 1961, 9; “Mississippi State Wins Southeastern Crown By Edging Tulane 62-57,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1961, 7; and “Battle For Second Gets SEC Spotlight,” *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1961, 5C.

<sup>77</sup> Phil Wallace, “All’s Gold, Glory On Maroons Now,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 9; and Phil Wallace, “Babe Call Team Real Champions,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 9.

<sup>78</sup> “Mississippi State Grabs SEC Championship In 62-57 Win,” *Starkville Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 2.

<sup>79</sup> “Florida Falts In Bid For 2<sup>nd</sup> Spot,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 10; Vernon Butler, “Mississippi State Maroons Wrap Up SEC Cage Crown,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 February 1961, 14; Vernon Butler, “Gallant 2<sup>nd</sup> Half Effort Gives Maroons Title,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 February 1961, 9; Vernon Butler, “Maroons Take Tulane To Win Conference Title; Florida Loses,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 28 February 1961, 5; and Vernon Butler, “Miss. State wins SEC championship,” *Hattiesburg American*, 28 February 1961, 13.

<sup>80</sup> Gary Kale, “Kentucky May Get Chance At NCAA,” *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1961, 4C; and “Tucky Could Sneak In NCAA,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1961, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Tim Moriarty, “SEC Champs Not On UPI’s Top 27 Teams,” *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1961, 5C. In the article, the top 20 teams in the nation are listed per the coaches’ votes followed by schools that received votes from the coaches but not enough to merit a place in the top 20. Seven schools were listed as receiving votes, hence the top 27 teams.

<sup>82</sup> Berry Reese, “Barnett Says He ‘Will Oppose’ NCAA Play,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 17; “No NCAA meet for State,” *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1961, 14; “Ross Opposes NCAA Playoff Spot For State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 10; and “Barnett Opposes State’s NCAA Cage Participation,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1961, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Berry Reese, “Barnett Says He ‘Will Oppose’ NCAA Play,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 17.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> “Maroons Would Like To Seek NCAA Title,” *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1961, 1-2A.

<sup>86</sup> G. J. Pope, “State Student Begg Ross To Let Team Prove Itself,” *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1961, 1A.

<sup>87</sup> Scott Hargrove, “SEC Champs Welcomed By Hugh Throng,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 11; “Starkville, University Turn Out To Welcome Maroons,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 1, 3; and “SEC Champion Maroons Receive Big Welcomes On Arrival In Mississippi,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 17.

---

<sup>88</sup> “Win Over Maroons Would Add Luster,” *Jackson State Times*, 1 March 1961, 4B; “Ole Miss Hosts State Saturday,” *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1961, 8; and “Rebels Will Be Gunning For Maroon Scalp Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1961, 20.

<sup>89</sup> “Maroons Closing Out In Rebeltown,” and “Reb Season Nearing End,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 9.

<sup>90</sup> “State-Rebels Close Season Tonite,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1961, 9; “Maroons, Rebs Wind Up Season Saturday,” *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 3B; “Ole Miss, State To Close Out Season,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1961, 12; “Maroons Close Out Year Saturday With Ole Miss,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1961, 6; “SEC Champs Hurt In Rebel Game Tonight” *Starkville Daily News*, 4 March 1961, 2; and “Maroons Close Year With Ole Miss Game,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 March 1961, 3.

<sup>91</sup> “SEC Cage Season Climaxes Tonite,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1961, 3; “Who Will Get Tourney Berth Still In Doubt,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 4 March 1961, 8; and “Situation In SEC Odd,” *Starkville Daily News*, 4 March 1961, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Bob Howie, “Shades of 1959,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 9.

<sup>93</sup> John Garcia, “Babe Is Coach Of The Year,” *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 3B; “McCarthy Again ‘Coach of Year,’” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 10; and John Garcia, “Babe McCarthy SEC Coach Of The Year,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1961, 16.

<sup>94</sup> John Garcia, “Babe Is Coach Of The Year,” *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 3B.

<sup>95</sup> “State Falls To Lowly Rebs 74-70,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 March 1961, 15.

<sup>96</sup> Lee Baker, “Rebs Halt Late Rally To Edge State 74-70,” *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1961, 1B.

<sup>97</sup> Tom Donovan, “Rebs Edge By State, 74-70,” *Jackson State Times*, 5 March 1961, 1; and “Maroons End Year In Loss,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1961, 2.

<sup>98</sup> “Playoff in SEC For NCAA Berth,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1961, 1B; “State Is SEC Champion; But Big Tilt Remains,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 1D; “Ole Miss Knocks Off State In Cage Finale Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 March 1961, 18; “Rebels Hand Southeastern Conference Champions 74-70 Licking,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 March 1961, 8; “SEC Play Over Except For Vandy, Tucky,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 March 1961, 6; “Kentucky Meets Vanderbilt In SEC Playoff,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 6 March 1961, 5; and “Vandy meets ‘Cats in playoff game,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 March 1961, 4B.

<sup>99</sup> John Garcia, “Maroons Could Replace ‘Tucky As League Power,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 7 March 1961, 8.

<sup>100</sup> “Kentucky Earns Right To Play In NCAA Battle,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 10 March 1961, 8; “‘Tucky Will Represent State In NCAA,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 March 1961, 8; and “Kentucky Will Challenge Ohio State in NCAA Go,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 March 1961, 10.

---

<sup>101</sup> While there is no known record of the Sovereignty Commission or the Citizens' Council explicitly asking Ward or any other editor to ignore MSU's chances at an NCAA bid in 1961, Robert Patterson of the Citizens' Council did send Ward a letter commending him on the lack of coverage on a 1962 visit from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mississippi. Patterson told Ward he thought "the silent treatment" was an effective strategic move to counter the work of civil rights activists. Mississippi Department of History and Archives. Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission files, SCR ID # 9-11-1-86-1-1-1, [http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital\\_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov\\_commissi on/images/png/cd08/061022.png&otherstuff=9|11|1|86|1|1|1|60207|](http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/sovcom/result.php?image=/data/sov_commissi on/images/png/cd08/061022.png&otherstuff=9|11|1|86|1|1|1|60207|) (accessed on 10 February 2011).

<sup>102</sup> Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse's Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi's Daily Press, 1948-1968* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 36. All of the referenced editors and journalists were still with the listed newspapers in 1961. Leonard Lowery would replace Harmon in 1962.

<sup>103</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 3 February 1961, 3B; and Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 6 February 1961, 10.

<sup>104</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 6 February 1961, 10.

<sup>105</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 7 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>106</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 9 February 1961, 9A.

<sup>107</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 13 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 14 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>110</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 20 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>111</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1961, 3B.

<sup>112</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 2 March 1961, 7A.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.

<sup>115</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 6 March 1961, 3B.

<sup>116</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 March 1962, 12; and "McDowell And Cristil Receive Top State Awards," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 March 1962, 12.

- 
- <sup>118</sup> Charles B. Gordon, "Sports Journal," *Enterprise-Journal*, 20 March 1962, 5.
- <sup>119</sup> Jimmie McDowell, interview with author, 12 August 2010.
- <sup>120</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 February 1961, 18.
- <sup>121</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 February 1961, 22; and Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>122</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1961, 18.
- <sup>123</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 February 1961, 12.
- <sup>124</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>125</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 15 February 1961, 22.
- <sup>126</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>127</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 22 February 1961, 18.
- <sup>128</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1961, 22.
- <sup>129</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>130</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1961, 20.
- <sup>131</sup> As it appeared it Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots, and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 March 1961, 22.
- <sup>132</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 March 1961, 22.
- <sup>133</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 March 1961, 18.
- <sup>134</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 February 1961, 8.
- <sup>135</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 February 1961, 16.
- <sup>136</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 February 1961, 10.
- <sup>137</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>138</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>139</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 21 February 1961, 8.
- <sup>140</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1961, 10.

- 
- <sup>141</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1961, 8.
- <sup>142</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>143</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 March 1961, 6.
- <sup>144</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 March 1961, 12.
- <sup>145</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 3 February 1961, 9.
- <sup>146</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 6 February 1961, 10.
- <sup>147</sup> Charles Kerg, "Kerg's Korner," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1961, 7.
- <sup>148</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>149</sup> Herb Phillips, "'N In This Cornah!'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 16 February 1961, 4.
- <sup>150</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., "Jus' BEN Thinkin'," *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1961, 12.
- <sup>151</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1961, 3B.
- <sup>152</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1961, 4B.
- <sup>153</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1961, 7.
- <sup>154</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>155</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 February 1961, 15.
- <sup>156</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1961, 4B.
- <sup>157</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>159</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1961, 5B.
- <sup>160</sup> Bob Howie, "Times Have Changed," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1961, 10.
- <sup>161</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 February 1961, 9.
- <sup>162</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1961, 11.
- <sup>163</sup> Lee Baker, "Florida Edges State, 59-57," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1961, 1B.
- <sup>164</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1961, 10.
- <sup>165</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1961, 9.

- 
- <sup>166</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1961, 9.
- <sup>167</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 9.
- <sup>168</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>169</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>170</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 10.
- <sup>171</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>172</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>173</sup> Bob Howie, "Hinny" *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1961, 1.
- <sup>174</sup> Bob Howie, "Still At It," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 March 1961, 1D.
- <sup>175</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1961, 3B; and Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1961, 5B.
- <sup>176</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1961, 13.
- <sup>177</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 February 1961, 18.
- <sup>178</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 February 1961, 24.
- <sup>179</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1961, 38.
- <sup>180</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1961, 14.
- <sup>181</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1961, 17.
- <sup>182</sup> In 1961, soon after the state of Mississippi granted Mississippi State university status, the school officially changed its school mascot and nickname from the Maroons to the Bulldogs. For a number of years, the press would refer to the teams at MSU as both the Maroons and the Bulldogs. Mississippi State University. Mississippi State Traditions. [http://www.mstateathletics.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB\\_OEM\\_ID=16800&ATCLID=926236](http://www.mstateathletics.com/ViewArticle.dbml?DB_OEM_ID=16800&ATCLID=926236) (accessed on 10 February 2011).
- <sup>183</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 18.
- <sup>184</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights in Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 19.
- <sup>185</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1961, 26.
- <sup>186</sup> Weill, 56-57, 86-87, 226-227.
- <sup>187</sup> Ibid., 86.



---

<sup>188</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 February 1961, 2.

<sup>189</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 8 February 1961, 2.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 10 February 1961, 2.

<sup>192</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 15 February 1961, 2.

<sup>193</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1961, 2.

<sup>194</sup> "Hurrah For A Fighting Spirit," *Starkville Daily News*, 22 February 1961, 4.

<sup>195</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 24 February 1961, 2.

<sup>196</sup> "Basketball Center of the U.S.A.," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 March 1961, 4.

<sup>197</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out For Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 2.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Chester M. Morgan, *Dearly Bought, Deeply Treasured: The University of Southern Mississippi, 1912-1987* (Oxford, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1987), 103-109. In February 7, 1962, Governor Ross Barnett signed a bill that granted university status to Mississippi Southern College, which was then renamed the University of Southern Mississippi.

<sup>200</sup> Marty Rickard, "Coach Lewis Leads Southern To Best Cage Record In History," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 1 April 1960, 4E.

<sup>201</sup> James Cleveland, "In the Press Box," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 9 December 1960, 5.

<sup>202</sup> Wayne Trotter, "Let's Make It Golden Giants," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 13 January 1961, 2.

<sup>203</sup> Associated Press, "Southern Ranked Third in AP Poll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 February 1961, 36; and "Southern Back in Second Spot," *Commercial Dispatch*, 2 February 1961, 2B.

<sup>204</sup> "Southern Five Starts On New Victory String," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1961, 5; "Nationally-Ranked Miss. Southern On Win Steak," *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 February 1961,

6; "MSC Hits The Road To Florida," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 5B; "Golden Giants Go Back Upon Road," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 February 1961, 9; and "Golden Giants Hit Road Again With Four-Game Winning Streak Working," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 February 1961, 23.

<sup>205</sup> Don Myers, "'Golden Giants' Dump Jacksonville, 72-62," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1961, 1B.

<sup>206</sup> "Southern Soars Past Jacksonville," *Jackson State Times*, 5 February 1961, 1D; "Southern Tops Jacksonville," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 February 1961, 13; "Southern Has Close Call But Takes Number 16," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 February 1961, 6; and "Southerners Win Another," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1961, 18.

<sup>207</sup> "Golden Giants Clobber FSC in Overtime," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1961, 11; "Giants Raze Fla. Southern In OT, 74-62," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 10 February 1961, 5; and "Giants Top FSC For Win No. 17," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1961, 7-8.

<sup>208</sup> James Cleveland, "'Sky's The Limit' In Growth, Potential For Bill Lundberg," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 10 February 1961, 5.

<sup>209</sup> "Southern Hosts Memphis CBC," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1961, 6; Joe Sargis, "MSC Is Closer To First Place," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1961, 8D; "Southern Routs Spring Hill, 87-54," *Commercial Dispatch*, 9 February 1961, 10; "Southern Wins 17<sup>th</sup> Out of 18," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 9 February 1961, 7; Associated Press, "Southern Rates Number 5 Spot," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 9 February 1961, 7; "Southerners Remain 2<sup>nd</sup> In Ratings," *Jackson State Times*, 9 February 1961, 9A; "Southern Topples Badgers," *Jackson State Times*, 9 February 1961, 11A; "Giants Trounce Spring Hill 87-54; Look Forward To Long Home Stand," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 17 February 1961, 6; "Southern Wins 17<sup>th</sup> Of Year," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 February 1961, 17; and "Southerners' Total Up But A&I Still Rated 1<sup>st</sup>," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 February 1961, 11.

<sup>210</sup> "Giants Open Home Stand Tonight Against CBC," *Hattiesburg American*, 11 February 1961, 8.

<sup>211</sup> Jim Cleveland, "Late Giants Rally Rolls CBC 83-67," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 17 February 1961, 5; "Southern Tops Memphis Club In 83-67 Win," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 February 1961, 12; "Southerners Turn Back Spring Hill," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 February 1961, 19; and "Southerners Win Again," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1961, 15.

<sup>212</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., "Southerners Finish Strong to Beat CBC," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1961, 9A.

<sup>213</sup> Don Meyers, "Southern Rallies Past Memphis CBC, 83-67," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1961, 1B.

<sup>214</sup> "Southern Five Faces Centenary Thursday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1961, 8D; "Golden Giants Play At Home," *Commercial Dispatch*, 16 February 1961, 4; "Southern's Cagers Play Pair This Week," *Jackson State Times*, 15 February 1961, 7B; "Southern Cards

---

Two Home Games For This Week,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 February 1961, 14; “Golden Giants Finally At Home,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1961, 12; “Golden Giants Play Two Games At Home,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 15 February 1961, 22; and “Giants Play Twice at Home This Week,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 February 1961, 5B.

<sup>215</sup> “Giants Play Even Taller Gents Here Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1961, 8A.

<sup>216</sup> “Southern Rated 4<sup>th</sup> In AP Poll,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1961, 17; “Southerners Gain, But Stay In 2<sup>nd</sup>,” *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1961, 2C; “Southern 13 Points Out of 1<sup>st</sup>,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1961, 12; “Southern Moves Up,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1961, 22; and “Southerners 4<sup>th</sup> in new AP poll,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1961, 8A.

<sup>217</sup> Lee Baker, “Centenary Tops Southern, 73-71,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1961, 8.

<sup>218</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., “Southerners’ home winning streak ended by Centenary,” *Hattiesburg American*, 17 February 1961, 11.

<sup>219</sup> “Centenary Pulls Upset on Miss. Southern, 73-71,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 February 1961, 9; “Southern Loses Overtime Game,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 17 February 1961, 5; “Centenary Defeats Southern Quintet,” *Jackson State Times*, 17 February 1961, 3B; and “Underdog Centenary Upsets Giants 73-71,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 24 February 1961, 6.

<sup>220</sup> Mary Lou Jones, “Determination Pays Off For Modest Don Clinton,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 17 February 1961, 5.

<sup>221</sup> James Cleveland, “In The Pressbox,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 17 February 1961, 5.

<sup>222</sup> “Stung Southerners try to Rebound Here Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 18 February 1961, 10.

<sup>223</sup> Robert Fulton, “Southern In 20<sup>th</sup> Victory,” *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1961, 9B.

<sup>224</sup> Bob Roule, “Giants Chase Demons 68-54 As Lundberg Sets Pace,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 24 February 1961, 6; “Southern Tops Northwestern For 20<sup>th</sup> Win,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 19 February 1961, 13; and “MSC Romp Past Northwestern, Here Again Tuesday Night,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1961, 4B.

<sup>225</sup> “Southern Basketball Coach Deplores Poor Home Support,” *Hattiesburg American*, 21 February 1961, 4.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> “Golden Giants In Final Week,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 21 February 1961, 7; “Southern Eyes Two Home Foes This Weekend,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 22 February 1961, 12; and

---

“Golden Giants Enter Last Two Weeks Of Cage Action,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 21 February 1961, 19.

<sup>228</sup> “Southerners Meet Hot Georgians Here Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 21 February 1961, 11.

<sup>229</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., “Southerners’ Defense Tough in 21<sup>st</sup> win,” *Hattiesburg American*, 22 February 1961, 5B.

<sup>230</sup> “Southerners Capture 21<sup>st</sup> Victory, 70-50,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 February 1961, 19; “Southerners Win Again,” *Jackson State Times*, 22 February 1961, 5B; ‘Giants Jar Ga. Eagles; 70-50,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 24 February 1961, 5; “Southern Snares Conquest No. 21,” *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1961, 9-10; and “Southern Post Victory,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 22 February 1961, 18.

<sup>231</sup> “Southern Rated 3<sup>rd</sup> In AP Poll,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1961, 30; Dick Joyce, “Southern Five Rated 2<sup>nd</sup> In Poll By UPI,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1961, 17; “Southerners Stay Close Behind A&I,” *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1961, 2D; Associated Press, “Southern’s Golden Giants Still Third In A.P. Cage Poll,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 23 February 1961, 22; and Associated Press, “Giants 3<sup>rd</sup> in AP poll,” *Hattiesburg American*, 23 February 1961, 8A.

<sup>232</sup> “Golden Giants Tackle Delta Here Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 23 February 1961, 9A.

<sup>233</sup> “Southern Tramples Delta St.,” *Jackson State Times*, 24 February 1961, 5B; “Southern Beats Delta State 74-65,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 24 February 1961, 5; and “MSC Golden Giants Grind Delta State 74-56,” *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 3 March 1961, 6.

<sup>234</sup> Paul Morgan, Jr., “Golden Giants Roll Over Delta, 74-56,” *Hattiesburg American*, 24 February 1961, 12.

<sup>235</sup> “Southern In 74-56 Win Over Delta,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1961, 16.

<sup>236</sup> Lee Baker, “Southern Takes Triumph No. 22,” *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1961, 8.

<sup>237</sup> “Southern Invades Shreveport,” *Jackson State Times*, 27 February 1961, 3B; ‘Giants Try Again With Centenary,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1961, 9; and “Golden Giants Facing Must Tilt At Centenary Tonight,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1961, 19.

<sup>238</sup> “Southern Bows To Gents 67-63,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1961, 11; “Centenary Tops Golden Giants Upset Victory,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1961, 7; “Ole Miss Tops LSU; Southern Bows Again,” *Jackson State Times*, 28 February 1961, 2C; “Centenary Pulls Rug From Under Southern, 67-63,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 February 1961, 8; and “Southern’s Golden Giants Bow To Centenary Again,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 February 1961, 14.

<sup>239</sup> Lee Baker, “Centenary Knocks Off M.S.C. Again,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1961, 9.

---

<sup>240</sup> Don Meyers, "Southerners' Stirring Rally Falls Short," *Hattiesburg American*, 28 February 1961, 9.

<sup>241</sup> "Southerners Third In AP Small Poll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1961, 4D; Associated Press, "Prairie View Leads Small Colleges; Southern Third," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 1 March 1961, 4; "Southern Stays Third In Small College AP Poll," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1961, 8; Associated Press, "Mississippi Southern Still Rated Third In A.P. Poll," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1961, 23; and Associated Press, "Southerners Still Third in AP Poll," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 March 1961, 4B.

<sup>242</sup> Mary Lou Jones, "Danforth Sparks Giants On Floor," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 3 March 1961, 5.

<sup>243</sup> "Golden Giants In '61 Finale," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1961, 16; "Southern In Final Cage Tilt," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 3B; "Golden Giants Set For Final Game Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1961, 9; "Golden Giants Take On Huge Belmont Abbey," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1961, 1D; "Golden Giants Play Final Game Friday," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1961, 20; "Golden Giants End Season Here Friday," *Hattiesburg American*, 2 March 1961, 8A; and "Giants Play Strong Belmont Abbey Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 3 March 1961, 10A.

<sup>244</sup> Lewis Blasts NCAA," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1961, 16; "Team Snubbed, Says MSC's Fred Lewis," *Jackson State Times*, 3 March 1961, 4B; and "Southern snubbed by NCAA tourney," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1961, 11.

<sup>245</sup> "Southern Hates Being Ignored," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1961, 8.

<sup>246</sup> "Southern Coach Says UPI Misquoted Him," *Hattiesburg American*, 3 March 1961, 9A.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> "Giants Nix Belmont 5 In Final Tilt," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 10 March 1961, 5.

<sup>250</sup> "Southern Ends Record Breaking Season With Win," *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 March 1961, 9; and "Southern Notches 23<sup>rd</sup> on Final Shot," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1961, 6.

<sup>251</sup> "Southern Notches 23<sup>rd</sup> on Final Shot," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1961, 6.

<sup>252</sup> "Golden Giants Close Cage Season With Friday Win Over Belmont Abbey," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1961, 12.

<sup>253</sup> Lee Baker, "Giants' 23<sup>rd</sup> Win By Slight 56-54," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1961, 2; and Ben Lee, Jr., "Southerners Wind Up with Cliff-Hanger Win," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 March 1961, 8.

---

<sup>254</sup> “Golden Giants Ended Great Cage Season,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1961, 25; “Golden Giants Close Out Another Fine Basketball Campaign,” 7 March 1961, 18; and “Southern Basketball Season Reviewed,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1961, 16.

<sup>255</sup> Associated Press, “Southern Ranked Third In AP Poll,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1961, 21; “Southern 3<sup>rd</sup> On AP’s Small College List,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 March 1961, 9; “Southern Closes 2<sup>nd</sup> Finest Year,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1961, 13; and “Giants Third in Final Poll,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 March 1961, 4B.

<sup>256</sup> “Southern Hunts New Cage Coach,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 7 March 1962, 9.

<sup>257</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., “Jus’ Ben Thinkin’ About Sports,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 February 1961, 12.

<sup>258</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., “Jus’ Ben Thinkin’ About Sports,” *Hattiesburg American*, 23 February 1961, 8A.

<sup>259</sup> Ben Lee, Jr., “Jus’ Ben Thinkin’ About Sports,” *Hattiesburg American*, 3 March 1961, 10A.

<sup>260</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 February 1961, 31.

<sup>261</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 February 1961, 7.

<sup>262</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 February 1961, 13.

<sup>263</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1961, 7.

<sup>264</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1961, 13.

<sup>265</sup> Arnold Hederman, “Highlights In Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1961, 15.

<sup>266</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1961, 12.

<sup>267</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1961, 8.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Bob Howie, “Shreveport Phony,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1961, 9.

<sup>270</sup> Arnold Hederman, “Highlights in Sports,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1961, 20.

<sup>271</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1961, 10B.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1961, 2D.

<sup>274</sup> Dick Lightsey, “Bunts, Boots and Bounces,” *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 9 March 1961, 22.

---

<sup>275</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 3 February 1961, 18.

<sup>276</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1961, 18.

<sup>277</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 February 1961, 14.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1961, 22.

<sup>280</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 March 1961, 8.

<sup>281</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 3 February 1961, 3B.

<sup>282</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 5 February 1961, 2D.

<sup>283</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 10 February 1961, 3B.

<sup>284</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 16 February 1961, 1C.

<sup>285</sup> Jimmie McDowell, "Jimmie McDowell," *Jackson State Times*, 23 February 1961, 1D.

<sup>286</sup> James Cleveland, "In The Pressbox," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 3 March 1961, 5.

<sup>287</sup> "MSC Foes Face No Patsy!" *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 10 March 1961, 2.

<sup>288</sup> James Cleveland, "In The Pressbox," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 10 March 1961, 5.

<sup>289</sup> James Cleveland, "In The Pressbox," *Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 20 January 1961, 5.

## CHAPTER VI

IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH FIVE WHITE BOYS WINNING THE  
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP?

The year 1962 proved to be one of the more turbulent years in the history of Mississippi as James Meredith, with the support of the U.S. government, attempted to integrate the University of Mississippi despite the objections of the state's leaders, specifically Governor Ross Barnett. As Meredith battled Barnett and the Closed Society in the legal arena, the renamed Bulldogs of Mississippi State University were on the heels of another debate that would challenge the validity of the unwritten law, as James "Babe" McCarthy's team finished the 1961-62 season with a remarkable 24-1 record and a second consecutive Southeastern Conference championship.<sup>1</sup> However, like in the SEC title seasons of 1958-59 and 1960-61, MSU rejected an NCAA tournament invitation in accordance with the state's athletic standard against integrated competition. In turn, the sporting press of Mississippi again argued as to whether or not the Bulldogs should have the right to participate in the integrated NCAA tournament for a chance at the Magnolia State's first national basketball championship.

While many within Mississippi's borders continued to stress the state's belief in segregation, the debate seemed to become a tired one for some residents of the Closed Society. Rep. Butch Lambert of Lee and Itawamba Counties informally polled his colleagues in the state legislature about relaxing the unwritten law to allow the Bulldogs to play in the tournament. When questioned about his inquiry, Lambert told the Associated Press, "I'm not for playing on a regularly scheduled basis with integrated teams but it seems foolish to pass up national honors when not playing in Mississippi and when they might not meet an integrated ball club. . . . Is there anything wrong with five white boys winning the national championship?"<sup>2</sup>



Citizens also began to display a degree of attrition in terms of accepting the seemingly ironclad unwritten law as MSU alumni, specifically in Meridian, circulated petitions urging the acceptance of an NCCA tournament bid. The petition, which was reported on in the *Meridian Star*, argued that the gentleman's agreement "in no way upholds our southern customs or traditions. A policy denying our best athletes an opportunity of competing nationally gives our competitors a great advantage in recruiting not only boys of our state, but out of state boys also."<sup>3</sup>

Reflective of the minority of support developing in both the social and political ranks of the Closed Society, the faction of MSU's journalistic supporters began to grow. Although the unwritten law's foremost critic, Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times*, left Mississippi for Trenton, New Jersey in 1961, reporters such as Herb Phillips of the *Commercial Dispatch*, Dick Lightsey of the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and Jimmie Robertson of the student-based *Daily Mississippian* at the University of Mississippi argued for the Bulldogs' place in the integrated postseason and the elimination of the unwritten law, all the while stressing their own belief in segregation.<sup>4</sup> Even sports editor Lee Baker of the Hederman-owned *Clarion-Ledger* began to express a supportive sentiment for the Bulldogs, shunning the journalistic neglect he had shown in the past and openly questioning the need for the unwritten law. "It already has been costly to the future of basketball at Mississippi State — and the state's other schools as well, one must realize — and quite possibly will become increasingly so," Baker wrote on March 5, 1962.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the emergence of this supportive minority, the unwritten law was observed and the Bulldogs were kept from the integrated postseason. The majority of reporters in the Magnolia State once again retreated to the comfortable confines of silent support for the Closed Society and failed to express an opinion on the issue. Like the 1960-61 debate, a number of notable journalists in the Magnolia State abstained from arguing the validity of a Bulldog venture into integrated athletics. Such luminaries as Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson*

*Daily News*, Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, and J. Oliver Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal*, all of whom had made past arguments either for or against an NCAA title run by McCarthy's troops, failed to publish any opinion-based commentary on the merits of State's 1961-62 conference title-winning season.

However, the foundation of support for the unwritten law that had been established in past MSU campaigns through derogatory commentary and silence began to weaken. While the majority of the aforementioned reporters failed to identify or advocate State's entry into the tournament as a nod to civil rights, the sheer questioning of the unwritten law was, nevertheless, a bold statement within Mississippi's borders. In combination with the impending integration of Ole Miss, the emergence of doubt in the unwritten law signaled a slow change in the Magnolia State. While most identified the possibility of an MSU national championship as the justification for the elimination of the unwritten law, the idea that the segregationist standards of the state would even be questioned was a radical one. It was this slow swell of support that eventually led to the middle-of-the-night exodus by McCarthy and his team the next season to participate in the 1963 NCAA tournament, despite objections from stalwarts of the Closed Society. While the press in Mississippi would unite in its support of Barnett and his objections to the U.S. government's support of Meredith's September 1962 admission on to the Oxford campus, that notion of solidarity was not evident months earlier as the validity of the unwritten law was put to the test.

This chapter examines the Bulldogs' 1961-62 basketball season from the perspective of Mississippi's newspaper journalists and, while the segregationist tone of the Magnolia State prevailed through Mississippi's press via outward expressions of opposition or through silence, a minority in support for integrated athletics began to grow as more sports reporters in the state rebelled against the status quo and supported MSU's potential entry into the integrated NCAA tournament. Much like MSU's previous season of hardwood success, the debate began in the newspapers of the Magnolia State during a late-season battle with the

University of Kentucky. From the early stages of February 1962 through March 1962, a smattering of commentary and opinions were expressed from newspapers such as the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Commercial Dispatch* in Columbus, the *Starkville Daily News*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi with no real universal consensus. Like in previous years, the reporters of the Magnolia State assumed in various articles covering the Bulldogs that an NCAA tournament bid was out of reach due to the unwritten law. In the realm of opinion-based commentary, the majority of journalists opposed a potential violation of the unwritten law or ignored the debate through silence while a minority in the press supported the possibility of a Bulldog national championship while professing their devotion to the Closed Society and the segregationist lifestyle it supported.

#### The Bulldogs March Toward Lexington

Much like previous seasons, the MSU faithful and, for that matter, the Magnolia State press, began to take note of McCarthy's Bulldogs before a late-season battle with their rival the University of Kentucky. As of February 1, 1962, MSU was 15-1 and was ranked tenth in the Associated Press college basketball poll. Despite the improving national perception of the Bulldogs, the team remained in third place in the SEC behind the Wildcats and the Green Wave of Tulane as they prepared to face the Louisiana State University.<sup>6</sup> In an article with no wire affiliation published in the *Starkville Daily News*, an unknown author wrote that MSU would be short-handed against the Tigers as senior captain Jack Berkshire was doubtful after spending time in the hospital due to the flu.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the Bulldogs were led by the stellar play of juniors Leland Mitchell and W. D. "Red" Stroud, who both averaged 17.2 points per game, and future Bulldog head coach Joe Dan Gold, who scored 12.3 points per game.<sup>8</sup>

Despite Berkshire's absence, the Bulldogs dominated the Bayou Bengals in Baton Rouge on February 3, 1962, by the score of 87-66. The *Clarion-Ledger's* Robert "Steamboat" Fulton wrote that the Bulldogs kept their conference title hopes alive with the win.<sup>9</sup> Stroud and Doug Hutton led the Bulldogs with 22 and 20 points respectively. The Bulldogs led by 19-points nine minutes into the game and never looked back, moving to 16-1 on the season and 5-1 in conference.<sup>10</sup> State would then have to play the Green Wave of Tulane in New Orleans in a battle for second place on February 5, 1962, for, according to an anonymous Associated Press reporter, the position "to challenge mighty Kentucky in its seemingly unstoppable march towards the title."<sup>11</sup> The Bulldogs had to answer the play of Tulane's Jim Kerwin, who was coming off of a 41-point performance against the University of Mississippi and led the conference in scoring at 23.8 points per game.<sup>12</sup> Despite MSU's outstanding season to date, an unknown writer with the Associated Press still considered the Wildcats the more likely team to win the conference despite matching the Bulldogs' record of 16-1.<sup>13</sup>

Led by Mitchell, who Fulton said was "possessed with the agility of a ballet dancer and the nerve of a brain surgeon," the Bulldogs beat the Green Wave 70-59, knocking Tulane out of second place in the conference.<sup>14</sup> Mitchell scored 29 points in the victory, which had to be stopped late in the second half when the 5,600 fans in attendance began throwing garbage on the court.<sup>15</sup> State led 40-28 at halftime and was never threatened as Kerwin finished with 12 points.<sup>16</sup> The win kept MSU "very much in contention for the SEC title," according to Bob Hartley of the *Starkville Daily News*.<sup>17</sup> The Associated Press' Ed Tunstall wrote that the team chanted, "On to Lexington" after the game, the home base of the first-place Kentucky Wildcats, despite not playing Rupp's troops for another week. "I don't know if we can beat them, but we're ready. I think we're as good as Kentucky," McCarthy told Tunstall.<sup>18</sup> State's victory also moved the team up one spot in the AP poll to ninth place.<sup>19</sup>

Despite not playing Kentucky for another week, UPI wrote that the game would essentially decide the SEC championship. The unknown author gave little chance to the

Bulldogs, writing, “You have to go with Kentucky as the favorite for the big game. The Wildcats are playing at home where they seldom lose.”<sup>20</sup> As of the publication of this account on February 7, 1962, no article consulted in this chapter had referenced the NCAA tournament in an article on Mississippi State.

After State moved into the second spot in the SEC, the team travelled to Knoxville to play the University of Tennessee, which had a 4-11 record and was viewed by some journalists as an afterthought.<sup>21</sup> The Vols were coming off of a 100-86 victory over Vanderbilt, the only team to defeat State on the year and were led by center Orb Bowling, who scored 15.3 points per game.<sup>22</sup> AP sports writer Vernon Butler wrote that the Vols could make life difficult for McCarthy’s charges if the team focused too much on the upcoming game against the Wildcats.<sup>23</sup> From the perspective of an unknown UPI sports writer who previewed both the Bulldogs’ games against Tennessee and Kentucky, a successful road trip was crucial to the team’s conference title hopes. “Mississippi State must upset Kentucky to have any hope of retaining the SEC crown,” the anonymous author wrote. “Even if State should win, it is likely that Kentucky will represent the SEC in the NCAA playoffs and thus make their bid for their fifth national title. State does not play in interracial tournaments.”<sup>24</sup> The unknown author’s commentary was the first in a newspaper used in this chapter to reference the NCAA tournament and the Bulldogs. Butler would make similar statements in future accounts on the MSU squad during the 1961-62 season.<sup>25</sup>

McCarthy’s troops defeated Tennessee soundly 91-67. According to *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker, the Bulldogs were unable to build a big lead in the first half but, as the Volunteers began to have shooting woes, MSU was able to easily move into a lead they would never relinquish.<sup>26</sup> Mitchell led the Bulldogs with 28 points while Gold added 21 and Stroud had 16.<sup>27</sup>

After the win, the Bulldogs had to quickly regroup for its contest with the first-place Kentucky Wildcats in a match-up that the AP called “a clash of the Southeastern

Conference's two basketball giants."<sup>28</sup> Jim Hackleman of the AP wrote that the game was the highlight of the SEC docket during the week while an anonymous AP sports scribe wrote that the favored Wildcats could all but clinch the conference title with a win over the Bulldogs, a feat the colorful Rupp called a gigantic task.<sup>29</sup> O'Neil Hendrick of UPI added that McCarthy modestly said that his team was as good as Rupp's anywhere in the nation except in the Bluegrass State. "It remains to be seen if we can spot them the home court advantage, which is worth about 10 points, and beat them in Lexington," McCarthy told Hendrick.<sup>30</sup> The two teams were separated by a single conference game, as Kentucky went into the contest with a 17-1 record and as the second-ranked team in the nation, while the Bulldogs were 18-1 and were ranked ninth in the country.<sup>31</sup> Tennessee head coach John Sines told *Clarion-Ledger* correspondent Scotty Hargrove that, if the Bulldogs could get a lead on the Wildcats, MSU had a good chance at winning the game.<sup>32</sup>

The Bulldogs would go on to upset the Wildcats on their home court 49-44 on February 12, 1962.<sup>33</sup> Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger* wrote of the game, "They said no team could beat Kentucky on its home floor when it meant something. . . . It meant something here Monday night and Mississippi State did."<sup>34</sup> Fellow Hederman sports scribe Baker called the win the greatest in the school's basketball history.<sup>35</sup> The Bulldogs held the Wildcats to only 15 field goals in 45 attempts and hit 69.2 percent of their shots in the game. Kentucky never led during the contest. Stroud paced State with 17 points, while Kentucky star Cotton Nash led the Wildcats with 23 points. The Bulldogs, in celebration of its first ever victory over the Wildcats in Lexington in 38 years, cut down the nets as they moved into a first-place tie with Rupp's charges.<sup>36</sup> Despite the win, Hackleman assumed the postseason was an unattainable goal for the Bulldogs, writing that McCarthy said "his Bulldogs again will pass up on the NCAA tournament if they repeat as champions because of the school's policy against playing racially integrated teams."<sup>37</sup> The win moved the Bulldogs up one spot in both the AP and UPI national basketball polls.<sup>38</sup>

While much of the AP content discussed appeared in the *Starkville Daily News*, what was more telling was the placement of those articles. On the front page of the paper's February 13, 1962 edition, a brief account about the "celebrations by the deliriously happy state students" in the aftermath of the victory could be found under the banner headline, "Court Rules Meredith Can't Enter Ole Miss," as, according to the AP, "the U.S. Court of Appeals refused to issue an injunction which would have permitted Negro James Meredith to enter the University of Mississippi."<sup>39</sup> Henry Harris, the segregationist publisher of the Starkville-based *Daily News*, and the paper's editor Sherill Nash, who was cut from the same ideological cloth as Harris, were both outspoken critics of the integration of Ole Miss and wrote damning attacks on the pioneering Meredith.<sup>40</sup> The simple placement of these articles on the front page of the *Starkville Daily News* served as a subtle reminder of both the role of Harris' paper in the Closed Society and tempered any anti-unwritten law sentiment in the reading audience as a result of the Bulldogs' landmark win. Despite the pertinent news value of the Meredith case, with a simple design decision the *Starkville Daily News* made an editorial statement and solidified its place as a supporter of the Closed Society and the unwritten law.

The Bulldogs were met back in Starkville by a horde of 4,000 students in celebration of the team's victory. Sports editor Herb Phillips of the Columbus-based *Commercial Dispatch* wrote that MSU "thoroughly outclassed the nation's number two-ranked Kentucky Wildcats" and that the spoils of the victory were for both the student body and the team.<sup>41</sup> An unknown journalist who covered the team's return home added, "If those folks who dictate basketball polls asked students at Mississippi State University who's number one, they'd get a loud 'we are'."<sup>42</sup> The masses chanted, "we're number one" during the celebration as McCarthy told the audience, "This was the greatest night of my life and by far the greatest thrill. That doesn't mean I want to quit however. . . . The race isn't over yet."<sup>43</sup> It is not known if the MSU head coach was referencing the SEC title, the NCAA tournament, or both.

Fulton continued to write about the Bulldogs' victory over the Wildcats but began his sports-based news account with what seemed to be a shocking statement from a reporter from the Hederman-owned *Clarion-Ledger*: "(The) Mississippi State Maroons earned themselves a trip to next month's NCAA finals" with the equally shocking headline, "State Won Trip To NCAA Cage Finals."<sup>44</sup> Fulton would later clarify his statement, writing in the third paragraph of the article, "About the trip to the NCAA, the Maroons will only go to spectate," citing a promise MSU assistant coach Jerry Simmons made to the team that a victory over the Wildcats would earn them tickets to the NCAA finals in Louisville on March 24, 1962. Fulton's play on words served as a red herring for the reading public as his article, on the surface, indicated that the team would be playing in the NCAA tournament.

A UPI article found in the *Commercial Dispatch* previewed the week's SEC basketball action and began by calling MSU "a solid favorite to defend its title" and relegated Kentucky to a battle for the conference's NCAA playoff berth. Rather than acknowledge that MSU could have a tournament bid if allowed by the university, the unknown writer explained, "as in the two previous years, segregation policy is expected to force the Bulldogs to sit out the national playoffs rather than compete against teams which have negro players."<sup>45</sup>

Putting Kentucky in the rearview mirror, State moved on to their contest against the 8-9 University of Florida Gators in Starkville.<sup>46</sup> At 19-1, the Bulldogs would have to play close attention to star Florida center Cliff Luyk, the conference's third ranked scorer at 21 points per game and who scored the game-winning basket during the Gators' 59-57 victory over MSU during the 1960-61 season.<sup>47</sup> UPI's preview of the week's upcoming SEC action called the Bulldog team "a solid favorite to defend its title" but focused on Kentucky and Auburn's battle for second place as the determining factor in the conference's postseason tournament berth.



A feature on Bulldog leader Stroud appeared in the February 16, 1962, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* from UPI. While the article, which featured no byline, did not delve into the NCAA tournament or the SEC championship, when talking about the “peanut butter-loving country boy with a shooting style as easy as his smile,” McCarthy told the UPI reporter, “if I were a coach in a national championship game and needed one basket to win, I’d rather have you (Stroud) shooting for it than any other player in the country.”<sup>48</sup>

On February 17, 1962, *Starkville Daily News* editor Sherill Nash published an article on McCarthy’s visit to the local Rotary Club and, while the Bulldogs’ leader discussed the controversial point-shaving scandal involving former Maroon Jerry Graves, going so far as telling the audience, “There are, I believe, politicians in our state today accepting favors that are as wrong as the acts Graves committed,” Nash’s work did not indicate if the NCAA tournament or the merits of the unwritten law were discussed.<sup>49</sup>

The Bulldogs would run away from the Gators 67-45 on February 17, 1962, after building a 24-14 halftime lead. McCarthy’s troops used the coach’s slow-down style in the first half after failing to make the majority of its shots but then starting to run in the second half, building a 42-19 lead.<sup>50</sup> The Bulldogs only hit 37.8 percent of their shots for the game but coasted to the win.<sup>51</sup> Mitchell led State with 17 points, while Gold had 14. Luyk, the Gators’ primary offensive weapon, scored only 9 points in the loss.<sup>52</sup> State moved to 20-1 on the season and was becoming the talk of the SEC circuit.<sup>53</sup>

In the continued hunt for its third SEC title in four seasons, MSU defeated the University of Georgia 83-74 on February 19, 1962, to move to 21-1 on the season. According to the *Starkville Daily News*’ George Anderson, “It was a rough, helter-skelter type ball game with The Babe’s men running their fast breaks most of the way but lacking their usual form and style.”<sup>54</sup> Mitchell led State with 17 points, but fouled out with 11:12 left in the game.<sup>55</sup> The Bulldogs were tied with Kentucky in the SEC standings and had moved up to fifth in the country in both the AP and the UPI polls.<sup>56</sup>

Needing three wins to close out the season and clinch another SEC title, Mississippi State prepared for rematches with LSU and Tulane in Starkville before finishing with in-state rival Ole Miss. LSU was 6-4 in conference and had a 13-8 overall record. The Tigers had already faced the Bulldogs twice during the season and lost both battles.<sup>57</sup> In David M. Moffit's preview of the week's SEC action, the UPI sports scribe began by focusing on Auburn's surprising 16-5 record and challenge to the conference NCAA tournament bid. In regards to the Bulldogs' postseason hope, Moffit wrote, "With the rigid segregation policies of the state of Mississippi, it is very unlikely that Mississippi State will be allowed to play in the NCAA tournament which will include teams with Negro players. . . . This is an old story in the SEC," dismissing any notion of State's participation in postseason play.<sup>58</sup> Moffit would reference the existence of the unwritten law in a number of articles during the remainder of the Bulldogs' season, all of which correctly assumed MSU would not participate in the NCAA tournament.<sup>59</sup>

MSU would defeat the Tigers on February 24, 1962, by a final score of 58-48.<sup>60</sup> State had a 23-11 lead in the first half but went the remainder of the opening frame without hitting a field goal and scored by way of 10 free throws. Meanwhile, the Tigers stormed back and were down 30-27 at halftime but would take the lead in the second half 37-36 with 11:12 left in the game. MSU's Doug Hutton hit a jump shot to put the Bulldogs up by one and State would never trail again. Gold was the statistical leader for the Bulldogs, scoring 22 points and grabbing 13 rebounds. The "McCarthy men" were now 11-1 in the SEC and 22-1 overall with two games remaining.

State welcomed Tulane and another match-up with SEC scoring leader Kerwin.<sup>61</sup> While Smith referenced MSU's match-up with the Green Wave, the UPI sportswriter paid particular attention to the game between Auburn and Kentucky, which would essentially decide the conference's second-place team and possible NCAA tournament representative. Smith said as much in his article, writing "With Mississippi State likely to refuse to oppose

tournament teams with Negro players, the No. 2 spot in the standings become all-important in determining the conference nominee for the NCAA.”<sup>62</sup> McCarthy’s team would easily defeat the Greenies 83-62 to move within one game of the SEC title, but the Bulldogs remained tied with Kentucky based upon the Wildcats’ narrow 63-60 victory over Auburn. Anderson wrote in his February 27, 1962, account for the *Starkville Daily News* that the win “left the SEC race practically all locked up between McCarthy’s men and Rupp’s Wildcats.”<sup>63</sup> Phil Wallace of the *Jackson Daily News* echoed Anderson’s comments, writing that the Wildcats “will probably get the NCAA berth.”<sup>64</sup> Fulton went even further; awarding Rupp’s charges the SEC’s postseason invitation. “Kentucky virtually clinched the other half of the title — and for all practical purposes, the NCAA tourney berth — by squeaking past Auburn 63-60,” he wrote.<sup>65</sup> An anonymous AP reporter made a similar claim, writing that “MSU has said it will not enter NCAA tournament competition because it is racially integrated,” despite the fact that no formal announcement from the university, MSU President Dean Colvard, or McCarthy had been made.<sup>66</sup> Stroud led the way for MSU with 21 points, 17 of which came in the decisive second half, which saw the Bulldogs move to a 16-point lead only two minutes into the frame.<sup>67</sup> McCarthy would later clean out his bench as the Bulldogs pushed the lead to 21 with four minutes left. Kerwin, who scored 12 points in the previous match-up with the Bulldogs, was held to 9 in the rematch. With the win, the Bulldogs remained in fifth place in both the AP and UPI national basketball polls.<sup>68</sup> Both Stroud and Mitchell were also named to the AP All-SEC team, while Mitchell was named to the UPI version.<sup>69</sup>

State, which needed one more win to clinch the conference championship, moved on from its win over the Green Wave and began to prepare for its March 3, 1962, showdown with in-state rival Ole Miss. The Rebels had won four out of their past five games going into the contest with the Bulldogs and were led by Donnie Kessinger, who scored 21.7 points per game. While Ole Miss was finishing out the season with a 12-12 record, 5-8 in conference, another victory would match MSU’s 1958-59 SEC title team for most wins in a single season

with 24.<sup>70</sup> MSU had a 12-1 conference record versus the 11-1 record of the Wildcats, which had also lost a game out of the SEC.<sup>71</sup> In their previous meeting, MSU beat Ole Miss by four points in a 61-57 Bulldog victory.<sup>72</sup> In an AP preview of the game, Ross M. Hagen noted the NCAA tournament, writing, “The only issue to be decided definitely is whether Kentucky or Mississippi State will represent the SEC in the NCAA tournament. The scales tip in favor of Kentucky because Mississippi has an unwritten law forbidding its athletes from competing in integrated sporting events.”<sup>73</sup>

While a number of Mississippi-based journalists ignored the chances of an NCAA tournament berth for the Bulldogs, both the AP and UPI reported on March 1, 1962, that Rep. Butch Lambert of Lee and Itawamba Counties said he got no results in talking to members of the state legislature about the possibility of allowing MSU to play integrated teams in the NCAA postseason tournament.<sup>74</sup> In some versions of the wire article from the AP, the lead paragraph acknowledged the existence of some political support for the Maroons: “Nobody wants to talk about it, but there is quite a bit of behind-the-scenes maneuvering in this segregation-conscious state to get approval for fifth-ranked Mississippi State’s participation in the NCAA basketball tournament.”<sup>75</sup> However, the anonymous author stressed the state’s belief in athletic segregation, writing, “Mississippi has an unwritten law against state supported athletic teams competing against teams with Negro players.”<sup>76</sup> In the UPI version, the gentleman’s agreement was described as “an unwritten but strong policy against state teams competing in racially integrated events.”<sup>77</sup> Lambert, who also moonlighted as an SEC basketball and football official, acted on the request of SEC commissioner Bernie Moore, who wanted to find out if there was any level of support in the state’s political elite for a possible MSU national title opportunity. Lambert told the AP that only the State College Board could make a decision concerning the NCAA tournament but added that the 1962 MSU team may have the best chance of not meeting integrated teams in a possible postseason

run. In the following passage, Lambert confirmed both his belief in segregation and argued for the Bulldogs' place in the postseason tournament.

I'm not for playing on a regularly scheduled basis with integrated teams but it seems foolish to pass up national honors when not playing in Mississippi and when they might not meet an integrated ball club. If it were definite we knew who state would play and it was an integrated club, that would be a different matter. . . . Is there anything wrong with five white boys winning the national championship?<sup>78</sup>

The *Clarion-Ledger* published the article on the inside page of its March 1, 1962, sports section with the headline, "No Playoffs For Bulldogs," despite the fact that nowhere in the account was an NCAA tournament bid ruled out.<sup>79</sup> Some newspapers, specifically the *Starkville Daily News*, did not publish anything on Lambert's investigation. On the same day the AP reported on Lambert's inquiry, the national news wire service named Stroud the SEC's Most Valuable Player.<sup>80</sup>

The *Meridian Star* reported that local residents had joined in with a statewide trend of State alumni circulating petitions urging school officials, specifically Colvard, to accept the bid to the NCAA tournament. The article, which appeared on the front page of the March 1, 1962, edition of the *Meridian Star* without a byline or any sort of wire affiliation, explained, "There is no law barring athletic participation against integrated teams but the policy in Mississippi has been to refuse to play against teams with Negro players."<sup>81</sup> The petition, which was addressed to Colvard and published verbatim in the *Meridian Star* article, called the absence of MSU in the postseason tournament "unjust; it is harmful to our state and to the Southeastern Conference." Furthermore, the petition, which referred to the unwritten law as "policy," stated that the gentleman's agreement only insured that the state would produce "mediocre athletic teams. No southern state except Mississippi has such a policy. It in no way upholds our southern customs or traditions. A policy denying our best athletes an opportunity of competing nationally gives our competitors a great advantage in recruiting not only boys of our state, but out of state boys also."<sup>82</sup> Despite the author's claim that the

petitions were being circulated throughout the state, no other newspaper consulted in this dissertation published an article on the efforts by MSU alumni.

MSU would go on to defeat the Ole Miss Rebels 63-58 for their third SEC title in four seasons but according to an anonymous author, “the NCAA bid, the big prize that goes along with winning the SEC title will not be taken by the Bulldogs.”<sup>83</sup> State trailed the Rebels by nine points at halftime, 37-28, but, led by Gold’s 16 points, the Bulldogs stormed back to take a 50-49 lead with 10:50 left in the contest. According to Fulton’s account for the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, MSU “earned the right to accept — or refuse — a trip to the NCAA Regional Finals,” despite the fact that a postseason berth for the Bulldogs had been ignored and/or assumed by most of the sporting press to be impossible.<sup>84</sup> The same could be said for Tom Gregory of the *Meridian Star*, who wrote in his article covering the game that the win “landed the once-beaten Maroons a trip to the NCAA national championship tournament — if they could take it.”<sup>85</sup> Paragraphs later, Gregory wrote that a trip would be “highly unlikely. . . . This is the third time Mississippi State has been eligible for the NCAA. An ‘unwritten law’ against playing racially integrated teams has always kept the Maroons at home. . . . So it looks as if State will have to be satisfied with sharing the conference title with Kentucky.”<sup>86</sup> *Commercial Dispatch* sports editor Phillips wrote that the Bulldogs won the right to play in the NCAA tournament, “However, as in the past, they will probably have to bow out from the honor because of Mississippi’s ‘unwritten law’ against playing integrated competition as would be the case in the NCAA viewing. Thus, no possible way left for national honors and recognition for MSU’s championship squad.”<sup>87</sup> State finished the season with a 24-1 record and the conference championship.

In the aftermath of the Bulldogs 63-58 win over Ole Miss, McCarthy told the *Jackson Daily News*’ Baker he preferred a “relaxation of Mississippi’s unwritten rule against sports competition with integrated teams, but he would abide by the decision.”<sup>88</sup> McCarthy also told Baker that he supported playing integrated foes outside of the borders of the Magnolia State.

“I feel that the majority of the people of Mississippi would favor our playing against integrated teams out of state,” the coach explained. Baker wrote that, by virtue of State’s SEC title win, the team had the right to accept the bid but according to the team’s leader, they would not be going. Baker would go a step further and explained the unwritten law in the following passage:

There is no ruling of the MSU administration or the state college board that would bar competition with integrated teams outside of the state. But there is on record a resolution of the Mississippi legislature, which is considered to cover the situation. The joint resolution calls on all state agencies and institutions to resist integration moves by all legal means.<sup>89</sup>

Baker’s commentary was interesting, considering that the original 1956 proposal of a state law banning integrated competition was never formally presented to the Mississippi legislature and was essentially a hand-shake agreement between state politicians and college administrators that had no real legal basis. His explanation of the merits of the unwritten law served less as a presentation of fact and more of a reminder of the strict observation by Mississippi’s elite of the enforcement of the fictitious law. UPI’s article on the win over Ole Miss also cited McCarthy’s comments on the unwritten law.<sup>90</sup>

The following day, SEC Commissioner Bernie Moore announced that Kentucky would receive the SEC conference invitation to the NCAA tournament that was originally granted to Mississippi State. Per Ross M. Hagen of the AP, “The Wildcats got the bid despite the fact that they were beaten by Mississippi State during the regular season and can do no better than tie the Maroons for the SEC crown.”<sup>91</sup> In an article in the *Commercial Dispatch* with no wire affiliation or byline, the unknown author similarly wrote that Kentucky would be the conference representative to the NCAA tournament after McCarthy “announced they would not accept the NCAA bid they had won. McCarty indicated he objected to Mississippi’s unwritten policy against its public college playing integrated teams out of state, but he said the Bulldogs would abide by it.”<sup>92</sup> State’s student newspaper, *The Reflector*, also

covered the Bulldogs' rejection of a postseason tournament bid in the March 8, 1962, edition of the newspaper. Scotty Hargrove, who also served as a correspondent for the *Starkville Daily News*, penned the account, which featured McCarthy's comments to UPI about the merits of his basketball team.<sup>93</sup>

Gold, who played on the 1961, 1962, and 1963 SEC title-winning MSU teams, said in a 2009 interview, while he wanted to participate in the tournament, he and his teammates did not consider it a feasible opportunity. "We wanted to go play (every year); we just didn't have a whole lot of hope to do so," Gold said. "In 1961, I just understood that we wouldn't go. But in 1962, Jack Berkshire, who was from Iowa, was the team's captain. I went home with Jack during a school break and we attended the NCAA regional that was being played in Kansas. It then hit home. At that game, I realized that we were really missing out."<sup>94</sup>

For his work during the season, UPI named McCarthy the SEC Coach of the Year. The wire article on McCarthy's award referenced State's absence from the NCAA tournament due to "segregation policies."<sup>95</sup> The Bulldogs finished the season as the fourth-best team in the nation in both the AP and UPI polls.<sup>96</sup> A version of Norman Miller's UPI article that appeared in the *Meridian Star* indicated that of the top 10 teams, only Mississippi State declined a bid to play for the NCAA championship.<sup>97</sup>

In an article reviewing the Bulldogs' magical season found in the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Starkville Daily News*, and the *Clarion-Ledger*, the anonymous author never mentioned the NCAA tournament and State's absence from the national championship race.<sup>98</sup> Despite the obvious objections on integrated athletics and an NCAA tournament appearance for the Bulldogs from the political elite in the Closed Society, the State Senate passed a resolution congratulating McCarthy on his Coach of the Year honors.<sup>99</sup>

Kentucky would go on to defeat Tennessee 90-59 in its season finale to clinch a share of the SEC title and a trip to the NCAA tournament. In the UPI account of the Wildcats' win, the anonymous author wrote, "Mississippi State was entitled to the bid because the Bulldogs



won the only game this season between the two teams but turned it down because state policy forbids competition against negro players.”<sup>100</sup> Bill Neikirk’s article for the AP on the game only referenced State as having the same conference record as the Wildcats.<sup>101</sup>

Weeks after the conclusion of the season, Lewis Lord of UPI wrote a profile of McCarthy and ascribed biblical status to the Mississippi native, calling the head coach “almost — but not quite — a Moses for Mississippi State.”<sup>102</sup> Lord’s work, which focused more on McCarthy’s opinion of the unwritten law and his team’s absence from the NCAA tournament, was perhaps the most insightful in terms of the coach’s opinion of the gentleman’s agreement. While Lord predicted that the Bulldogs would be one of the top teams in the nation during the 1962-63 campaign, he explained that MSU would likely have to stay home again due to the unwritten law, “a policy formed by legislative leaders, though not written into law, [that] threatens a reduction of state money to any white school which allows its athletes to compete with Negroes.” In a direct nod to McCarthy’s feelings on the matter, Lord wrote that the head coach found it difficult to deal with.

It galls McCarthy, but there is little he can do about it. He has led state to three Southeastern Conference championships in four years. But bringing about a policy change in the state capital — especially when it regards race — apparently requires much greater powers of persuasion. . . . McCarthy says “the boys should be allowed to play against integrated teams away from home” and he feels most Mississippians agree with him.<sup>103</sup>

In response, Barnett told the UPI scribe, “If we play them up there, they will want to come down here. Where would they eat? Where would they stay? And wouldn’t they want to go to the dance after the game?”<sup>104</sup> The article was also featured in the *Jackson Daily News* without a byline.

#### The Hederman Empire Holds the Segregated Line

Much like MSU’s previous runs to SEC laurels, sports journalists for the Jackson-based *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, both owned by the segregationist Hederman family, opposed the Bulldogs’ opportunity at both a SEC championship and an

opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament. Veteran sports columnists such as Lee Baker, Arnold Hederman, and Carl Walters spent the vast majority of their opinion-based work either neglecting the Bulldogs' chances of playing in the integrated NCAA tournament or stressed the binding nature of the unwritten law. Another Hederman sports scribe, Robert Fulton, expressing little to no opinion on the matter and, when the merits of the unwritten law were a topic of conversation, yielded to the work of his sports reporting brethren from inside the Magnolia State. Like past instances discussed in this dissertation, the Hederman sports desk did little to contribute to the opinion-based debate and, by spending the bulk of the time on the sidelines, helped enforce the unwritten law and served as a journalistic cog in the Closed Society.

Baker began his trend of neglect in the February 4, 1962, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger* by overlooking the SEC title chances of the Bulldogs, despite the team's victory over LSU in Baton Rouge. Baker wrote that the Kentucky Wildcats, after victories at the University of Georgia and the University of Florida, had put a lot of pressure on fellow SEC contenders State, Tulane, and LSU. "With 16 wins in 17 outings to date, Kentucky simply acts as though it will not lose again, period," Baker wrote.<sup>105</sup>

Walters, another sports-based protector of the Closed Society, described MSU's SEC title chances as slim in the February 5, 1962, edition of his column. Walters anointed Kentucky as the eventual league champions, writing, "Adolph Rupp's Wildcats are the odds-on choice to replace State as the Dixie Dozen kingpin, with State and Tulane given only an outside chance of upsetting the dope bucket."<sup>106</sup>

After the Bulldogs soundly defeated Tulane, Walters changed his tone on the prospects of an SEC title for MSU in his February 7, 1962, column for the *Clarion-Ledger*. Walters called MSU "the one and only threat to Kentucky's bid for the Dixie Dozen title."<sup>107</sup> Walters concluded by addressing the concerns of an Ole Miss fan that complained to the *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer that the Rebels were being neglected in the press. Walters

responded by writing, “The only college basketball team in the state that any large number of fans and newspaper readers are interested in to any great extent is Mississippi State. If that be treason, then make the most of it.”<sup>108</sup> Two days later, Walters called the Bulldogs’ contest against the Wildcats the game of the year in the conference although MSU still had to play Tennessee before the Kentucky contest. Despite Walters’ premature musings on the MSU-Kentucky contest, the veteran sports writer did not reference the NCAA title hopes of either team.<sup>109</sup>

Fellow segregationist Arnold Hederman also wrote on MSU’s upcoming contests against the University of Tennessee and the University of Kentucky, matching Walters’ anointment of the latter contest as the conference game of the year. Hederman also warned against overlooking the Volunteers, but a victory in both games would “put the Mississippi State five in a position of ruling the roost for a while at least.”<sup>110</sup> Hederman would again reiterate that the game against the Wildcats would likely decide the conference title in the February 11, 1962, edition of his column.<sup>111</sup>

*Clarion-Ledger* sports writer Robert Fulton also got into the act of supplying opinion-based material to the Jackson-based newspaper in his column “High ‘N Inside.” In the February 10, 1962, edition, Fulton focused on State’s upcoming games against Tennessee and Kentucky, borrowing excerpts from an interview he conducted with McCarthy. The Bulldogs’ head coach would call the road trip the biggest the team had ever taken because of the pressure of essentially having to win the SEC title on the road. Fulton wrote if MSU were to win both games, the Bulldogs would have the advantage for the conference title based on the two team’s remaining schedules.<sup>112</sup>

Walters would be the first writer to reference the integrated NCAA tournament and the unwritten law in one of the Hederman-owned newspapers in his February 11, 1962, edition of “Shavin’s.” Walters, while previewing the evening match-up between the Bulldogs and the Wildcats, congratulated Rupp on what was supposed to be a down year for the

Kentucky team after coming off a 13-9 campaign during the 1960-61 season. Walters wrote that the Kentucky field general was “making a strong bid for SEC and national laurels” and, in the following passage, conceded the NCAA tournament bid to the Wildcats, painting a grim postseason picture for MSU.<sup>113</sup>

The Cats are a certainly to represent the SEC in the NCAA tournament. If Kentucky and State should tie for the loop crown, or even if State should upset the dope and take the title, Kentucky would go in the national event as the loop-runner-up because the Bulldogs would have to pass it up because of “established policy” in Mississippi against teams that have Negro players.<sup>114</sup>

Walters would go on to pick the Wildcats to defeat McCarthy’s team and take the SEC title. While Walters’ commentary on the NCAA tournament and the unwritten law failed to express a definitive opinion on the legitimacy of the agreement or State’s claim to the berth, the *Clarion-Ledger* sports columnist still supported and defended segregated athletics with his assumption of an NCAA tournament bid for the Wildcats. Theoretically, with the SEC title still up for grabs, the NCAA conference representative had yet to be decided, thus making both Kentucky and State viable options. Yet Walters’ explanation of the unwritten law defied that logic and presented postseason play as an unattainable goal for the Bulldogs.

On the day of the KU-MSU game, Walter wrote that “the duel to the death” would decide the SEC conference championship and called it not only the top contest in the Southeast but the “nation’s premier attraction,” a tough feat indeed for a Mississippi State team that Walters had already eliminated from the national championship picture.<sup>115</sup> In his preview, Walters made no reference to the NCAA tournament.

Baker, another supporter of the unwritten law and a member of the Hederman empire, called MSU’s battle with the Wildcats the biggest game of the year. “If the Maroons cannot do the job, the likelihood of anyone else halting the Wildcats is remote,” the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor wrote.<sup>116</sup> While Baker failed to address the chances of an NCAA bid, he defended the Bulldogs and the prevailing notion that the team was a less-than-credible challenger to the nation’s top basketball powers because of their schedule. While running

through Kentucky's past contests against the likes of Southern California, Temple, and Notre Dame, in comparison to MSU's yearly contest against Delta State, Baker argued that pundits should be aware of the constraints Mississippi State faced due to various issues including the unwritten law, writing, "They little appreciate the inability of State to schedule such outside powers, both from the standpoint of Negro players and from the financial end."<sup>117</sup> Baker ended by claiming a State win over Rupp's squad would justify MSU's position among college basketball's best teams.

In Baker's February 13, 1962, column, the veteran sports editor, who covered the win over Kentucky for the *Jackson Daily News*, addressed the national perception of the Bulldogs as one that should change in light of the victory. "The outside world discovered that something must be doing down there at the Cow College," Baker penned.<sup>118</sup> Of greater significance, Baker addressed the national championship aspirations of Mississippi State and, much like Fulton did in his article for the *Clarion-Ledger*, the Hederman sports reporter misled his audience in the following passage:

Mississippi State's basketball team has shown the world just how good it is. And the reward already has been promised. A trip to the N.C.A.A. championship finals at Louisville, Ky. March 23-24 no matter what . . . the assumption has formed rather solidly that the Maroons will pass a third time, even if they win the title unless some remarkably changed thinking comes in high places back home.<sup>119</sup>

Baker's commentary failed to address McCarthy's pregame promise to his team to purchase tickets to the NCAA tournament if they defeated the Wildcats, giving the perception that the team would participate in the postseason. Baker acknowledged that the unwritten law had kept the two-time SEC champions from the national championship tournament, but he never explained that the team would make the trip as spectators. Rather than making a case for the Bulldogs to participate in the tournament, regardless of justification, Baker's statements incorrectly gave the perception that a tournament bid would be accepted. Baker's

misleading commentary did little to change his role as a protector and proprietor of the unwritten law and appeared to be a reckless offering to the reading audience.

Walters, who penned his February 13, 1962, edition of “Shavin’s” before the State-Kentucky match-up, offered congratulations to the winner.<sup>120</sup> A day later, Walters addressed the Bulldogs’ triumph over the Wildcats in the February 14, 1962, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, three days after the game. Walters identified the tardiness of his commentary, calling his column “an echo” but later wrote, “If you think we’re not going to have our say-so you’re just plain nuts.”<sup>121</sup> Walters called the win over Kentucky “one of the all-time great sports accomplishments by a Mississippi team” and said the Bulldogs outsmarted and outplayed Rupp’s charges. “Magnolia Staters by the thousands have been dining on ‘stewed Wildcat a la Bulldog’ ever since, and we can testify that it is a most delectable dish,” he wrote. Walters admitted that he did not give the MSU contingent much of a chance going into Lexington, and the win would boost the team’s national reputation. “It will prove to be the biggest prestige boost-sports-wise, in Mississippi State history,” he wrote. Walters would go on to urge the Bulldogs to “finish the job” and win the SEC title, but he avoided referencing the NCAA tournament.

As for Baker, the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor returned to safer harbors by writing about McCarthy’s joyous exchange with reporters after the game, calling the Bulldogs’ head coach “the Casey Stengel of basketball and the joy of the Fourth Estate’s sports writing division.”<sup>122</sup> Despite again focusing on the team’s win over the Wildcats, the favorite in the SEC, Baker did not write about the conference championship or the NCAA tournament. The same could be said for Baker’s February 15, 1962, edition of “Baker’s Dozen,” as Baker addressed Billy Thompson of the *Lexington Herald*, who took issue with McCarthy’s slow-down tactics and called for the NCAA to adopt a 24-second shot clock; a suggestion the veteran sports editor called “childish.”<sup>123</sup>

Hederman used his “Highlights in Sports” column on February 14, 1962, to congratulate the Bulldogs on their win over Kentucky and wrote “the Maroons have that boost which could carry them on to the championship.”<sup>124</sup> Much like Walters, while Hederman reviewed the upcoming schedule for MSU, he failed to reference the NCAA tournament.

The *Clarion-Ledger*’s Charles M. Hills, a segregationist and member of the Citizens’ Council, also wrote about the Bulldogs, citing MSU alumnus and former cheerleader Sen. Billy Mitts of Enterprise, who led the State Senate in a cheer for MSU after the team’s win over Kentucky. Later in the day, Rep. Jimmy Love of Holmes proposed a resolution congratulating the Bulldogs for the win, which was adopted.<sup>125</sup> Hills expressed no opinion on MSU and the NCAA tournament.

Walters moved on from the Bulldogs’ battle with the Wildcats and previewed the team’s upcoming game against the University of Florida, but the veteran sports scribe made a greater case for Auburn University as opposed to the Mississippi-based Bulldogs. According to Walters, if the Plainsmen were to defeat Kentucky and win their remaining games, they would be tied with the Wildcats for second place in the conference and win the head-to-head tiebreakers, sending the Alabama-based university to the national championship tournament. As for the Bulldogs and a national title, Walters wrote, “Mississippi State has already let it be known that the Bulldogs will pass up the national tourney because of ‘established’ policy as regards the race problem, so the Bulldogs are out. But that doesn’t necessarily mean the Wildcats are in.”<sup>126</sup> While Walters’ comments may have been accurate, there was no record of MSU’s making any public statement validating his claims in the Mississippi press. Due to Walters’ past support of the unwritten law, it was more likely that Walters had simply assumed the Bulldogs would not play in the tournament because of past precedent.

Baker continued his conservative commentary on the eve of the Bulldogs’ contest against Luyk and the rest of the Gators from Gainesville. Baker warned the MSU team to not

take its remaining schedule lightly but failed to mention the conference title or the postseason.<sup>127</sup> The same could be said for his February 19, 1962, column in which he previewed the team's game against the University of Georgia and recapped the win over Florida.<sup>128</sup> Despite State's record of 20-1, Baker did not mention the SEC title in his column; however, he did write that the Bulldogs were "continuing its drive to a second straight SEC championship" in his preview of the week ahead for the college basketball teams in the Magnolia State.<sup>129</sup>

Walters next took issue with an article in the February 19, 1962, edition of *Sports Illustrated* by Ray Cave that profiled Rupp before the Wildcats lost to MSU.<sup>130</sup> Using the Bulldogs' victory as justification, Walters wondered if the Rupp article and subsequent defeat meant that McCarthy would be featured next in the pages of the national sports magazine. Citing McCarthy's relatively young age, 38, and his .742 winning percentage, Walters argued that the Bulldogs' field general was worthy of such an article because of the short time it had taken him to build MSU's program. "And the man who has brought about this happy situation is none other than McCarthy, a standout student of the game, a dedicated battler, a hard worker and an excellent recruiter," Walters wrote. "Maybe *Sports Illustrated* will wake up to the fact before too many more years pass that the days when Adolph Rupp and his Cats ruled the roost in the South — with little to no competition — are over and done with."<sup>131</sup> While McCarthy may have deserved some sort of national attention, Walters ignored the fact that McCarthy's MSU teams had never played in an NCAA tournament and still refrained from scheduling integrated foes, something that could not be said about Rupp and his Wildcats, thus contradicting Walters' criticism of the lack of competition for Rupp's squad.

Despite MSU's run of success, Baker focused his February 18, 1962, edition of "Baker's Dozen" on the changing face of the SEC from an offensive conference, once led by the likes of Bailey Howell and Bob Pettit, to a defensive circuit.<sup>132</sup> In a similar fashion, Hederman wrote on the upcoming basketball schedules for all Mississippi collegiate teams



and made only a fleeting reference to the Bulldogs' conference title aspirations by writing that MSU "with that big win over Kentucky, could go on for the SEC crown in a close battle with the Wildcats," ignoring the postseason.<sup>133</sup>

Hederman continued to display a degree of neglect in his commentary on the Bulldogs, using his February 20, 1962, column to examine the rosters of both the Wildcats and MSU and the outlook for both teams in the future. Focusing on Kentucky in the first two paragraphs, Hederman then turned his attention to the local contingent and wrote that McCarthy's charges would be in good shape in the 1962-63 season because only one player, Jack Berkshire, was graduating. "In fact, State and Kentucky should be in the thick of things, title-wise, for the next three years as both seem to be loaded for bear," Hederman wrote.<sup>134</sup> Despite his positive predictions for both the Wildcats and the Bulldogs, Hederman never mentioned the NCAA tournament.

On the same day, fellow Hederman sports editor Baker credited the effort put forth by the University of Georgia Bulldogs in their nine-point defeat at the hands of MSU. While Baker did not address the NCAA tournament, he wrote that if McCarthy should win his second consecutive SEC title "as it appears likely the way things are going, Babe and his boys are due some large recognition."<sup>135</sup> Baker's solution: A state-recognized day to honor the Bulldogs leader and Mississippi native. While a day celebrating McCarthy's tenure as MSU head coach may have been a worthwhile suggestion, if attention was what the Bulldogs truly deserved, Baker could have suggested playing for the national title. Like many of his fellow sports writers in the Closed Society, Baker often ignored or simply neglected to make or identify logical reasons and justifications for their opinions and arguments.

Hederman would repeat his performance from his February 20, 1962, column only five days later when he discussed the remaining schedules for all of the state's collegiate teams but wrote that MSU's game with Tulane "could mean a great deal for the SEC leaders at this time."<sup>136</sup> Absent was any reference to the NCAA tournament.

Rather than advocate an NCAA tournament appearance for the Bulldogs, Walters and a number of other sports reporters put more stock into the national perceptions of the team through the AP and the UPI polls. In his February 21, 1962, column, after the Bulldogs had moved up to fifth place in both polls, Walters wrote, “The characters who cast ballots in the basketball ranking polls finally took some notice of the Mississippi State Bulldogs this week, with Babe McCarthy’s crew being chosen for the No. 5 spot on both lists.”<sup>137</sup> Kentucky was the third-ranked team in both polls, a point that Walters disagreed with. “Kentucky has no business being rated above State, either. . . . The reason the pollsters put ‘Tucky ahead of State was because the Cats have played a tougher schedule, which recalls — once again — the difficulty the Ole Miss Rebels encounter in attaining high ranking in football, with too many weak foes among their victims.”<sup>138</sup> Again, Walters ignored that Kentucky played integrated foes and in the NCAA tournament, something that MSU had yet to do. Walters would also write that, “State’s fifth-place ranking among all the nation’s major college cage combines is something to be proud of, however, and the school — and the State of Mississippi — will benefit from this publicity fine,” indicating that the veteran columnist put more stock into the polls than in the obvious national stage provided by the NCAA tournament and a possible national championship.

Fulton, who earlier in the month declared that the Bulldogs were “going to the NCAA tournament” after the team was promised tickets in exchange for a win over Kentucky, wrote on the work MSU assistant coach Jerry Simmons had done for the team during the course of the season in his February 24, 1962, edition of “High N’ Inside.” While Fulton was quite complimentary in his feature on the former MSU track athlete and McCarthy’s right hand man, the *Clarion-Ledger* sports reporter failed to reference the team’s SEC title hopes, any aspirations of an NCAA tournament bid and, more importantly, Simmons’ bet with the team regarding the NCAA tournament.<sup>139</sup>

Going into MSU's final three games of the season, Baker initially focused on the on-court match-ups between the Bulldogs and LSU, Tulane, and Ole Miss. First, looking at the games against the Louisiana-based Tigers and Green Wave, Baker predicted victories for MSU but warned the Starkville contingent to avoid overconfidence.<sup>140</sup> After the team's win over the LSU, Baker wrote that the schedule featured rare match-ups of Magnolia State foes. Baker thoughtlessly explained: "Our teams show great reluctance to play one another, based greatly upon fear of a prestige loss. . . . Sometimes it seems that Mississippians worry more about losing face than Orientals, particularly in the world of athletics."<sup>141</sup> Other than Baker's racist commentary, the SEC title and any postseason hopes for the Bulldogs was absent in his work. In fact, Baker referenced the conference championship in his February 28, 1962, edition of "Baker's Dozen" when he simply stated that a win over in-state rival Ole Miss was needed for the crown.<sup>142</sup> In the same edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Bob Howie's latest cartoon depicted a MSU basketball player stepping into a bear trap labeled "Ole Miss," under the heading, "One Last Hazard."<sup>143</sup>

On February 26, 1962, Walters wrote that the Bulldogs were two games away for the SEC title and, with an Auburn win over Kentucky, State would "rule the SEC roost alone. . . . The McCarthymen have absolutely no intention of faltering in the stretch with the big prize now just two victories away."<sup>144</sup> Walters, again did not reference the NCAA tournament. The same could be said for his March 1, 1962, column that previewed the game between MSU and Ole Miss. Walters predicted an MSU victory and the SEC title but stayed away from any postseason aspirations for the ball club despite the AP reporting on the same day that Lambert had been asking his constituents about the possibility of the Bulldogs playing in the NCAA tournament.<sup>145</sup> Hederman predicted a hard-fought victory for the Starkville five and hoped for a Kentucky loss at the hands of Tulane, which "would push the Maroons into the first place standings without any doubt."<sup>146</sup>

Like many of his colleagues, Baker addressed the UPI and AP rankings and the perception of the Bulldogs from the national point of view. In his March 1, 1962, column, Baker wrote that he was befuddled by the fifth-place status of State in both national basketball polls, considering that Kentucky remained ahead of the Starkville contingent as the fourth best team in the country. "It is difficult to explain how the sports writers or the coaches could be so stubborn," Baker wrote. "The possibility that Mississippi State is no better than the fifth team in the country might be accepted. . . . But the proof was displayed for 13,000 to see that the Maroons are better than the Wildcats, even in the Kentucky coliseum. . . . What else is needed?"<sup>147</sup> Baker's argument ignored the absence of integrated and nationally recognized foes on the Bulldogs' schedule, a logical justification for the low regard others had for MSU outside of Mississippi.

On the eve of the season finale against Ole Miss, Baker wrote that the Bulldogs would have to take their rivals from Oxford seriously in order to come out with a win, referencing MSU's 1959 season-ending victory over the lowly Rebels 23-16. "Thus with State standing on the threshold of a Southeastern Conference championship, equaling its greatest record ever and shooting for high national rankings, there will be nothing to hold back the Maroons from an outstanding effort," Baker wrote, identifying the conference crown but neglecting any national title hopes.<sup>148</sup>

Fulton, in the March 3, 1962, edition of "High N' Inside," directly addressed the unwritten law and the NCAA tournament hopes of the Bulldogs. Fulton predicted that an Ole Miss victory over MSU would fuel rumors of McCarthy's impending departure from Starkville and eliminate any discussion about a Bulldog berth in the postseason. "There would be a noticeable absence of opinion about Mississippi's unwritten law which prohibits Mississippi athletic teams from competing against integrated teams outside of the state," Fulton wrote.<sup>149</sup> If Mississippi State were to defeat the Rebels, "State would have clinched the right to represent the SEC in the NCAA regional tournament in Iowa City, Iowa and the

Maroons and thousands of cage fans over the state would wait for someone to make a decision” as to whether or not the Bulldogs could play in the tournament, which in Fulton’s words “would result in the most buck-passing since the day Confederate money was ruled worthless.”<sup>150</sup> While Fulton had made a point of avoiding all conversations on an NCAA berth for the Bulldogs and failed to express his own opinion on postseason basketball for MSU, he clearly predicted another episode of political and social debate on the merits of integrated play within the Closed Society. Much like Jimmie McDowell of *Jackson State Times*, Fulton referred to said debate as “buck passing,” putting the responsibility of upholding the unwritten law on the shoulders of the political purveyors of the Magnolia State.

Baker failed to write about the win over Ole Miss, the conference title, and the debate surrounding the NCAA tournament in the March 4, 1962, edition of his column and focused on the stability of the basketball coaches in the state and the broadcasting of the Kentucky-Mississippi State game on local station WJTV-Channel 12.<sup>151</sup> Baker’s constant neglect of the Bulldogs and the integrated national championship tournament ended on March 5, 1962, in the pages of the *Jackson Daily News*. Baker addressed the pro-NCAA sentiment expressed by McCarthy and pondered a future of segregated basketball in Mississippi. In the aftermath of the Bulldogs’ title-clinching win over the Rebels, Baker wrote, “The discontent of being left at home while all other conference champions elsewhere about the land prepare for NCAA tournament competition was heavy in the air.”<sup>152</sup> Baker questioned the accuracy of McCarthy’s belief that most citizens of the Magnolia State wanted MSU to play in the tournament, writing that it “could hardly be determined for it is one thing sure to never end up on a ballot. And with such sentiment unable to be precisely determined, those who control the decision on such a question maintain the stay-at-home policy for Mississippi athletics.” Baker also theorized that the result of foregoing three NCAA tournaments in a four-year span would affect recruiting and the sustainability of the program’s success. Pointing to the then-freshmen team’s record of 9-11, Baker claimed that many of McCarthy’s out-of-state recruits

failed to come to MSU because of the lack of an opportunity to play for a national title. Baker wrote that the MSU head coach was troubled by the unwritten law. “This situation is one which has brought considerable division of opinion to the state and one which apparently is not going to be resolved anytime soon,” Baker wrote, without calling the gentleman’s agreement by name. “It already has been costly to the future of basketball at Mississippi State – and the state’s other schools as well, one must realize – and quite possibly will become increasingly so.”<sup>153</sup> Baker then addressed the future of McCarthy, wondering if the Baldwin native would follow the lead of former Southern Mississippi head coach Fred Lewis and leave the Magnolia State in order to have the chance to win on a bigger stage. “Can Maroons fans expect a man of McCarthy’s drive and ambition to accept year after year the staying at home when the likes of Kentucky goes off to represent the SEC in NCAA play?” Baker asked. “This is the thing that State folks are pondering seriously today as they consider the unwritten law in Mississippi.”<sup>154</sup> While Baker failed to express a definitive opinion on the unwritten law, he clearly addressed the merit of the segregationist agreement and the overall effect it had on Mississippi’s athletic landscape. Baker’s commentary was a progressive step forward for the Jackson sports editor despite his attack on McCarthy’s commentary and his failure to express a true opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, Baker essentially asked the Closed Society if the enforcement of the unwritten law had become a handicap to the betterment of their hallowed athletic institutions, a shocking notion for one who spent considerable time ignoring or denouncing the threat of integrated athletics since 1955.

After the Bulldogs clinched the conference championship, Walters wrote that MSU “proved they are genuine champions and worthy of all the plaudits coming their way when they rallied in the second half Saturday night to turn back a scrapping band of Ole Miss Rebels, 63-58.”<sup>155</sup> After covering the spoils of the Bulldogs’ season, the veteran sports reporter addressed MSU and the NCAA tournament, writing that the team’s conference championship “also earned them the right to represent the SEC in the NCAA national

championship campaigning, a privilege that will be passed up because of 'state policy' which forbids athletic competition between teams of state institutions and other teams that number Negroes among their players . . . not only brought honor to themselves and Mississippi State University, but have also brought honor and national recognition to the State of Mississippi."<sup>156</sup> Although Walters expressed no opinion on MSU's right to participate in the integrated postseason tournament, in the wake of the University of Wisconsin's upset victory over the top-ranked Ohio State Buckeyes, the future Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer wrote, "Thousands of Mississippi basketball fans will always wonder just how Mississippi State's Bulldogs would stack up against the top teams from other sections of the country." Walters also reprinted segments of *Sports Illustrated's* Mervin Hyman's article, which claimed the Bulldogs were the best team in the southern United States. Hyman wrote that most teams that win the SEC participate in the NCAA's postseason "except when that team is Mississippi State. When the Bulldogs win, they have to beg off because state policy does not permit them to compete in integrated competition."<sup>157</sup>

Hederman played it safe in his next edition of "Highlights in Sports." While the segregationist congratulated McCarthy and his troops on their SEC conference title, he failed to reference an NCAA berth for MSU and, even in his discussion of Kentucky's final two contests, did not reference the Wildcats' place in the tournament.<sup>158</sup>

The column written by Fulton on the aftermath of the Bulldogs-Rebels battle was followed by the March 6, 1962, edition of "High N' Inside" in which the sports writer focused the bulk of his column on a letter from *Jacksonville Journal* sports editor Jack Hairston, a native Mississippian who sent Fulton a letter to denounce the unwritten law. Fulton printed the Florida-based Hairston's correspondence verbatim. "To the best of my knowledge," Harrison wrote, "Mississippi is the only state in the union whose teams have not competed against Negro athletes in one sport or another in the last three or four years."<sup>159</sup> Hairston clarified that his position was based more on the athletic opportunities lost and not

social equality. “My interest is not in crusading for integration. As a former resident of Mississippi, I’m still interested in Mississippi and I hate to see them deprived of their chances at national recognition.”<sup>160</sup> Fulton expressed no opinion on the matter although his publication of the letter could have been interpreted as the Jackson sports writer’s support for Hairston’s commentary.

Fulton later wrote about a campaign started by “supporters of Mississippi State University” to purchase McCarthy a brand-new car and provided readers with an address to send contributions for the new vehicle. “This will probably tend to sweeten the bad taste left in McCarthy’s mouth by his not being allowed to take his Maroon basketball team to the NCAA regional play-offs.” Fulton’s remarks were the first to allude to the Bulldogs’ leader as harboring some resentment for the binding nature of the unwritten law. To that point, the *Clarion-Ledger* had only described McCarthy as being disappointed.

In the wake of neighboring Memphis State’s loss of head coach Bob Vanatta to the University of Missouri, Walters wrote that there were many Tiger fans in Memphis who wanted the school to offer the vacant position to McCarthy. Walters wondered if the Mississippi native would be willing to turn down a chance at a third straight conference title with the bulk of his roster remaining the same for the 1962-63 season. Walters predicted that McCarthy would remain at MSU but added that the desire for national success could be a determining factor in the viability of the coach’s relationship with Mississippi State. “We’re simply ‘guessing’ that a year or two from now, if recruiting problems prove to be a real handicap, if Mississippi teams are still barred from competing for national honors, and if a good offer comes along from a top school that does not pass up NCAA or NIT events, McCarthy — in justice to himself and his future — will be moving along,” Walters wrote. “We certainly hope that things DO NOT work out that way, but it’s logical to assume that they could.”<sup>161</sup> The statement was as daring as it got for the segregationist Walters. While the sports scribe often defended the unwritten law with his denouncement of tournament



opportunities for Mississippi collegiate sports teams or with his silence on the issue, his March 14, 1962, commentary was, more or less, a plea to prevent the potential departure of McCarthy.

Walters would later take issue with the absence of any MSU Bulldogs on both the United States Basketball Writers National and Southern All-Star squads. Walters admitted that the scoring averages of Mitchell and Stroud of roughly 17 points each was less than the other 10 players selected and that “State’s schedule was strictly sectional,” an indirect nod to the absence of northern and, more importantly, integrated teams on the Bulldogs’ schedule.<sup>162</sup>

After Baker’s surprising questioning of the unwritten law, the Jackson sports editor ended his commentary on the Bulldogs’ 1962-63 season by addressing the selection of one player from the SEC, Kentucky’s Nash, for All-American status. While Baker admitted that he could argue with the ten selected for the team, he did object to the absence of a member of the Mississippi State team. Baker attacked the national perception of the Wildcats: “Not a single, solitary Mississippi Stater. Not nary a one. Nobody. Period. . . . The outside world may think that Kentucky is hell on wheels. . . . But down here the folks know that Mississippi State won 24 times and lost but once. . . . Ignore the Maroons if you will, but they will not go away. And relish the thought, on Kentucky, that you WILL be playing at Mississippi State next year.”<sup>163</sup>

Baker’s commentary toed a middle ground that would safely keep him from opposing the Closed Society yet offered enough opposition to, at least, question the observance of the unwritten law. He expressed a definitive opinion only in cases where State’s status as a major college basketball power came into question and, despite his pondering of the merit of the unwritten law, kept opinions that may have hurt the mission of the Closed Society to himself. Whether or not Baker supported the elimination of the gentleman’s agreement was unknown, and the lack of any real expression of opinion and/or opposition in his work during the 1962-63 season did not help.

Hederman closed his commentary by taking a neglectful route to express a degree in disappointment in the Bulldogs' final place in the AP and UPI polls, respectfully. While MSU finished in fourth place in both national rankings, Hederman disagreed with the third place status of Kentucky. "What we are wondering about is 'how in the cat's hair' can Kentucky finish in third place after the Maroons had defeated the Wildcats?"<sup>164</sup> While Hederman's point did follow simple sports logic, he overlooked the obvious justification of the presence of integrated foes on Kentucky's schedule and the Wildcats' status as a willing NCAA tournament participant.

The third of the Hederman newspapers, the *Hattiesburg American*, also took the typical route in the journalistic community of the Closed Society and chose to offer little to no commentary on the NCAA tournament or the unwritten law. The first opinion-based article that addressed the Bulldogs' 1961-62 campaign came from Paul Morgan, who wrote in the February 7, 1962, edition that the team's surprisingly dominate win over Tulane had made a believer out of the Hattiesburg sports editor. Morgan did not reference the conference title or the NCAA tournament; rather he took issue with the ninth place AP national ranking for the former Maroons in comparison to the second-place Kentucky Wildcats. "These rankings don't mean a thing to us," Morgan quipped.<sup>165</sup>

Morgan would again write about the Bulldogs going into their showdown with Kentucky on February 12, 1962, and while the Hattiesburg sports editor argued that the Wildcats could be beaten at home, Rupp's charges had only lost 13 times since the 1942-43 basketball season.<sup>166</sup> Morgan refrained from making a prediction on the contest and did not reference State's SEC or NCAA title aspirations.

After MSU's triumph over the Wildcats, Morgan called the win "among the greatest cage upsets of modern times."<sup>167</sup> Morgan admitted that he did not give the contingent from Starkville much of a chance but wrote that MSU "showed us that perhaps, indeed, they are one of the best basketball teams in the nation. Only one thing could make the State campus a

happier place than it is today, a football victory over rival Ole Miss.”<sup>168</sup> Morgan failed to reference either an SEC title or the NCAA tournament in conjunction with the MSU. While many in the Bulldogs’ nation of fans may have wanted a football victory over the Rebels, it would have been logical for Morgan to wish for the more attainable conference title or a national championship.

In anticipation of McCarthy’s March 13, 1962, visit to Mississippi’s “Hub City” and Hattiesburg High School, Morgan wrote on February 23, 1962, that the MSU head coach was a mere three wins away from the conference championship, but he failed to discuss the postseason.<sup>169</sup> The same could be said for Morgan’s March 3 and March 5, 1962, columns. In the March 3 edition of “The Sports Hub,” the Hattiesburg sports editor previewed the Bulldogs game against Ole Miss and, while Morgan referenced the SEC title for MSU on a number of occasions in the column, there was never any reference to the NCAA tournament despite the column’s publication only two days after the AP reported on Lambert’s litmus test on the state legislature and the unwritten law.<sup>170</sup> On March 5, 1962, only a day after McCarthy expressed his disappointment to the press about not being allowed to participate due to the existing gentleman’s agreement, Morgan mused about MSU’s title-clinching win over the Rebels but did not discuss the NCAA tournament.<sup>171</sup> In total, Morgan’s work did little to push the sociological and dated views of his readers and expressed no opinion on the merit of integrated athletics or State’s right to play for the national title.

The *Starkville Daily News* published little editorial material on the hometown Bulldogs during the 1961-62 season. In fact, the first opinion-based material to reference the “McCarthyism” was published on February 15, 1962, in the aftermath of the win over Kentucky. The editorial, presumably written by editor Sherill Nash, disputed a report in the *Birmingham News* that claimed the students on the Starkville-based campus rioted after the victory. Nash wrote that his reporters were on campus and could only report “a lot of shouting, a lot of cowbells ringing, and some burning of rubbish in trash cans plus a few

explosions from firecrackers.”<sup>172</sup> Nash concluded by writing that the paper of the people of Starkville was “proud of the student body at Mississippi State. . . . We hope the Birmingham paper sees fit to retract the untrue information published.”<sup>173</sup> Nash did not discuss the Bulldogs’ NCAA chances but publisher Henry Harris would do so in a later column.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Starkville Daily News* published sports-based opinion and commentary under the byline “The Daily News Sports Staff,” meaning pinpointing a specific individual as the author was somewhat difficult. The sports staff first discussed MSU in the February 17, 1962, edition of the *Starkville Daily News*. Citing Nash’s coverage of McCarthy’s discussion with the local Rotary Club, the editorial stated that the Bulldogs’ leader would not overlook any of its foes on the team’s run to the conference championship, especially Florida, who defeated the then-Maroons the previous year in a late-season match-up that could have impacted conference title hopes for both teams.<sup>174</sup> While the column stressed that MSU should remain cautious during the upcoming games, the NCAA tournament or merits for the team’s place in the tournament was not discussed.

The *Starkville Daily News*, which did not report on Lambert’s inquiry to the state legislature about relaxing the unwritten law to allow State to play in the postseason as discussed previously in this chapter, provided copies of the March 6, 1962, edition of the *Starkville Daily News* to each of the coaches and players at MSU. On the front page, Harris and Nash featured a small letter to the Bulldogs, congratulating them and thanking them for a wonderful season. In a nod to go to the NCAA playoffs, the letter stated “regardless of tournaments, we think you are the greatest basketball team in the Nation.”<sup>175</sup> Inside, the paper featured a full-page ad paid for by various local sponsors congratulating the Bulldogs and McCarthy on winning the conference championship.<sup>176</sup> In the same issue, the segregationist Harris congratulated the victorious Bulldogs on its share of the SEC championship in his column “Pencil Shavings,” but the controversial publisher was quick to temper any thoughts or discussion of an NCAA tournament invitation as demonstrated in the following passage:

It means that (once again) there will be a lot of talk about State going to the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament. But let's not compromise with principles. Let's not even consider it. Some of our young friends in college may not agree with our views on this subject right now — but some day they will. And we are willing to wait. Being old enough to leave home or to go into the military service, or even vote, doesn't always signal the arrival of full and mature judgment. There is far more to this business of playing integrated basketball teams than can be confined to the walls of a gymnasium. Once action is underway, few players could tell by the shape of the court or the size of the baskets whether they are playing in Mississippi or Michigan. You can't describe principles in geographical terms.<sup>177</sup>

The Starkville sports staff referenced the lost opportunity for the Bulldogs in its column on March 8, 1962, writing that MSU's fans would see their team play again; however, "It won't be in the form of postseason game between Babe McCarthy's Southeastern Conference champs and an Atlantic Coast Conference power. . . . Some hope was held for such a game for awhile but it is not expected to materialize now."<sup>178</sup> McCarthy's squad was to take on a team of alumni later in the month.<sup>179</sup> The Starkville sports staff expressed no opinion on the validity of MSU's case for an NCAA berth.

#### The Long Shadow Cast by Jimmie McDowell

While the outspoken McDowell was no longer in the Magnolia State to lead the charge against the unwritten law, other sports reporters and editors surprisingly stepped up to challenge the principles surrounding the gentleman's agreement even if they were motivated more by the allure of a national championship and less by social or civil equality.

One such newspaper was the Columbus-based *Commercial Dispatch* and sports editor Herb Phillips, who would both question the legitimacy and need for the unwritten law while proclaiming his devotion to the Closed Society's segregationist lifestyle. Early in the debate surrounding the 1962 NCAA tournament and the Bulldogs, the *Dispatch's* place in that argument was unclear. The first opinion-based material to appear in the Columbus-based newspaper came in the February 12, 1962, edition. Wayne King, a sports writer with the *Dispatch*, previewed the game between the Bulldogs and the Wildcats in his column "Sports Off The Cuff." While King's commentary differed little from his journalistic contemporaries

in Mississippi, he did call out Kentucky leader Rupp for his recruitment of black athletes to the Wildcat basketball team. “Another Mississippi institution which Rupp has threatened to tear down is segregated athletic contests,” King wrote. “Rupp gave athletic scholarships to two negroes this year and vowed that when they reach the varsity he will play them against all foes. . . . ‘If any school refuses to play me, they will simply have to forfeit,’ said Rupp.”<sup>180</sup> King’s attack on Rupp for threatening the sanctity of the unwritten law was somewhat surprising considering that the *Commercial Dispatch* would eventually take a stance against the gentleman’s agreement. By King’s work, one could logically deduct that the sports writer believed in the unwritten law and the principles of the Closed Society. Despite Rupp’s recruitment, a black athlete would not appear in the SEC until 1966.

Phillips penned his first column referencing the MSU contingent on February 14, 1962; two days after the team defeated the Wildcats. Phillips, in his column titled “‘N In This Cornah!,” congratulated the Bulldogs on the victory and predicated a maroon and white path to the SEC title. “They’ve got five regular season games remaining (all versus conference foes) on their schedule and guess where they’ll all be played? That’s right! Every last one of ‘em will be staged in the both lovely (to the State cagers) and terrible (to their foes) Cow Palace on the University’s campus,” he wrote.<sup>181</sup> Phillips’ confidence aside, the Columbus sports editor did not reference the NCAA tournament or the unwritten law.

The following day, Phillips continued to bask in the glow of the Bulldogs’ victory over the Wildcats, writing, “Fact is, it was the first time ever that the Mississippi breed of Bulldogs ever tumbled the feline Kentuckians up yonder in the land of the thoroughbreds. They thus joined a quite exclusive club (13 members now) composed of quintets who have accomplished the feat over the last 20 years.”<sup>182</sup> Phillips then focused on the comments of various team members, but again, did not write about postseason play.

A rarity in the Closed Society, Phillips criticized the unwritten law after MSU ran its record to 21-1. In the February 21, 1962, edition of the *Commercial Dispatch*, Phillips

questioned the need for the gentleman's agreement and held out hope for a change of heart by the university and the purveyors of the Closed Society. "It's altogether sad and disillusioning that the Babe won't be able to carry his hand-shaped band of courtmen on into the NCAA tournaments ahead," Phillips wrote. "Perhaps the 'unwritten law' that keeps teams from the Magnolia State at home while every other outstanding club in the U.S.A. is after the highest plums in sports will be lifted this time — just perhaps."<sup>183</sup>

Phillips' commentary, while not particularly scathing, was shocking nonetheless because very few writers spoke out in favor of an NCAA tournament berth and against the unwritten law. Even Phillips' simple questioning of the ban indicated that at least some in the sports journalism community had become tired of the seasonal debate involving integrated athletics and MSU.

Phillips' February 22, 1962, edition of "N In This Cornah!" focused on the "Non-Stater" rule that prohibited the twelve state junior colleges with athletic programs from recruiting out-of-state players, by publishing excerpts from a letter penned by East Mississippi Junior College at Scooba president R. A. Harbour. Harbour's letter attempted to clarify the rule and pointed to the need to keep state students at Mississippi's community colleges. In terms of a national perception of a segregated Mississippi-based team, Harbour wrote, "The matter of Mississippi Junior Colleges losing their national rating, if they should, seems of little importance since a Mississippi junior college cannot participate in any sectional bowl game where there is integration."<sup>184</sup> In response to Harbour's reference to the unwritten law, Phillips took the opportunity to make a statement about MSU at the conclusion of the college president's letter.

"Memo to Babe McCarthy: It's not important that you win the Southeastern Conference championship this year or ever," Phillips sarcastically quipped. "For you too, 'cannot participate in any sectional bowl (let's substitute tournament for bowl) where there is integration.'"<sup>185</sup>

The following day, Phillips used his column to promote his weekly televised version of “‘N In This Cornah!” on WCBI-TV in Columbus. Phillips wrote he planned to welcome fellow sports writer Robert Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger* to the weekly broadcast. While he expressed no opinion on the matter, Phillips indicated to his reading audience that he and Fulton would discuss the growing controversy involving MSU, including “segregation, the NCAA tournaments coming-up and what is going to be smoldering from the mixture.”<sup>186</sup>

Phillips made his feelings on the unwritten law known in the February 25, 1962, edition of the *Commercial Dispatch* as the sports editor professed to randomly discussing the gentleman’s agreement with four individuals he met on the street. Phillips wrote that three of the four favored the elimination of the unwritten law, although all four claimed to be segregationists. Phillips claimed that he agreed with the abolishment of the gentleman’s agreement, writing “this ‘unwritten law’ regarding the participation of state schools in integrated competition is certainly a handicap, and growing more meaningful all of the time. Actually, it appears that within the not-too-distant future, this ‘unwritten law’ will force the universities and colleges of the Magnolia State into a flimsy little ‘Mississippi Conference’ where Ole Miss, Miss. State and Southern will be competing such rivals as Millsaps, Delta State, Mississippi College and Belhaven.”<sup>187</sup> Before continuing with his argument, Phillips made it a point to clarify that his position was based on athletic merit and not civil rights in the following passage:

I, like 95 percent of all other white Mississippians, am and always have been a 100 percent racial segregationist. This statement cannot be intelligently challenged by anyone! After making that point perfectly clear allow me to state that all of Mississippi’s native athletes who go into the service and play ball there or who advance in a professional athletic career, compete against, as well as with, negroes. This doesn’t mean they personally have to socialize with them, for I’ll wager 99 percent of them don’t. . . . Why can’t our athletes, who are consistently so magnificent on the field of play and who bring so much genuine admiration and publicity to our Magnolia State, deal in the same way OUT from our borders with mongrelized teams as other Southern fieldings have been forced for sports’ sake into doing?<sup>188</sup>



Phillips added that it was inevitable that integrated play would come to the SEC, citing Rupp's initial recruitment of black athletes but sympathized with the enforcement of the state's segregationist athletic standard, writing that the issue "goes deeper than sports" and identified the prevailing fear that integrated play would lead to the end of segregation in Mississippi. "The nation's courts, politics and big business all seem hell-bent on forcing a curtailment of the Southern way of life at any rate," Phillips wrote. "Folks who only a few years ago boasted 'It'll (integration) never come — never be allowed in Mississippi!' are now saying 'It's coming!' The time to decide on the matter is now. The grief that would come about with the fall of the nation's finest and mightiest athletic systems, per population, would be tremendous — especially if the reason for the toppling proved negligible."<sup>189</sup> While Phillips' proposed elimination of the unwritten law seemed on the surface as a nod toward the progression of equality in the state, the racist rhetoric utilized in his work negated the potential impact of his writing. While asking for the lifting of the ban on integrated athletics, the Columbus sports editor dismissed blacks as mongrels lacking the ability to function socially. It is clear in his work that his justification was only for the chance at a national championship.

Phillips would make the same point on his aforementioned television show with Fulton as referenced in the February 26, 1962, edition of "N In This Cornah!" Phillips wrote that his friend "Steamboat" agreed with him that most people in Mississippi would like to see State in the NCAA playoffs, and playing integrated foes outside the Magnolia State "could only be beneficial to us and our way of life, and would not have any adverse, undesired effects."<sup>190</sup> News of Phillips' and Fulton's televised comments on the unwritten law appeared in the *Starkville Daily News* via the AP. The article indicated that both men thought the unwritten law should be eliminated but Fulton said it was highly unlikely, a contradictory statement of sorts for the Jackson-based sports writer.<sup>191</sup>

Phillips' March 1, 1962, effort focused on a letter from fellow Mississippian and U.S. Air Force airman O. J. Lawrence, Jr. Lawrence had, at one time, supported Ole Miss student editor Jimmie Robertson's pleas for the Rebels to play integrated Michigan State University in football, much to the dismay of Phillips. Lawrence wrote to Phillips to discuss the controversy surrounding MSU and the NCAA tournament and voiced his support for MSU's appearance in the playoffs "no matter who the opposition may be."<sup>192</sup> Lawrence questioned native Mississippians' pride in their state, especially in light of its denial at opportunities for college national championships. "I am sure many Mississippians and a majority of the players would like very much for their teams to enter these tournaments and possibly win some national championships," Lawrence wrote. "I believe this could be done without destroying the principles the people of Mississippi are trying so desperately to uphold. At the same time it would give Mississippians something else to be proud of."<sup>193</sup> In response, Phillips agreed with Lawrence and sarcastically marveled at his change in ideology. "Perhaps somewhere in there between the two mailings he has come to realize that he wasn't setting a bunch of unseeing fools straight back on the home front with his worldly knowledge acquired as a roving member of the U.S. Air Force. Perhaps his liberal wisdom vanished in the light of cold, hard facts and intelligent argument," Phillips quipped.<sup>194</sup>

Prior to the season-ending battle against the Rebels, Phillips again discussed the unwritten law in detail, calling for state politicians to be consistent in their views on race relations. Phillips wrote that the Bulldogs would not be going to the playoffs because "some legislators in Jackson and their 'unwritten law' against playing integrated competition outside of the state." Phillips added that MSU "was being cheated out of their rightful reward for superiority. Again they are the sufferers of a ridiculous 'enforced for some, lifted for others' ruling like one found in no other Southern state." Phillips then proposed that all events should fall under the guise of the unwritten law for the sake of consistency, thus eliminating Miss America candidates, college quiz and debate groups, 4-H organizations, civic and church

clubs to name a few. “What’s fair for one segment should be fair for all. So be fair or else lift the bonds that bind and let our athletes go,” Phillips concluded.<sup>195</sup> Again, while Phillips’ work was opinionated, based upon his stand against integration, he only wished for athletic superiority for Mississippi and not equality.

Despite Phillips’ logical rationale for the elimination of the unwritten law, at least in an athletic context, he still used his March 4, 1962, column to express a degree of outrage over the Bulldogs’ AP and UPI national poll rankings behind Kentucky. While Phillips used the rankings and Stroud’s absence on any of the AP’s All-American squads, the Columbus-based editor acknowledged one of the more logical justifications for MSU’s poor reputation in the eyes of the nation’s sporting press: The lack of integrated teams on its schedule. However, Phillips painted the Magnolia State as a victim of sorts and attacked both polls on their validity. “We Southerners and especially we Mississippians, who are daily pictured by outsiders as ‘discriminators’ are being discriminated against by some of those same depictees — and that’s one reason,” Phillips quipped. “The other is that those polls are a lot of hooey so packed with political maneuvering and pressuring that they’re no where near accurate, representative or honorable.”<sup>196</sup> While Phillips may have objected to the unwritten law, the professed segregationist believed in the principle behind it and supported and defended the Closed Society.

Despite Phillips’ protective remarks in terms of the southern way of life, he addressed Mississippi’s unwritten law one more time, on March 6, 1962. Phillips again lamented over the Bulldogs’ ranking in the national basketball polls and blamed the national perception of MSU on the state’s gentleman’s agreement. “This state’s ‘unwritten law’ against playing integrated competition outside of the state is responsible for this, and will continue to plague Mississippi sports of every season,” Phillips argued. “Perhaps State has got the best cage team in the country — but we and especially the pessimistic fans outside the

Mid-South will never know whether they have or not because the Bulldogs are given no chance to play the other top teams in the NCAA playoffs. . . . It's a shame."<sup>197</sup>

*Daily Herald* sports editor Dick Lightsey began his commentary on the Bulldogs' season on February 1, 1962, in his daily column, and the professed segregationist wrote that MSU was in the midst of its most difficult part of the season with an upcoming trip to Baton Rouge to play LSU. Foreseeing victories by McCarthy's squad against the Tigers and the Tulane Green Wave, Lightsey wrote that the February 13, 1962, contest against Kentucky could decide the SEC championship. "State has a good basketball team," Lightsey wrote. "But just how good it remains to be seen."<sup>198</sup>

After defeating LSU, Lightsey again wrote that the game against Tulane would be a difficult one. The Biloxi-based sports editor still held out hopes for a conference championship for the Bulldogs but wrote that anything less would give the team two losses and an "almost impossible chance of overtaking Kentucky."<sup>199</sup> Lightsey would again write about the upcoming contest for the Bulldogs in his February 7, 1962, column, but like many other sportswriters, he focused on the Bulldogs' games against Tennessee and Kentucky with the bulk of his attention going to Rupp's charges.<sup>200</sup> Two days later, the *Daily Herald's* sports editor used his column to compare Rupp and McCarthy. Lightsey, in a complementary fashion, proclaimed the Bulldogs' general as the conference's Coach of the Year if his team could beat the Wildcats in the Blue Grass State.<sup>201</sup> The day of the game, Lightsey predicted an MSU victory but warned that the victor would still "have to win several games before being assured of the SEC crown."<sup>202</sup>

After MSU's victory over the Wildcats, Lightsey first addressed the NCAA tournament and gave Rupp's charges the advantage over the Starkville contingent in the national championship chase despite the loss. "McCarthy has already announced his Maroons will pass up the NCAA event if they win the title — as they have done in two of the past three years," Lightsey penned, conceding the opportunity to Kentucky despite advocating a

tournament appearance for the Starkville contingent in 1959 and expressing a degree of regret over the team's tournament absence in 1961.<sup>203</sup> Lightsey returned to more conservative musings the following day when he looked at the Bulldogs and the rest of the SEC from a statistical perspective.<sup>204</sup> The same could be said for his February 16, 1962, effort, when the sports editor clarified that MSU had defeated the Wildcats in Lexington before — in 1924 by the score of 17-16.<sup>205</sup> Lightsey did not reference the SEC crown nor NCAA tournament in either column.

Despite the Bulldogs' success, by February 24, 1962, Lightsey still had yet to address the national title merits of Mississippi State. During State's previous SEC championship season, the Biloxi-based Lightsey was one of the few vocal sports voices against the gentleman's agreement despite his professed belief in segregation. In his February 24, 1962, edition of "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," Lightsey wrote that the Bulldogs were only three wins away from another SEC title and predicted victory for McCarthy's team but wrote little else.<sup>206</sup> Lightsey did the same two days later, openly hoping for an MSU title and a Kentucky defeat but he never referenced the postseason.<sup>207</sup>

Lightsey finally offered a glimpse of his 1959 form when, in his February 28, 1962, column, the Biloxi sports editor wrote that the Bulldogs deserved a chance to play in the national title tournament; however, he considered the opportunity a lost one. "The Maroons, needing a victory over Ole Miss Saturday night, will probably wind up deadlocked with Kentucky for the SEC title and we feel they should be allowed to participate in the NCAA tournament," Lightsey claimed. "But, because Mississippi teams have a policy of not playing against integrated athletic teams, they will have to pass up the opportunity and a possible chance at glory."<sup>208</sup>

While Lightsey spent considerable time being noncommittal about the unwritten law and the chances of an MSU postseason appearance, he would use his March 2, 1962, column to make his strongest editorial statement concerning the gentleman's agreement, as he argued

for its elimination. “Since 1956, the Magnolia state has not allowed any of its athletic teams to compete against teams with Negro players. We see no reason for such an ‘unwritten law,’ especially when Mississippi teams go outside of the state to play against other squads,” Lightsey wrote.<sup>209</sup> Interestingly, Lightsey argued that any inquiry into a possible postseason berth for the Bulldogs was “premature” despite publishing his column days before the Bulldogs would conclude the SEC regular season.

Four days after the Bulldogs wrapped up the SEC title, Lightsey called for MSU to move up in the AP and UPI national basketball polls and named the Bulldogs the best team in the country. Because of State’s fifth place status in both polls, Lightsey called efforts to rank the nation's best teams “futile” and said it was merely a “popularity contest.” Lightsey questioned why the Bulldogs were ranked behind Kentucky even though MSU defeated the Wildcats in Lexington. Despite the logical nature of Lightsey’s argument, the obvious justification for MSU’s less-than-stellar national profile, the lack of integrated teams on its schedule, was never mentioned. In closing, Lightsey wrote, “People who have seen them in action regard the Maroons as the best collegiate team in the country and, if not, certainly no worse than second.”<sup>210</sup>

Lightsey again stressed his opposition to the unwritten law in his March 12, 1962, column following Kentucky’s regular season finale against Tennessee. Lightsey told his audience that he would cheer for the Wildcats to win the NCAA title but, “(It) Seems a shame that State has to stay home after qualifying for the NCAA event. . . . Maybe Mississippi’s ‘unwritten law’ will be tossed out the window if enough pressure is brought to bear on the powers that be.”<sup>211</sup> Lightsey would later write, “Sure would like to see Mississippi State competing in that NCAA event!” after previewing the national title tournament.<sup>212</sup> While Lightsey did not express the same level of opposition to the unwritten law as McDowell, the Biloxi-based sports editor was one of the few in the Mississippi sports journalism community to speak out against the gentleman’s agreement. Lightsey would remain at the *Daily Herald*,

which would become the *Sun Herald* in 1982, for 43 years before his death in 1994 at the age of 68. Lightsey continued writing for the *Herald* even after his retirement in 1991 under the title of sports editor emeritus. His then-executive editor, Mike Tonos, said of Lightsey in his obituary, “Dick was dedicated. . . . He worked hard for his family, his newspaper, and his community. He’s going to be missed by a lot of people.”<sup>213</sup>

Another of the more outspoken critics of the unwritten law was *Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray. As detailed in the previous chapter, Ray argued that the then-Maroons should have been allowed to play in the 1961 NCAA tournament after winning the SEC, although Ray’s justification was based on athletic merit and not social equality. In Ray’s February 11, 1962, edition of “Press Box Views,” the Vicksburg sports editor addressed the Bulldogs’ contest with the favored Kentucky Wildcats and, while Ray openly discussed Rupp’s charges’ hopes for the SEC title and another berth in the NCAA tournament, he failed to reference any such aspirations for the Bulldogs.<sup>214</sup>

Unlike his sports reporting brethren, Ray wasted little time commenting on the unwritten law, using the victory over the Wildcats as a catalyst for the subsequent debate. After writing on the finer points of MSU’s win in Lexington, Ray identified the Bulldogs as the frontrunner for the conference title. As for the integrated NCAA tournament, Ray wrote that the Starkville contingent was bound to suffer an injustice at the hands of the unwritten law. “As for the NCAA tournament, it looks like it’s Kentucky or Auburn representing the SEC, regardless of how the Maroons fare from here on out,” Ray wrote. “Is it fair to Mississippi State’s fine basketball team? Mississippi’s lawmakers undoubtedly think so.”<sup>215</sup> Only a day later, Ray would write about McCarthy’s promise that an MSU win would earn the team a trip to Louisville for the NCAA tournament finals as spectators. “Probably the best team in the country won’t be playing, they’ll be sitting in the stands,” Ray quipped.<sup>216</sup>

Ray’s commentary became somewhat tame after the Bulldogs’ win over Florida, as he only focused on McCarthy’s overall success in Starkville and not the championship or

postseason hopes for the current squad. Ray called MSU a “basketball factory,” pointing to the presence of four starters from the 1961 team that won the SEC title. Ray wrote that he expected a similar level of success going into the 1962-63 season.<sup>217</sup> In the February 20, 1962, edition of “Press Box Views,” Ray compared McCarthy’s winning ways to that of University of Alabama football coaching legend Paul “Bear” Bryant but made no mention of the NCAA tournament.<sup>218</sup>

After news that the Bulldogs were ranked in the top five basketball teams in the country, Ray predicted in his February 21, 1962, column a tie between MSU and Kentucky for the conference championship and echoed Baker’s sentiments that there should be a special celebratory day set aside for McCarthy.<sup>219</sup> Despite the reference to both teams’ title aspirations and McCarthy’s stellar run as the Bulldogs’ coach, no mention was made of the NCAA tournament. The same could be said for Ray’s March 1, 1962, column, which previewed the game between archrivals MSU and Ole Miss and, while a SEC title for the Bulldogs was discussed at length, Ray did not mention the postseason.<sup>220</sup>

After a string of relatively mundane columns, Ray again tackled the unwritten law, this time addressing the possibility that McCarthy would leave Starkville because of the inability to play for a national championship. “Now that Mississippi State has at least a tie clinched for the 1961-62 SEC basketball title and another NCAA bid staring them in the face — but, of course, to no avail since it is a presumed fact that Babe’s boys won’t be allowed to go — Bullie fans are getting a little uneasy that James ‘Babe’ McCarthy may be a little dissatisfied and will pull up stakes for better treatment elsewhere,” Ray wrote.<sup>221</sup> The Vicksburg sports editor explained the unwritten law in the following passage:

There is no ruling of the MSU administration or the state college board that would bar competition with integrated teams outside of the state. But there is on record a resolution of the Mississippi legislature, which is considered to cover the situation. The joint resolution call on all state agencies and institutions to resist integration moves by all legal means and to violate this resolution could hurt the school doing the violating quite a bit, especially financially.<sup>222</sup>



While he did not express an opinion in this column on the gentleman's agreement, Ray hoped that McCarthy's tenure in Starkville would continue for the foreseeable future. "We hope Babe stays at Mississippi State as long as he lives, but hoping and actually doing it under present conditions vary as much as daylight and dark," he wrote.<sup>223</sup>

Despite Ray's commentary on the unwritten law and the future of the Bulldogs' leader, he never explicitly denounced the gentleman's agreement. After his comments on the effect of the unwritten law on McCarthy's tenure in Starkville, Ray returned to less controversial topics, discussing MSU's status as the fifth-ranked team in the country. In the March 7, 1962, edition of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, Ray cited Phillips of the *Commercial Dispatch* as opposition to the unwritten law and published his aforementioned March 1, 1962, column verbatim, but the Vicksburg sports editor never offered a definitive opinion on the matter.<sup>224</sup>

In the March 11, 1962, edition of the Vicksburg-based paper, Ray addressed McCarthy's SEC Coach of the Year award, but rather than congratulate the MSU leader, he took the opportunity to point out a potential injustice at the hands of Mississippi's segregationist standards. "That's about as far as he (McCarthy) will get because his Mississippi State basketball team will not be allowed to compete in the NCAA tournament for national honors, thus chances are he won't even be considered for national 'Coach of the Year,'" Ray wrote. "It's a shame . . . an injustice if there ever was."<sup>225</sup> Ray later identified local resident James L. Coleman, an alumnus of MSU, who wrote a letter to the Vicksburg sports editor disagreeing with Herb Phillips' proposed elimination of the unwritten law. Ray, who did not publish the local citizen's letter, defended Phillips' contention, writing, "You have to admit that Phillips has a point . . . what's fair for some should be fair to others . . . or put a damper completely on all out-of-state activities where a possibility of competition between the races exists."<sup>226</sup> While Ray did not express an opinion on Phillips' work at the

time the Vicksburg sports editor published it, it is clear from his comments to Coleman that he agreed with Phillips' general premise.

After Kentucky had clinched a share of the SEC title, Ray again acknowledged the missed opportunity for MSU in his March 13, 1962, column, writing that the Bulldogs would have been the conference's representative but "since State has to stay home, Kentucky gets a chance to ride the glory train."<sup>227</sup> Ray would also point out the absence of any Bulldogs from the All-American team and, in a show of frustration, wrote, "We could say a few more words, but it wouldn't help any."<sup>228</sup>

Ray addressed the unwritten law and the merits of MSU's basketball team in one last column on March 20, 1962, in the aftermath of Ohio State's victory over Rupp's Wildcats. In the wake of the Buckeyes' win over Kentucky, Ray wrote that it was logical to question whether or not Ohio State could beat Mississippi State. "That question will never be answered, thanks to Mississippi's 'unwritten law' that prevented Babe McCarthy's Bullies from trying for national basketball honors," Ray wrote. "We don't know how State would have fared with the No. 1 Bucks, but we certainly would like to have seen them take a six-point lead like Kentucky did on several occasions. Babe's tactics would have been a little different than 'Uncle Adolphs,' that you can be sure of."<sup>229</sup>

While Phillips, Lightsey, and Ray would debate the merits of the unwritten law but publicly maintain their belief in segregation, *Meridian Star* sports editor Billy "Sunshine" Rainey took a decisively conservative approach to his work. Much like he did during MSU's 1960-61 run at the conference championship, "Sunshine" only wrote on the Bulldogs once during the examined time period. In his February 13, 1962, edition of "Sunshine on Sports," Rainey hailed McCarthy as the new "Mr. Basketball" in the SEC in the wake of the team's victory over Rupp's Wildcats. Rainey called McCarthy "the man most responsible for the phenomenal rise of basketball at Mississippi State University" and gave the Bulldogs' leader

credit for preparing his team at a run for another conference title but the Meridian-based Rainey did not address or reference the unwritten law or the NCAA tournament.<sup>230</sup>

Fellow sports editor Charles S. Kerg of the *Delta Democrat-Times* did not discuss the Bulldogs' SEC title hopes until the final week of the season and, even then, Kerg's feeling commentary simply explained that State needed to defeat Ole Miss in order to win the conference championship.<sup>231</sup>

#### Robertson, the *Daily Mississippian* Oppose the Closed Society

One of the more progressive voices in terms of racial equality in Mississippi sports came from an unlikely source. Jimmie Robertson, the editor of the student-based *Daily Mississippian* at the University of Mississippi, condemned the unwritten law and painted the gentleman's agreement as a hindrance that was holding the state of Mississippi back. Robertson's ascension to the editor's desk was in itself inauspicious. His only adversary in the election for editor, Billy Barton, became a target of the Citizens' Council and the State Sovereignty Commission after it was discovered he served an internship at the *Atlanta Constitution* with liberal editor Henry Grady. The Council's William J. Simmons called Barton "a left winger" and claimed the Ole Miss student had participated in several sit-ins while he was in Atlanta. With Simmons' help, the Sovereignty Commission worked in conjunction with the administration at Ole Miss and Barton never took on the role of the newspaper's editor. He eventually stopped actively campaigning for the position although friends of the defamed student continued to campaign for him with no success.<sup>232</sup> Sovereignty Commission publicity director Erle Johnston later admitted that the claims against Barton were false.<sup>233</sup>

Robertson was elected on April 18, 1961, and the junior history major turned out to be an editor and columnist the school's administration and the various organizations within the Closed Society feared. During his time as editor, Robertson advocated the admission of Meredith into the university, condemned the work of the Hederman-owned *Jackson Daily*

*News*, defended Pulitzer Prize-winning editor Hazel Brannon Smith of the *Lexington Advertiser* and the *Northside Reporter* and attacked the Sovereignty Commission for the possible violation of her civil rights, and mocked the racist *Rebel Underground*, likening the newspaper to a comic strip.<sup>234</sup>

Robertson took a special interest in athletics, first writing about the unwritten law in November 1961 after Ole Miss's second ranked football team turned down an opportunity to play the nation's number-one ranked and integrated Michigan State Spartans. In response, Robertson sent a letter to the *State News*, the student newspaper of Michigan State, which generated criticism and ridicule from the segregated elite in the state.<sup>235</sup> Robertson would again write about the unwritten law in the January 11, 1962, edition of the *Daily Mississippian*. Robertson, who stressed that he did not favor integration in the state, called the gentleman's agreement a "death knell for sports in Mississippi."<sup>236</sup> Furthermore, Robertson cited the integration of neighboring southern conferences, specifically the Southwest Conference and Kentucky's public support for the SEC's addition of black athletes, and argued that the unwritten law would have a negative effect on the viability of Mississippi athletics. In an effort to appeal to the Magnolia State's desire for a positive reputation outside of its borders, Robertson closed his column by writing, "It is ridiculous to keep a million-dollar publicity machine like the Ole Miss Rebels tied up inside the South where everybody already knows how great they are."<sup>237</sup>

In the throes of MSU's run to the SEC championship, Robertson again attacked the unwritten law. While Robertson said that he opposed integration, he wrote that the state's segregationist athletic standard was the only one like it in the South and the principle behind the policy was violated every time a Mississippi congressman participated in an integrated Congress. Robertson cryptically predicted the demise of college sports in Mississippi because of the unwritten law.<sup>238</sup> The controversial work of the outspoken Robertson was picked up by both the AP and UPI and published in papers across the state.<sup>239</sup> Some newspapers buried the

article, like the *Starkville Daily News*, which published the UPI account at the bottom corner of its sports section next to an advertisement for the local bowling alley. Others, such as the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Hattiesburg American*, did not publish any content on the work of Robertson.

Robertson later wrote on Mississippi State's hopes for an NCAA tournament appearance in the March 2, 1962, edition of the *Daily Mississippian*. The student editor wrote that he was "very much encouraged by growing discontent in Mississippi with the state's 'unwritten law.'"<sup>240</sup> Robertson said he was pleased that Rep. Butch Lambert spoke out "against this ridiculous and unnecessary 'law.'" In a nod to his professed segregationist beliefs, Robertson wrote that, at the least, the loyal followers of the Closed Society would want to see "five white boys win the tournament over a score of teams which were integrated," again stressing his opposition to integration.<sup>241</sup>

Only days later, Robertson penned another column on the unwritten law, opposing the notion that the elimination of the controversial gentleman's agreement would lead to the integration of the Magnolia State. "Many feel that this policy is necessary to the perpetuation of our segregated way of life in Mississippi. We are among those that do not," Robertson wrote.<sup>242</sup> Perhaps a more shocking notion for the Magnolia State than eliminating the unwritten law was Robertson's argument that if the gentleman's agreement was going to stay in place, then Mississippi State and Ole Miss should withdraw from the SEC. "The time has come for these two schools to quit leaching off the conference, to quit proclaiming the superiority of the SEC while refusing to help prove it," Robertson wrote. "If we know that we are not going to participate in national competition if we are the conference champions, we should gracefully bow out so the SEC may once again be able to send its champion to represent it before the nation. If we are to follow the 'unwritten law,' resignation from the conference is our only honorable recourse."<sup>243</sup>

Robertson even published the work of *The Reflector* from Mississippi State, as a column from the MSU student paper's staff appeared in the March 7, 1962, edition of the *Daily Mississippian*. *The Reflector* staff argued that the unwritten law placed the college sports teams of the Magnolia State on a "second rate level" and asked for the state legislature to examine the policy against playing integrated teams, claiming, "It should not be a dead question" in regards to MSU's possible appearance in the NCAA tournament. However, the column did not go so far as to advocate an elimination of the gentleman's agreement, calling for state politicians to take into account "their way of life."<sup>244</sup> While *The Reflector's* questioning of the unwritten law certainly fell in line with a number of the more progressive journalists, professional or otherwise in the state, the student paper of MSU clearly was hesitant in endorsing the elimination of the gentleman's agreement.<sup>245</sup>

Robertson's work continued to be of a controversial nature during his tenure as the editor of the *Daily Mississippian*, but his stance on the unwritten law was on par with the professional journalists of the time. At every turn, Robertson's work was attacked by the *Rebel Underground* and its racist rhetoric and, without blinking, the student editor fired back at the very caste system that helped him ascend to the top position of power at the *Daily Mississippian*. While he refused to let go of the customs and traditions of segregation and the Closed Society, his support for Mississippi State and constant calls for the elimination of the unwritten law put his commentary on a similar level as Phillips, Lightsey, and Ray.

#### The Press Fails to Represent Public Opinion

While public opinion on the issue could be measured, to some extent, by the presence of letters to the editors, in the case of the Bulldogs' 1961-62 campaign, published statements of opinion from the reading audience were few and far in between. In fact, outside of any references to letters that were used in columns from various Mississippi newspapers, only a single letter appeared in any Mississippi newspaper consulted in this chapter concerning the 1962 NCAA tournament debate.

The first and only letter to the editor in the Jackson-based *Clarion-Ledger* was published on March 20, 1962, 16 days after the team's title-clinching victory over Ole Miss. Johnny Nikolic, a student at Mississippi State, asked for additional justification as to why the Bulldogs were forced to sit out of the national tournament, citing Mississippi's political elite's permission for "Congressmen to go and participate in an integrated Congress . . . white teachers to teach in a Negro school and they allow Mississippi's most beautiful women to participate before integrated crowds at Miss America Pageants."<sup>246</sup> Nikolic argued that MSU should have been allowed to compete for the title in order to prove the legitimacy of the Closed Society and its segregationist way of life. "I think our boys could prove that our principle of segregation is just as capable of winning an NCAA tournament or any other type of competition as an integrated one," the Jackson resident wrote. "I don't mean we will or would win, but I believe we could use our principle in fighting for what we believe while competing. What's wrong with an all-white team winning the tournament! Nothing, and why don't we prove it?"

Like the print-based discussion of the 1961 title-winning Maroons, it was somewhat illogical to think that a single letter to the editor was submitted during the debate surrounding the merits of the unwritten law, considering that MSU President Dean Colvard received his fair share of correspondence on the Bulldogs. It would still be another year before Colvard would give McCarthy the green light to participate in an integrated postseason. The North Carolina native, who would come under fire from various state entities that promoted and protected the segregationist way of life in Mississippi, would receive letters arguing both for and against the Bulldogs' participation in the NCAA tournament.

#### Conclusion

In the midst of the racial and social turmoil that engulfed the Magnolia State due to the ongoing and eventual admission of Meredith to Ole Miss, it would be understandable if some journalists overlooked the contributions of Mississippi State's basketball team in

weakening the iron-fisted reign of the Closed Society. However, it was clear that the constant challenges to the unwritten law pushed Mississippi's journalists, specifically sportswriters, into a position of support. While almost to a man every supporter of an MSU venture into integrated basketball expressed their segregationist status, in turn they were in opposition of the Closed Society, thus contributing the weakening of the racist foundation in which it sat. In terms of social progress, no one supported the Bulldogs for the sake of equality and civil rights, but a progressive ideological switch was beginning in the Magnolia State, which was represented in the work of the press. When MSU violated the unwritten law in 1956, the team and the school were met with universal outrage over its participation in an integrated contest. Roughly six years later, some journalists were calling for the elimination of Mississippi's segregationist athletic standard. Even the Hederman papers, while opposing McCarthy's crew, offered subtle hints at such a change, especially in the musings of Baker who surprisingly questioned the merits of the unwritten law. Others, such as Walters, continued to hold on and defend the Closed Society, but more journalists were offering opinions that were noncommittal in content and tone, a progressive step indeed. While Meredith's September 1962 arrival on the Oxford campus would unite the state's press against the Federal Government, the Closed Society and, specifically, the unwritten law faced a final test from the Starkville contingent that would put reporters and editors across the state at ideological odds and leave the gentleman's agreement in shambles.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1961, the school officially changed its team name from "Maroons" to "Bulldogs." Many journalists used the two names in an interchangeable fashion while others simply switched Bulldogs with Maroons. Because of the switch, the author chose to refer to the Mississippi State contingent as the Bulldogs.

<sup>2</sup> Associated Press, "No Playoffs For Bulldogs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 2F; Associated Press, "Will State Go To NCAA," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1962, 1F; "'Unwritten' law opposition grows," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 March 1962, 1, 6; "See Possibility Of State Playing In NCAA Tourney," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1962, 18; "A Lot Of Folks Want State To Go To NCAA Cage Event," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1962, 12; "Approval Sought for State to Enter NCAA Contests," *Enterprise-Journal*,



---

1 March 1962, 10; and “Efforts To Send MSU Cagers To US Tourney Failed,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1962, 9.

<sup>3</sup> “Move Is Started Here To Send MSU to NCAA,” *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1962, 1.

<sup>4</sup> “Cristil and McDowell Receive Sports Awards,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 March 1962, 4B.

<sup>5</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1962, 10.

<sup>6</sup> “State Cagers Hit Road For Action,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 February 1962, 3D; “MSU Facing Crucial Foe,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 February 1962, 3; “National Ranking To Be Put On The Line By Maroons At Baton Rouge Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 February 1962, 21; and “State Maroons Face LSU Tigers Tonight,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 3 February 1962, 13.

<sup>7</sup> “Bulldogs and Tigers Clash,” *Starkville Daily News*, 3 February 1962, 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Cagers Blast Tigers,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1962, 1B.

<sup>10</sup> “Stroud-Lead Bulldogs Scatter LSU’s Cajuns In 87-66 SEC Rout,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 February 1962, 7; and “Maroons Rout LSU Tigers for Sixth League Victory,” *Meridian Star*, 4 February 1962, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Associated Press, “Tulane, Miss. State Game Top Action,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1962, 11.

<sup>12</sup> “Green Wave Lashes At Bulldogs Tonight In Battle Of New Orleans,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 February 1962, 3; and Hedrick Smith, “State Battles Strong Tulane,” *Meridian Star*, 5 February 1962, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Associated Press, “Kerwin tallies 41 points, takes over scoring lead,” *Hattiesburg American*, 4 February 1962, 5B; “Maroons Face Tulane In Crucial SEC Tilt,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 February 1962, 15; and Associated Press, “Kerwin Sinks 41 Points As Tulane Takes 107-77 Win Over Bulldogs,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 5 February 1962, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Robert Fulton, “Maroons Produce Fireworks 70-59,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 February 1962, 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Vernon Butler, “Bulldogs blast Greenies; Kentucky showdown nears,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 February 1962, 9; “State’s Latest Victory Puts Green Wave On Ice,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 6 February 1962, 6; Vernon Butler, “Showdown Looms For SEC Title Monday; State Beats Tulane,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1962, 15; Vernon Butler, “State Takes On Dream Team Look; Showdown Against ‘Tucky Coming,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 6 February 1962, 5; “On To Lexington’ Is State Maroon War Cry,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 6 February 1962, 5; and “State Smothers Tulane Greenies,” *Meridian Star*, 6 February 1962, 6.

- 
- <sup>17</sup> Bob Hartley, "Bulldogs Trample Tulane 70 to 59," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 February 1962, 3.
- <sup>18</sup> Ed Tunstall, "'On To Lexington' Is War Cry Of Bulldogs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1962, 19; and Ed Tunstall, "McCarthy Believes State Has Chance To Stop Kentucky Bid," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1962, 15.
- <sup>19</sup> Associated Press, "State Ranked Ninth By AP," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1962, 19; Associated Press, "Bulldogs Now Holding Ninth Spot In Nation," *Starkville Daily News*, 7 February 1962, 3; and Associated Press, "Maroons Move Up To Ninth In Cage Poll," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1962, 15.
- <sup>20</sup> "Wildcats Host Bulldogs In Crucial One Monday," *Commercial Dispatch*, 7 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>21</sup> "MSU Cagers Face Vols," *Starkville Daily News*, 9 February 1962, 3; "State Plays Vols, Cats On Big Trip," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1962, 7; and "State Maroons Face Tennessee Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1962, 16.
- <sup>22</sup> "MSU Faces Tricky Vols," *Starkville Daily News*, 9 February 1962, 4.
- <sup>23</sup> Vernon Butler, "Full Slate of SEC Cage Activities Slated This Weekend," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 February 1962, 19; Vernon Butler, "State Packs Bags, Ready For Big Swing," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 February 1962, 10; and Vernon Butler, "State Heads For Lexington Today To Meet Big One," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 9 February 1962, 5.
- <sup>24</sup> "State Making Crucial Trek," *Commercial Dispatch*, 9 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>25</sup> Vernon Butler, "Babe beats The Baron at home; tenacious Bulldogs win it 49-44," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1962, 11; Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Shocks Kentucky in SEC Skirmish," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1962, 14; Vernon Butler, "Miss. State Beats Second Ranked Kentucky 49-44," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1962, 8; Vernon Butler, "Coach Babe McCarthy Riding High After Toppling Rupp's Wildcats," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 13 February 1962, 5; Vernon Butler, "State Maroons Stun Kentucky 49 to 44," *Enterprise-Journal*, 13 February 1962, 5; Vernon Butler, "Auburn Risks Title Hopes on Road Trip," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1962, 22; "Auburn Looms As SEC Dark Horse For NCAA Berth," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 February 1962, 6; Vernon Butler, "Darkhorse Auburn May Be Team To Play In Annual NCAA Tourney," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 16 February 1962, 5; Vernon Butler, "State, 'Tucky, Auburn can't make a slip now," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 February 1962, 4A; Vernon Butler, "State Maroons Grab SEC Basketball Lead," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 19 February 1962, 12; Vernon Butler, "Babe's Bullies Go After 21<sup>st</sup> Win Tonite," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 19 February 1962, 7; Vernon Butler, "State, Kentucky, Auburn Enter Into Stretch Drive For Title," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 19 February 1962, 5; Vernon Butler, "Mississippi State Takes Lead in SEC Cage Race," *Enterprise-Journal*, 19 February 1962, 5; "S.E.C. Leaders Drive To Thrilling Finish," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1962, 9-10; "Reb Soph Is Top Scorer; MSU Vs. Georgia Tonight," *Commercial Dispatch*, 19 February 1962, 3; Vernon Butler, "Only three hurdles remain in path of McCarthymen," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1962, 10; Vernon Butler, "Auburn, Kentucky, State All Post Victories," *Daily Herald*

(Biloxi), 20 February 1962, 15; Vernon Butler, "Bullies Claw Georgia 83-74; Vandy Scares Cats But Lose," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1962, 10; Vernon Butler, "Only Three Teams Stand Between State And SEC Basketball Title," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 20 February 1962, 5; Vernon Butler, "Maroons Defeat Georgia 83-74," *Enterprise-Journal*, 20 February 1962, 5; and "3 Games Left For Maroons," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 9-10.

<sup>26</sup> Lee Baker, "State Bags Tennessee, Kentucky Next Target," *Clarion-Ledger and Jackson Daily News*, 11 February 1962, 1B.

<sup>27</sup> "Steady State Blasts Volunteers 91-67; Onward To Kentucky," *Commercial Dispatch*, 11 February 1962, 8; and "Mississippi State Downs Tennessee," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 February 1962, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Associated Press, "Cats, Maroons Game Is Week's Highlight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1962, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Jim Hackleman, "Showdown Week Begins," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 February 1962, 5B; Jim Hackleman, "Nation's Eyes Focus On Lexington Battle Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 February 1962, 8; "Tough Task Says Rupp," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1962, 13.

<sup>30</sup> O'Neil Hendrick, "Bulldog, Tucky battle tonight," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1962, 7; and "Babe Says State Good As 'Tucky,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1962, 13.

<sup>31</sup> "State's Bulldogs Vs. Kentucky's Wildcats Up In Bluegrass Tonight," *Commercial Dispatch*, 12 February 1962, 6; Vernon Butler, "Kentucky Faces Mississippi State In Big One," *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 12 February 1962, 14; Vernon Butler, "Kentucky And State Said In Top Form," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 February 1962, 7; Vernon Butler, "State Wins Over Tennessee 91-67 As Kentucky Beats Ole Miss 83-60," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 12 February 1962, 5; and "Maroons, Kentucky Tangle in SEC's Top Tilt Tonight," *Enterprise-Journal*, 12 February 1962, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Scotty Hargrove, "Tennessee Coach Says State Can Whip Cats," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1962, 13.

<sup>33</sup> "Mississippi State Wins Collegiate Basketball's Game Of The Year," *Commercial Dispatch*, 13 February 1962, 7; "Bulldogs Turn Back Kentucky," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1962, 9; "Says Rupp, 'We Knew It,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 11; Bill Neikirk, "State Was Scared But Wouldn't Quit," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1962, 13; and "Bulldogs Keep Poise For Win," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Fulton, "Mississippi State Shatters Invincible Rule of Kentucky Wildcats, 49 To 44," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1962, 13.

<sup>35</sup> Lee Baker, "Maroons Down Mighty Wildcats," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 11-12.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*; and Phil Wallace, "Remember Last Maroon Win At 'Tucky?'," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 February 1962, 14.

---

<sup>37</sup> Jim Hackleman, "State In Spotlight But Will Again Turn Down NCAA Bid," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1962, 9; Jim Hackleman, "Bulldogs Beat Mighty Kentucky Tie Wildcats In Conference Play," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 13 February 1962, 5; and "MSU Bulldogs Defeat Kentucky 48-44," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Associated Press, "Same Old Story With Ohio State Atop Poll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1962, 16; "Bulldogs Ranked 8<sup>th</sup> In UPI Poll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1962, 17; "Bulldogs Jump To 8<sup>th</sup> Ranking," *Commercial Dispatch*, 13 February 1962, 7; Sheldon Sakowitz, "State Moves Up To Eight In AP Poll," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1962, 15; Sheldon Sakowitz, "State Only 8<sup>th</sup> This Week, But Wait Until Next!," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1962, 8; "State Is Eight in AP Poll," *Enterprise-Journal*, 13 February 1962, 5; Norman Miller, "State Cagers rated eight in UPI poll," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1962, 8; Sheldon Sakowitz, "State Holds 9<sup>th</sup> In AP Cage Poll," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 12; and "Maroons Finally In UPI's Top 10," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 12.

<sup>39</sup> "Happy Pandemonium Follows MSU Win," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 1; and "Court Rules Meredith Can't Enter Ole Miss," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Susan Weill, *In a Madhouse's Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi's Daily Press, 1948-1968*. (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), 88.

<sup>41</sup> Herb Phillips, "All Is Jubilation In Magic Land Of Mississippi State Basketball," *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 February 1962, 8.

<sup>42</sup> "'We're Number 1,' Chant Rings Over Miss. State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1962, 17; and "1500 Cheer Cage Heroes' Return Home," *Starkville Daily News*, 14 February 1962, 1, 3.

<sup>43</sup> "1500 Cheer Cage Heroes' Return Home," *Starkville Daily News*, 14 February 1962, 1, 3.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Fulton, "State Won Trip To NCAA Cage Finals," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1962, 19.

<sup>45</sup> "MSU Favorite For SEC Title," *Commercial Dispatch*, 15 February 1962, 8.

<sup>46</sup> Bob Green, "State Can Take Over SEC With Win Over Fla. Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 February 1962, 3; and Bob Green, "Eight Ranked State Meets Florida In One Of Country's Top Games," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 17 February 1962, 5.

<sup>47</sup> "State Meets Florida Next," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1962, 20; "Maroons To Meet Florida Tonight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1962, 6; "Bulldogs Will Host Florida Saturday," *Starkville Daily News*, 15 February 1962, 3; "Gators and Bulldogs Will Tangle Tonight," *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1962, 3; "Bulldogs Look Towards Invading Florida Gators," *Commercial Dispatch*, 15 February 1962, 7; "Mississippi State Entertains Florida," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 February 1962, 12; "Maroons Could Move Up In AP Rankings By Beating Florida," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 February 1962, 13; "Giants Killers From State Primed For Gator Invasion," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 February 1962, 7;

---

“M.S.U. Eyes Florida 5 Saturday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1962, 1D; and Associated Press, “Maroons Eye Sole SEC Lead Tonight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1962, 2.

<sup>48</sup> “Stroud Came, Hit, Played,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1962, 7.

<sup>49</sup> Sherrill Nash, “McCarthy Talks Boys, Basketball, Kentucky,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1962, 1, 3. Graves was a part of the elaborate point shaving operation of Jack Molinas, a former professional basketball player who, at one time during the early 1960s, had 37 college players at 27 schools participating in his operation. On January 7, 1961, it was believed that Graves helped keep MSU under the spread against Auburn in order for Molinas to reap the gambling benefits. For more on Graves’ involvement in Molinas’ gambling empire, see Charley Rosen, *The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press), 200, 250.

<sup>50</sup> Lee Baker, “State Toys With Gators To Close Grasp On SEC,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1962, 1C.

<sup>51</sup> Herb Phillips, “State Captures 20<sup>th</sup> Win; Florida Is 67-45 Victim,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 18 February 1962, 5; and Van Savell, “Bulldogs Down Florida 67-45,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 18 February 1962, 9.

<sup>52</sup> “Bulldogs wallop Florida,” *Meridian Star*, 18 February 1962, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Vernon Butler, “State Hogs Spotlight As Cinderella Team,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1962, 9.

<sup>54</sup> George Anderson, “Babe’s Boys Beat Ga. 83-74; Keep S.E.C. Lead,” *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Fulton, “Maroons Reduce Magic Number To 3 With Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1962, 17; “Bulldogs Out-Maneuver Classy, Game Georgians,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 20 February 1962, 6; “State gets 21<sup>st</sup> cage win, 83-74,” *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1962, 9; Lee Baker, “Maroons Slither By Dogs, 83-74,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 9; and United Press International, “SEC’s Top Miss. State Defeats Georgia 83-74,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 20 February 1962, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Joe Sargis, “Maroons Advance To 5<sup>th</sup> In UPI Cage Poll,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1962, 18; Associated Press, “State Ranked Fifth By AP; ‘Tucky 3<sup>rd</sup>,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1962, 15; Don Weis, “Miss. State moves up to fifth place,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1962, 10; Don Weis, “Mississippi State Moves Up To Fifth In AP Cage Poll,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1962, 14; Don Weiss, “Mississippi State Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> In Nation,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1962, 10; “Mississippi State Fifth in AP Voting,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 20 February 1962, 5; Associated Press, “Bucks On Top, Maroons 5<sup>th</sup>,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 10; “Maroons Up To 5<sup>th</sup> Place In UPI Polling,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 10; and “Ohio State Holds No. 1 Rating; Miss. State Vaults To 5<sup>th</sup> Place,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 20 February 1962, 7.

<sup>57</sup> “State Cagers Clash With Tigers, Tulane,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1962, 18; “Pressure-Packed Play Is Slated By Bulldogs,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1962, 6; “MSU

Needs 3 Victories For Crown,” *Starkville Daily News*, 23 February 1962, 3; “Bulldogs-Bengals Tangle Tonight,” *Starkville Daily News*, 24 February 1962, 3; “Bulldogs After Victories In Final Three Contests,” 22 February 1962, 8; “State Gets Ready For LSU Invasion,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 23 February 1962, 19; “Bullies Need 3 More Wins To Clinch SEC Title,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 23 February 1962, 6; “MSU Bulldogs Must Hurdle LSU and Tulane For Big SEC Title,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 23 February 1962, 5; and “Maroons Driving Towards Crown,” *Jackson Daily News*, 22 February 1962, 1D.

<sup>58</sup> David M. Moffit, “Auburn Awaits Big Battle,” *Meridian Star*, 23 February 1962, 9.

<sup>59</sup> David M. Moffit, “Rebs, Maroons Meet Bayou 5s,” *Meridian Star*, 24 February 1962, 7; “SEC Eyes On Monday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1962, 3; David M. Moffit, “Mitchell Gains Berth On UPI All-SEC Squad,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1962, 18; “Kentucky’s Cotton Is High-Grade Choice of UPI Poll’s Sportswriters,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1962, 10; David M. Moffit, “Most SEC teams win up Saturday,” *Meridian Star*, 2 March 1962, 8; “Bulldogs and Wildcats In Probable Title-Tie,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 2 March 1962, 3; and “No. 1 MSU Favored To Down Rebs, Win Title,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 March 1962, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Wins By 58-48, But LSU Plenty Tough,” *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1962, 1B; Herb Phillips, “State Uses Charity Line To Push Back LSU, 58-44,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 25 February 1962, 62, 6; Associated Press, “Stage is set for tonight’s Tiger-Wildcat showdown,” *Hattiesburg American*, 26 February 1962, 4B; Associated Press, “Auburn-Kentucky In Showdown Tonite,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 26 February 1962, 7; Associated Press, “Showdown Battle Slated Tonight As Mighty ‘Tucky, Auburn Clash,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 26 February 1962, 5; “Maroon foul shots down LSU, 58-48,” *Meridian Star*, 25 February 1962, 8; Van Savell, “Mississippi State Nips Tigers 58-48,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 25 February 1962, 13; and United Press International, “MSU Tops LSU 58-49; Rebs Overcome Tulane,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1962, 5.

<sup>61</sup> “Maroons Cast Wary Eyes At Green Wave,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1962, 10.

<sup>62</sup> Hedrick Smith, “Auburn-Kentucky showdown tonight,” *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1962, 8.

<sup>63</sup> George Anderson, “MSU Blasts Tulane Five,” *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1962, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Phil Wallace, “Maroon Express Keeps On Rolling,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1962, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Back On Beam In Romp Over Greenies,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1962, 13.

<sup>66</sup> “Kentucky Stops Auburn, May Get N.C.A.A. Berth,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1962, 7-8.

<sup>67</sup> “Bulldogs bop Tulane Wave for 23<sup>rd</sup> win,” *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1962, 8.

<sup>68</sup> Dick Joyce, "State Maintains 5<sup>th</sup> Spot in UPI Ratings," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1962, 17; The Associated Press, "State still fifth in AP cage poll," 27 February 1962, 12; and "State Remains Fifth In AP College Poll," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1962, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Vernon Butler, "Stroud, Nash Voted Unanimous All-SEC," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1962, 13; Vernon Butler, "Two Maroons make All-SEC team," *Hattiesburg American*, 27 February 1962, 12; Vernon Butler, "Stroud-Mitchell Named On First Team All-SEC," *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1962, 2; "Stroud, Mitchell Make AP's All-SEC 1<sup>st</sup> Team," *Commercial Dispatch*, 27 February 1962, 8; Vernon Butler, "State And Kentucky Places Two On All-SEC Cage Squad," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1962, 15; Vernon Butler, "State And Kentucky Pace All-SEC Team," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1962, 11; and "State holds 5<sup>th</sup> in cage ratings," *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1962, 8.

<sup>70</sup> "State After SEC Title, Prestige On Saturday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 1F; "Red Hot Rebs Invade State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 1F; "High Flying State Closes Out Season With Rebels Saturday," *Starkville Daily News*, 28 February 1962, 3; "Bulldogs Preparing To Host Rebels In Regular Cage Season's Closeout," *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1962, 2; "State Closes Out Season Saturday," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1962, 19; "State Ends Season Tonight When Rival Rebels Invade," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1962, 3; "State, Ole Miss Clash Tonight In SEC Finale To Decide Title," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 3 March 1962, 5; and "Maroons Close Out After One More," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1962, 14.

<sup>71</sup> "SEC Title At Stake in Battle," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1962, 9; and "Bulldogs and Rebels Clash Here Tonight," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 March 1962, 3.

<sup>72</sup> "Rebels Call On Maroons," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1962, 14; "Rebs After Upset Win in Finale," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1962, 9; "Rebs Ready For Battle With State," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1962, 16; "Hot Rebels Seek To Cool Off Rival State Saturday," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1962, 13; and "State Set For Rebels," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1962, 8.

<sup>73</sup> Ross M. Hagen, "Family Squabbles In SEC Focus Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 3 March 1962, 17; and Associated Press, "Last Big Night For SEC Cagers," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1962, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Associated Press, "No Playoffs For Bulldogs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 2F; Associated Press, "Will State Go To NCAA," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1962, 1F; "'Unwritten' law opposition grows," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 March 1962, 1, 6; "See Possibility Of State Playing In NCAA Tourney," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1962, 18; "A Lot Of Folks Want State To Go To NCAA Cage Event," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1962, 12; "Approval Sought for State to Enter NCAA Contests," *Enterprise-Journal*, 1 March 1962, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Associated Press, "Will State Go To NCAA," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1962, 1F.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> "Efforts To Send MSU Cagers To US Tourney Failed," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1962, 9.

---

<sup>78</sup> Associated Press, "No Playoffs For Bulldogs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 2F.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Vernon Butler, "State's Red Stroud Named Loop's Most Valuable Player," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 March 1962, 4B; "Stroud Is Valuable," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 March 1962, 3; Vernon Butler, "State's Red Stroud Named Most Valuable Cager in SEC," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1962, 17; Vernon Butler, "'Red' Stroud Edges Nash As SEC's MVP," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1962, 12; Vernon Butler, "Stroud Named Most Valuable In SEC Play," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 1 March 1962, 5; and "Red Stroud Is Voted SEC Best," *Enterprise-Journal*, 1 March 1962, 10.

<sup>81</sup> "Move Is Started Here To Send MSU to NCAA," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1962, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> "State Turns Down Bid To Tourney After Win," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 5 March 1962, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Fulton, "Mississippi State Wins Second Straight Title," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1962, 1B.

<sup>85</sup> Tom Gregory, "State ekes out win over Rebels," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1962, 9.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Herb Phillips, "Bulldogs Wrap Up Sensational Season; Buckeyes Collapse In Flames," *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 March 1962, 6.

<sup>88</sup> Lee Baker, "State Coach For Relaxing Ruling," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1962, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "McCarthy Wants State In NCAA Tourney Play," *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 March 1962, 6; and "Babe Thinks State Should Go To NCAA," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1962, 8.

<sup>91</sup> Ross M. Hagen, "It's Official Now – Wildcats To NCAA," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1962, 13; Ross M. Hagen, "Cats invited to represent SEC in NCAA playoffs," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 March 1962, 8A; Ross M. Hagen, "Mississippi State Takes Share of SEC Title, Beats Rebels," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 March 1962, 14; Ross M. Hagen, "SEC Scoring Leaders To Clash Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 March 1962, 6; Ross M. Hagen, "Kentucky Faces Tulane Tonight; Top Scoring Aces Battle It Out," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 5 March 1962, 7; and Associated Press, "SEC Point Title On Line Tonight," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1962, 10.

<sup>92</sup> "Kentucky Gets NCAA Berth Assurance, Hosts Tulane's Greenies Tonight," *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 March 1962, 3.



---

<sup>93</sup> Scotty Hargrove, “‘Unwritten Law’ Again Stops Maroons Short of Tourney,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 8 March 1962, 1.

<sup>94</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>95</sup> “Babe McCarthy Named UPI Coach of Year,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1962, 11; “Babe McCarthy named Coach of Year in SEC,” *Meridian Star*, 6 March 1962, 9; “McCarthy SEC ‘Coach of Year,’” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1962, 10; “Babe McCarthy’s Coaching Has Been Key To Bulldogs’ Cage Success,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 6 March 1962, 8; and United Press International, “Coach Of The Maroons Guided Win Over Cats,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 March 1962, 9.

<sup>96</sup> Norman Miller, “Miss State Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> In Final National Polls,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 March 1962, 13; “Final UPI Polling Has Kentucky And State Ranked Third and Forth,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 12 March 1962, 3; “Maroons are Fourth in AP Poll,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 13 March 1962, 5; Associated Press, “Buckeyes 1<sup>st</sup>, Maroons 4<sup>th</sup>,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 March 1962, 7; and “Bucks Get Unanimous Vote of 35 Coaches,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 12 March 1962, 5.

<sup>97</sup> Norman Miller, “State fourth in final UPI ratings,” *Meridian Star*, 12 March 1962, 8.

<sup>98</sup> “Maroons Equal To Best Team Of Previous Years,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1962, 16; “State Had Eventful Cage Season,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1962, 2B; “Cagers Tie Best Record; Babe Is Coach of Year,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 March 1962, 3; “Mississippi State Cagers Equal Best Record Ever,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 7 March 1962, 9; “State Maroons Wind Up Campaign; Equal Best Previous Mark,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 March 1962, 30; “State’s Cagers Equaled Best Showing In History,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 March 1962, 15; “State Bulldogs Finish Fifth; Record Setters Get SEC Honor,” *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 8 March 1962, 4; and “MSU Closes Season To Equal Best Cage Mark,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 8 March 1962, 9.

<sup>99</sup> “State Senate Congratulates Babe McCarthy,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1962, 21.

<sup>100</sup> “Wildcats Claim Title-Tie With Victory Over Vols,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 11 March 1962, 6.

<sup>101</sup> Bill Neikirk, “Cats Win And Tie For Lead,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1962, 2B.

<sup>102</sup> Lewis Lord, “Babe Becomes a Moses For State’s Bulldogs,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 March 1962, 3; Lewis Lord, “McCarthy Almost Leads State To Promised Land,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 16 March 1962, 6; “Ultimate Beyond Grasp For Babe,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 March 1962, 13; and “Babe Hasn’t Quite Led MSU To Promised Land,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 16 March 1962, 8.

<sup>103</sup> Lewis Lord, “Babe Becomes a Moses For State’s Bulldogs,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 March 1962, 3.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

- 
- <sup>105</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1962, 5B.
- <sup>106</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1962, 12.
- <sup>107</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1962, 19.
- <sup>108</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>109</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1962, 19.
- <sup>110</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1962, 26.
- <sup>111</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1962, B2.
- <sup>112</sup> Robert Fulton, "High 'N Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>113</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1962, 12B.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>115</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>116</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1962, 13.
- <sup>117</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>118</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1962, 11.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>120</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1962, 16.
- <sup>121</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 March 1962, 18.
- <sup>122</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>123</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1962, 1D.
- <sup>124</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1962, 20.
- <sup>125</sup> Charles M. Hills, "Affairs of State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1962, 2.
- <sup>126</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's" *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1962, 20.
- <sup>127</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>128</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1962, 9.
- <sup>129</sup> Lee Baker, "Basketball In State Nears End," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1962, 9.

- 
- <sup>130</sup> Ray Cave, "The Old Master Has A New Kind Of Winner," *Sports Illustrated*, 19 February 1962, 52-53.
- <sup>131</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1962, 4C.
- <sup>132</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1962, 5C
- <sup>133</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1962, 6C.
- <sup>134</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1962, 18.
- <sup>135</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1962, 9.
- <sup>136</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1962, 3B.
- <sup>137</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1962, 18.
- <sup>138</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>139</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>140</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>141</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1962, 5B.
- <sup>142</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>143</sup> Bob Howie, "One Last Hazard," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>144</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1962, 10.
- <sup>145</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 2F.
- <sup>146</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1962, 8F.
- <sup>147</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1962, 1F.
- <sup>148</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1962, 8.
- <sup>149</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1962, 11.
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>151</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1962, 3B.
- <sup>152</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1962, 10.

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. Baker identified the following players from McCarthy's three SEC title teams as coming to Starkville from another state: Bailey Howell (Tennessee), Ted Usher (New York), Jerry Graves (Tennessee), Jack Berkshire (Iowa), and Joe Dan Gold (Kentucky).

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1962, 14.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1962, 13.

<sup>159</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1962, 20.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 March 1962, 14.

<sup>162</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 March 1962, 22.

<sup>163</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 March 1962, 9.

<sup>164</sup> Arnold Hederman, "Highlights In Sports," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 March 1962, 12.

<sup>165</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 7 February 1962, 3B.

<sup>166</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 February 1962, 4B.

<sup>167</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1962, 10.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 23 February 1962, 13.

<sup>170</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 3 March 1962, 10.

<sup>171</sup> Paul Morgan, "The Sports Hub," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 March 1962, 7A.

<sup>172</sup> "False Report," *Starkville Daily News*, 15 February 1962, 4.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, "Time Out for Sports," *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1962, 3.

<sup>175</sup> "Dear Team. . .," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1962, 1.

- 
- <sup>176</sup> “The Best In The Nation,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1962, 8.
- <sup>177</sup> Henry Harris, “Pencil Shavings,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1962, 4.
- <sup>178</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, “Time Out For Sports,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1962, 3.
- <sup>179</sup> “Old-Timers Cage Game Set for MSU March 24,” *Starkville Daily News*, 13 March 1962, 3.
- <sup>180</sup> Wayne King, “Sports Off the Cuff,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 12 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>181</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>182</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 15 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>183</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 21 February 1962, 9.
- <sup>184</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>185</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>186</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 23 February 1962, 3.
- <sup>187</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 25 February 1962, 7.
- <sup>188</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>189</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>190</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February 1962, 3.
- <sup>191</sup> “Writers Say End Sports Ban,” *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1962, 3.
- <sup>192</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1962, 11.
- <sup>193</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>194</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>195</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>196</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 March, 1962, 7.
- <sup>197</sup> Herb Phillips, “‘N In This Cornah!,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 6 March, 1962, 8.
- <sup>198</sup> Dick Lightsey, “Bunts, Boots and Bounces,” *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 1 February 1962, 21.
- <sup>199</sup> Dick Lightsey, “Bunts, Boots and Bounces,” *Daily Herald (Biloxi)*, 5 February 1962, 14.

- 
- <sup>200</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 February 1962, 19.
- <sup>201</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 February 1962, 17.
- <sup>202</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 12 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>203</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 February 1962, 18.
- <sup>204</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 15 February 1962, 17.
- <sup>205</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 February 1962, 21.
- <sup>206</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 24 February 1962, 17.
- <sup>207</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>208</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>209</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1962, 14.
- <sup>210</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 March 1962, 18.
- <sup>211</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 12 March 1962, 14.
- <sup>212</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 March 1962, 10.
- <sup>213</sup> "Lightsey: A Dedicated Life of Sportswriting," *Sun Herald* (Biloxi), 25 October 1994, 1A.
- <sup>214</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 February 1962, 10.
- <sup>215</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>216</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 February 1962, 14.
- <sup>217</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 18 February 1962, 10.
- <sup>218</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1962, 10.
- <sup>219</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 21 February 1962, 10.
- <sup>220</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1962, 12.
- <sup>221</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 March 1962, 8.
- <sup>222</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>223</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>224</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 March 1962, 8.

- 
- <sup>225</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 March 1962, 8.
- <sup>226</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>227</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 March 1962, 11.
- <sup>228</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>229</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 March 1962, 10.
- <sup>230</sup> Billy Rainey, "Sunshine on Sports," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1962, 8.
- <sup>231</sup> Charles S. Kerg, "Kerg's Corner," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 March 1962, 9.
- <sup>232</sup> Johnny Gregory, "Robertson Elected 'U' Student Editor," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 April 1961, 1.
- <sup>233</sup> Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 38-40.
- <sup>234</sup> Jimmie Robertson, "Liberals Often Do More Harm Than Good," *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 18 January 1962, 2; Jimmie Robertson, "State Senate Approves Efforts of State Times," *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 19 January 1962, 2; Jimmie Robertson, "Rebel Underground?," *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 13 February 1962, 2. Per the AP, the *Rebel Underground*, which was an anonymous independent newspaper published at Ole Miss, took issue with Robertson and told the *Daily Mississippian* editor to "get off your integration kick and scandal sheet and write about the real problems facing this campus." In addition, Robertson was accused of "being sympathetic" with Meredith's plight and supporting the 29-year-old's efforts to enter the all-white school. "An Anonymous Newspaper Blasts Ole Miss Editor," *Greenwood Commonwealth*, 17 February 1962, 1.
- <sup>235</sup> "Ole Miss Editor Hits Football Race Barriers," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 November 1961, 1.
- <sup>236</sup> Jimmie Robertson, "Walls Closing in On Mississippi Athletics," *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 11 January 1962, 2.
- <sup>237</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>238</sup> Robertson's work from page two of the February 22, 1962, edition of the *Daily Mississippian* was missing from the paper's archives at the University of Mississippi. However, the details of his column could be found in a number of wire-based articles that were published in state including the following: "Editor Assails Ban On Teams," *Starkville Daily News*, 24 February 1962, 3; "State's Policy Against Inter-Racial Sports Hit," *Commercial Dispatch*, 23 February 1962, 3; and "'Mississippian' Protests Racial Athletic Policy," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1962, 7.

---

<sup>239</sup> “Editor Assails Ban On Teams,” *Starkville Daily News*, 24 February 1962, 3; “State’s Policy Against Inter-Racial Sports Hit,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 23 February 1962, 3; and “‘Mississippian’ Protests Racial Athletic Policy,” *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1962, 7.

<sup>240</sup> Jimmie Robertson, “Representative speaks against ‘unwritten law,’” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 2 March 1962, 2.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Jimmie Robertson, “Teams Must Withdraw From Tournament Play,” *Daily Mississippian* (University of Mississippi), 6 March 1962, 4.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> “Editor of Reflector Questions Unwritten Law,” *Daily Mississippian* (University of Mississippi), 7 March 1962, 2.

<sup>245</sup> The author made a document request to the Mississippi State University Archives division for copies of *The Reflector* for the 1961-62 season. The only item received by the author was Scotty Hargrove’s article from the March 8, 1962, edition of the student-based paper. The column, which appeared in the issue of the *Daily Mississippian* the day before Hargrove’s article, was not included.

<sup>246</sup> Johnny Nikolic, “Voice of the People,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 March 1962, 10.



## CHAPTER VII

THIS IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO OUR WAY OF LIFE SINCE THE  
RECONSTRUCTION

For Mississippi State University, the 1962-63 basketball season would be like no other in team history. Head coach James “Babe” McCarthy’s Bulldogs finished the season with their third straight Southeastern Conference basketball championship and a record of 22-6. Led by seniors W. D. “Red” Stroud, Leland Mitchell, and Joe Dan Gold, the Bulldogs won four titles in five years and, yet again, had a chance to play in the NCAA national championship tournament. While the integrated status of college basketball’s postseason had kept previous MSU clubs at home, McCarthy and MSU president Dean W. Colvard opposed the Closed Society by accepting the tournament invitation, violating the state’s long observed unwritten law. An opponent of the unwritten law during its eight-year duration, *Delta Democrat-Times* editor Hodding Carter quipped, “The people decided they were sick of stupidity — no matter under what guise it travelled,” a nod to the statewide support that existed for the Bulldogs’ venture into the integrated postseason.<sup>1</sup> Although MSU lost 61-51 to the integrated University of Loyola of Chicago Ramblers on March 15, 1963, the eventual national champions, they gained a bigger victory over Mississippi’s staunch segregationists and the protectors of the Closed Society. After the team’s win over an integrated Bowling Green team 65-60 the next night in the region’s third place game, McCarthy was asked by reporters what he thought the reaction was going to be back in Mississippi. “I don’t know. I hope they don’t bomb the plane,” McCarthy quipped.<sup>2</sup> MSU’s decision was the subject of a heated debate in the tense, volatile air of the Magnolia State between the conservative white ideals of the Closed Society and the progression of civil rights in the South.

While many of the journalistic stalwarts of the Closed Society held true to form and supported the unwritten law through either the opinion-based forums afforded to them or

enforced Mississippi's segregationist status quo through silence, support for MSU's basketball team continued to infest Mississippi's journalistic community. The 1962-63 debate brought forth new support for integrated athletics from Mississippi's sports reporters and demonstrated the beginning of a slow but progressive change in Mississippi's press that refused to blindly damn any and all notions towards integration and social equality. From February 26, 1963, when the Bulldogs clinched the SEC championship through March 20, 1963, after the MSU contingent returned to Starkville from the NCAA tournament, editors and reporters in Mississippi debated the legitimacy of the unwritten law. Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News* and James Skewes of the *Meridian Star* continued to champion the cause of the Closed Society, while others such as Bill Ross of the *Daily Journal*, Dick Lightsey of the Biloxi-based *Daily Herald*, and sports editor Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, supported an NCAA title opportunity of the Bulldogs. Even the conservative Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* and Carl Walters of the *Clarion-Ledger* expressed a change of opinion, supporting the MSU five's appearance in the tournament.

In total, the dichotomy of opinions and perspectives that appeared in the press was a contrast to the universal opposition expressed by the editors and journalists of Mississippi towards the September 13, 1962, integration of the University of Mississippi by James Meredith. The civil rights pioneer's mere presence at Ole Miss led to riots that engulfed the Oxford campus.<sup>3</sup> The press reacted with disdain over the move and, in total, supported Governor Ross Barnett, who threatened to close all of the colleges and universities in the Magnolia State if integration was forced upon Ole Miss.<sup>4</sup> Editors and journalists across the state, including segregationists Ward, Skewes, Tom Ethridge of the *Clarion-Ledger*, and even the more moderate J. Oliver Emmerich of the *Enterprise-Journal* and Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* supported the governor.<sup>5</sup> While Barnett would later yield and allow Meredith to enter the Oxford-based university, his addition to Ole Miss did not lead to the immediate integration of Mississippi's colleges and universities. However, the damage had

been done. Meredith's enrollment at the Closed Society's crown educational jewel signaled the onset of change in Mississippi. The united white front on which the Closed Society was built began to question the caste system's purpose. Evidence of those inquiries emerged months later because of a college basketball team from Starkville and its quest for a national championship.

That December, Mississippi State University's basketball Bulldogs would begin its 1962-63 season, one that would aggravate the already exposed cracks in the racist foundation of white Mississippi. As the Bulldogs mounted the final challenge to the unwritten law, those same journalists and editors were fragmented on their opinions of MSU's desire to play in the integrated tournament, signaling a significant weakness in the Closed Society. The slow but evolutionary change occurring in Mississippi's press was apparent by both the number of sports reporters and editors who expressed a change in opinion from previous debates involving the unwritten law.

This chapter consulted fifteen Mississippi newspapers, including the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Hattiesburg American*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Enterprise-Journal*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Commercial Dispatch* in Columbus, the *Starkville Daily News*, the *Greenwood Commonwealth*, the *Jackson Advocate*, the *Natchez Democrat*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the Tupelo-based *Daily Journal*, the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, and *The Reflector* of the Mississippi State University. From an examination of the articles, columns, editorials, and letters to the editor published by the aforementioned publications, a changing in the ideological guard in the Magnolia State began to emerge, one that would question the legitimacy of the state's once sacred unwritten law. In an attempt to protect the Closed Society, editors and reporters such as Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, T. H. Hederman, Jr., of the *Clarion-Ledger*, and Skewes of the *Meridian Star* served as the journalistic watchdogs for the state's powerful segregationist class and viewed the MSU effort as a threat to their southern way of life, attacking the Bulldogs with their venomous and

racist commentary. However, despite the work of these strident segregationists, a number of reporters, specifically Mississippi's sports writers and editors, contradicted the opinions of the aforementioned editors and, along with the work of journalistic luminaries Carter and Emmerich, made an effort to break through the dominant white ideology pervaded by the state's social and political elite by supporting the efforts of McCarthy's Bulldogs. A separate contingent, such as the Hederman-owned *Hattiesburg American* and the *Starkville Daily News*, voiced no opinion on the racial aspect of the matter and remained silent. Despite the evidence of civil rights progress during the debate, most Mississippi newspapers disregarded the team's appearance in the tournament after the Bulldogs were eliminated from the postseason. Rather than identify the social and cultural relevance of the integration of athletics within the state and the Southeastern Conference, journalists in Mississippi ignored the issue, as demonstrated by the press coverage of the team's return to Starkville and, later, McCarthy's 1965 resignation from Mississippi State. However, despite the perceived social step backwards, the damage to the Closed Society had already been done.

As demonstrated in this chapter, Mississippi's journalists, in total, offered unprecedented support for the elimination of the unwritten law and the entry of the Bulldogs into the 1963 NCAA tournament if, for no other reason, to win a national championship. However, unlike past challenges to the gentleman's agreement, members of the state's journalistic community not only identified the athletic benefit from the team's participation but the bigger civil rights-based justification of integrated athletics as an inevitable occurrence in the state's social evolution. In total, the 1963 MSU-NCAA debate served as a sign of things to come in Mississippi as the press continued in this process that had originally been spurred by Meredith's entry into Ole Miss.

#### The Ghosts of Championships Past

Like in past years, MSU's desire to play in the integrated national championship tournament was well known even before it became an argued norm in the pages of

Mississippi's newspapers. As early as January 25, 1963, McCarthy told members of the press that he hoped for the elimination of the unwritten law so his team could have a chance to play for the national championship. McCarthy, in a nod to civil rights history, explained that the purveyors of the Closed Society could no longer look at the Bulldogs as a threat to all out integration in the Magnolia State because that line had already been crossed in Oxford. "About 75 percent of the people wanted us to play in the tournament anyhow," the head coach said. "Now, since the [James] Meredith case at Ole Miss, they can't say 'I told you so, you played against integrated teams and look what it brought on' because it didn't bring it on."<sup>6</sup>

By the time February 24, 1963, had come around, the Bulldogs were firmly entrenched in the position of the SEC's best quintet. Coming off a 99-64 victory over Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge on February 23, 1963, McCarthy's team had but two games left in the regular season with a chance to clinch at least a share of the SEC title.<sup>7</sup> Stroud, who was known as "Red" due to his bright hair color, led the Bulldogs with 21 points, followed by fellow seniors Gold with 17 and Mitchell with 15. McCarthy, in a plea for a postseason berth, told Robert "Steamboat" Fulton of the *Clarion-Ledger*, "It would be a shame for a team capable of playing as well as our boys did away from home tonight, not to get a chance to play in the NCAA."<sup>8</sup> Associated Press sports writer Jim Hackleman identified the Bulldogs as the conference leader in the SEC with two games to go but much like his sports brethren, Hackleman minimized the Starkville contingent's chances at a postseason berth "because of policy against integrated athletics," a common occurrence in MSU's previous SEC-title winning seasons.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, David M. Moffit, a longtime sports reporter with United Press International, wrote on February 25, 1963, that Georgia Tech, which was tied for second place with Auburn University behind the Bulldogs, was in the lead for the conference's berth in the national title tournament due to their win over the Plainsmen and the existence of the unwritten law.<sup>10</sup>

On February 25, 1963, the Bulldogs defeated Tulane University in New Orleans 78-67 to clinch their third straight SEC championship. The two teams exchanged the lead 21 times before State pulled away in the first half. Stroud led the Bulldogs with 28 points while Gold added 26 in the win. Fulton, who just a year earlier called for the elimination of the unwritten law, foretold of the pending controversy, writing, "It is the hour of decision for the officials who have for three years kept championship Miss. State teams at home while less worthy clubs represented the league in the NCAA. If those officials show the guts and courage displayed last night by the Bulldogs, their chances of going will be greatly improved."<sup>11</sup> Others journalists were not as supportive. Fellow Hederman-based sports reporter Phil Wallace of the *Jackson Daily News* wrote that, while the SEC title was in the Bulldogs' sights, the NCAA tournament was still in doubt as "State had turned down bids in the past to represent the SEC in the NCAA playoff because of Mississippi's 'unwritten law' against participating in integrated events."<sup>12</sup> In an almost universal fashion, most articles that appeared in Mississippi newspapers on the win quoted McCarthy lamenting for a national title opportunity. "I wish the boys, by some means, would have the opportunity to play," the State head coach told the press. "It breaks my heart."<sup>13</sup> McCarthy did not mince his words with the *Starkville Daily News*, telling an anonymous reporter, "It makes me sick when I have to tell friends I don't think we'll get a chance to go. . . . I don't see why they should have to pack their uniforms and let an Alabama or Georgia team represent the SEC when they have the same problem we have. To a man, my boys want to play in the tournament. I have said my piece."<sup>14</sup> McCarthy's comments were somewhat inaccurate. The state of Georgia tried to pass a law banning integrated competition in 1957, but failed. Furthermore, by 1963, colleges and universities from the Peach State played against racially mixed foes on the road.<sup>15</sup> In Alabama, while the Crimson Tide abstained from playing integrated teams at home, by 1963, schools such as the University of Alabama competed against such teams on the road.<sup>16</sup>

Despite McCarthy's public appeal, other reporters, such as AP scribes Tom Dygard and Robert Davenport, stressed that conference runner-up Georgia Tech would be the SEC's representative.<sup>17</sup> UPI's coverage of the win took a similar path, writing that it was unlikely that the Bulldogs would accept the tournament berth "for racial reasons. . . . State officials, so far, have shown no inclination to permit state-supported Mississippi schools."<sup>18</sup> The article was published in Carter's *Delta Democrat-Times* with the misleading headline, "State Clinches Tie in SEC —Tech Earns NCAA Berth," indicating that the editors at the *Delta Democrat-Times* assumed that MSU would succumb to the unwritten law and the Yellow Jackets would take their place.<sup>19</sup> In another UPI-based article on Georgia Tech's 89-69 win over the University of Florida on February 25, 1963, an anonymous author wrote that Tech's win "assured them the NCAA bid, barring a reversal on the racial issue by Mississippi officials."<sup>20</sup> With the win, State moved into the seventh spot in both the AP and UPI national basketball polls.<sup>21</sup>

In the aftermath of MSU's victory over the Green Wave, the Magnolia State's litany of politicians began to appear in the pages of the state's newspapers voicing their opinions on a Mississippi State NCAA tournament appearance. Republican gubernatorial candidate Rubel Phillips told the AP that McCarthy's squad should play in the NCAA tournament, proposing that citizens view the situation in terms of geographical rules and, since MSU would be going to Michigan, it was only fitting that the team "play by their rules."<sup>22</sup> In articles from both the AP and UPI, the State College Board athletic committee chairman S. R. Evans said MSU was not likely to accept the bid unless, "there is an expression from the legislature and the state administration for a change."<sup>23</sup> Sen. Billy Mitts of Enterprise, a former MSU cheerleader and a strident defender of the unwritten law during its eight-year duration, went before the state Senate and asked that legislative measures be taken against MSU to prevent them from going to the NCAA tournament. Mitts' request was tabled and sent to committee.<sup>24</sup>

Many journalists, specifically Moffit, continued to tout Georgia Tech as the SEC representative, as if it were a foregone conclusion that the Bulldogs would reject the invitation.<sup>25</sup> Moffit identified the Atlanta-based contingent as the conferences' representative to the NCAA tournament unless MSU hurdled "the racial prejudice which continues to bar it from the national tournament."<sup>26</sup> Moffit's article appeared in the *Delta Democrat-Times* with the headline, "Tech Meets Vandy In Final Tune-up Before NCAA Meet," again giving the impression that the Bulldogs would yield and allow the Yellow Jackets to take their place in the tournament.<sup>27</sup> Moffit would again concede the NCAA bid to the Yellow Jackets in another UPI article that appeared on February 28, 1963, in the *Clarion-Ledger*.<sup>28</sup> The UPI sports reporter, in a slight show of opinion, wrote, "It's getting to be an old issue in the SEC."<sup>29</sup> An edited version of Moffit's UPI account appeared in the *Jackson Daily News* without the previous statement.<sup>30</sup> An anonymous AP sports writer wrote in a March 3, 1963, article that appeared in a number of different Mississippi newspapers that the Bulldogs could clinch the outright conference title with a win over the Rebels but failed to identify the NCAA tournament as the team's capstone goal.<sup>31</sup>

Before MSU's last game against in-state rival Ole Miss, McCarthy spoke to sports editor Bill Ross of the Tupelo-based *Daily Journal* and said he thought the prospects of playing in the NCAA tournament were better than in the team's past SEC title-winning campaigns. In a show of optimism, McCarthy predicted that, if the team's efforts were opposed, the university and the state would receive a barrage of bad publicity. The Baldwin native also said that he felt there was more general interest in the issue and that prevailing opinion in the state had changed since the team's first conference championship in 1959. Ross' work also appeared in the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>32</sup>

While politicians and McCarthy took to the press to express a litany of opinions, support in the state from various alumni groups was growing. The *Delta Democrat-Times* reported that the MSU alumni chapter in Washington County released a statement on



February 26, 1963, supporting the school's administration regardless of the decision Colvard made.<sup>33</sup> In Starkville and Yazoo City, residents and MSU alumni circulated a petition approving the SEC champions' efforts to enter the NCAA tournament.<sup>34</sup>

In the days before the season finale against Ole Miss, the press continued to report on the building anticipation for Colvard's decision. SEC commissioner Bernie Moore announced that Mississippi State had until March 5, 1963, to make a final decision as to whether or not they would accept the NCAA tournament invitation. The article also cited comments from MSU athletic director Wade Walker, who told *Daily Journal* sports editor Bill Ross that it was unlikely the team would bypass the unwritten law. The account appeared in *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Meridian Star*, and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* without a byline.<sup>35</sup> Although it was reported in a number of wire-based article that officials with MSU feared possible punishment from the SEC or the NCAA if it were to reject the bid, Moore refuted such a claim in a March 7, 1963 article from UPI.<sup>36</sup>

While MSU's past challenges to the unwritten law yielded a degree of ignorance from Mississippi's press, the 1963 debate seemed to do just the opposite as the debate surrounding the gentleman's agreement seeped to the forefront and the athletic aspects of the issue clearly became secondary. The *Jackson Daily News* published a preview of the Bulldogs' season-ending contest against the University of Mississippi on March 2, 1963, but the article's only reference to State's championship status came in the lead. The NCAA tournament or Colvard's impending decision was never mentioned.<sup>37</sup> Similar content could be found in an article in the *Enterprise-Journal*.<sup>38</sup>

Despite all of the public commentary on the chances of MSU playing in the integrated national title tournament, Joe Dan Gold, who was a senior and the team captain of the 1963 squad, said there was little discussion on the matter in the Bulldogs' locker room. "We were aware that McCarthy wanted to go and we were aware that Dr. Colvard was receptive to go, but I don't think we ever got our hopes up because of the unwritten law," said

Gold in a July 2009 interview. “As a team, we never really had any discussions on that. We had several Mississippi guys on the team and several from out of state that had played integrated teams before. I first played against black players in 1957 when I was in high school. We did have some who had never played against black players but I don’t think it was an issue for any of us.”<sup>39</sup>

#### Colvard, McCarthy Forgo the Unwritten Law

On March 2, 1963, before the Bulldogs were to play their final game of the 1963 regular season against the Rebels of Ole Miss, Colvard surprisingly announced that he would allow McCarthy’s team to go to East Lansing, Michigan to play in the NCAA tournament. The university president, who received both scorn and praise for his decision, began his statement to the press by attributing the acceptance of the bid to the desire to “do the right thing.” Citing the questionable validity of the unwritten law and the enormous amount of support the team received from faculty, alumni, students, friends, and fans, Colvard gave his blessing to McCarthy’s team to go into the integrated postseason in the following passage:

In the light of my best judgment, it is my conclusion that as responsible and responsive members of the academic community and of the Southeastern Conference we have no choice other than to go. . . . I have decided that unless hindered by competent authority, I shall send our basketball team to the NCAA competition. As one who has lived in the midst of Mississippians for less than three years, I am cognizant of it upon my professional career. . . . 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 hope for the team is an enjoyable time, good, clean competition and victory.<sup>40</sup>

No president in the history of Mississippi State had to confront the issue of race more frequently than Colvard. The North Carolina native replaced Ben Hilbun at the conclusion of the 1959-60 school year and was, in essence, an outsider to the Magnolia State.<sup>41</sup> While

many viewed Colvard as a hero in MSU's long history, at the time, the embattled president's consent to play in the tournament made him one of the more disliked individuals in the Closed Society.<sup>42</sup> With the impending controversy and subsequent decision to allow the Bulldogs to play in the tournament, the MSU president was bombarded with correspondence and letters both supporting and denouncing his decision.

According to the president's personal correspondence, Colvard seemed to have a solid relationship with the press as a number of journalists contacted MSU's embattled leader to offer their support. Jackson news director Dick Sanders of WJDX and WLBT Channel 3 wrote to Colvard to express his "appreciation and admiration" for allowing the Bulldogs to play in the integrated tournament.<sup>43</sup> J. Oliver Emmerich showed his support for Colvard by writing the president to tell him that most of the *Enterprise-Journal's* reading audience had accepted his decision.<sup>44</sup> Owens F. Alexander, manager of the Capital Broadcasting Company and WJTV Channel 12 in Jackson followed suit, telling Colvard that, in a poll conducted by the CBS affiliate, local residents were "overwhelmingly" in favor of MSU's appearance in the NCAA tournament as 85 percent of those polled sided with Colvard.<sup>45</sup> Jocko Maxwell, sports director of radio station WNJR in Newark, New Jersey, the self-professed "America's Most Experienced Negro Radio Chain," called the idea that the Bulldogs would miss the tournament due to a "Colored American" a "silly, un-American view. This is 1963 and we feel that all races in the USA should join together to build a happier world by good sportsmanship, clean politics, and clean living. We appreciate your views on the matter."<sup>46</sup>

The majority of newspaper accounts covering Colvard's announcement published the university president's statement verbatim.<sup>47</sup> *Meridian Star* sports editor Billy "Sunshine" Rainey, who offered little support to the Bulldogs during previous challenges of the unwritten law, wrote in an hesitant tone that the team would "apparently play in the event this year" after being denied in the past.<sup>48</sup> An anonymous reporter for the Associated Press opened their article on the decision, which appeared in the *Jackson Daily News, Daily Herald* of Biloxi,

the *Hattiesburg American*, and *Vicksburg Evening Post*, by writing, “Segregationist elements remained silent today on Mississippi State’s decision to permit the Maroons to play in the NCAA basketball tournament” in a nod to the bevy of no comments that came from staunch segregationists like Barnett and William J. Simmons of the Citizens’ Council.<sup>49</sup> Another reporter from the AP, whose work appeared in the *Hattiesburg American* and the *Laurel Leader-Call* without a byline, called Colvard’s decision the surprise ending of the SEC basketball season and referenced McCarthy’s disdain for the gentleman’s agreement, claiming that the coach “has long favored with doing away with the state’s unwritten law against playing teams with Negro athletes.”<sup>50</sup> It was also reported that the Mississippi State Student Senate unanimously voted for the team to play in the tournament and offered a public show of support for the embattled Colvard.<sup>51</sup>

Knowing that a chance at a national championship was in their immediate future, the Bulldogs would go on to defeat the Rebels 75-72 as Gold scored 24 points and Stroud chipped in 19. MSU finished the regular season with a 21-5 record and 12-2 mark in the SEC.<sup>52</sup> In a number of wire-based accounts, it was reported that McCarthy was pleased with Colvard’s decision. “It’s great,” the joyous coach told the press. “I’m happy we can go. The boys deserve it.”<sup>53</sup> *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker referred to the Bulldogs as “NCAA-tourney bound” and added that the team would play the winner of a playoff game between Loyola of Chicago and the yet-to-be-determined champion of the Mid-America Conference at the NCAA’s Mideast regional on March 15, 1963, in East Lansing, Michigan.<sup>54</sup> Loyola’s integrated status was not referenced. After the season-ending victory, Mississippi State remained the seventh best team in the nation according to the rankings in the AP and UPI national basketball polls.<sup>55</sup>

#### Roberts and the State College Board Intervene

The day after Colvard’s announcement, Moffit began his article for UPI by writing, “Joy, tempered by caution, is today’s mode at Mississippi State. Unless die-hard

segregationists throw up a last minute roadblock, the Bulldogs are bound for the NCAA regional and their first shot at the national basketball championship.”<sup>56</sup> Another account from UPI, which appeared in the sports section of the *Jackson Daily News*, stated, “Teams in the NCAA college basketball tourney welcomed Mississippi State into the fold” after Colvard “lowered the barrier that previously prohibited the Maroons from competing against Negro athletes.”<sup>57</sup>

Reaction to the decision from the political elite in Mississippi soon followed with the majority attacking MSU and defending the unwritten law. In a UPI article featured in the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Delta Democrat-Times*, Rep. Russell Fox, who was cited as helping create the gentleman’s agreement in 1956, told the anonymous author that Colvard’s decision would be misinterpreted as a sign of weakness from other states in Mississippi’s stand for segregation.<sup>58</sup> Mitts called the decision a “low blow to the state of Mississippi” and questioned the College Board, telling the unknown author, “it should place native sons of Mississippi in college presidencies and not risk a similar tragedy like this from happening in the future,” a swipe at Colvard’s North Carolina roots. While reporting on the reaction to the decision from McCarthy, an unknown AP reporter cited an anonymous State College Board member who said he saw no reason why Colvard’s decision would be overturned.<sup>59</sup> Rep. Walter Hester of Natchez claimed that MSU was opening the doors for all-out integration in the state in the following passage from the March 5, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*.

I am opposed to integration in any form. It is no safer to mix with Negroes on the ball courts than it is in the classroom. . . . This action follows the Meredith decision as an admission that Miss. State has capitulated and is willing to move into that school en mass. The liberal press will have their way with this and how can you blame them. We are being sold out by our own people. We have now accepted integration.<sup>60</sup>

The Rev. W. E. Gamble of Jackson concurred with Hester’s remarks, predicting that MSU’s participation would compromise future efforts to maintain segregation in Mississippi schools.<sup>61</sup> Barnett told the press he had no comment on the Bulldogs or the upcoming

meeting.<sup>62</sup> Some of the above referenced articles also included information about an unidentified Leland man who burned a petition he had received asking for support for MSU's appearance in the integrated tournament.<sup>63</sup>

On March 5, 1963, a number of news outlets reported that the State College Board, led by Hattiesburg-based attorney and segregationist M. M. Roberts, would hold an emergency meeting on March 10, 1963, to decide whether or not to override Colvard's decision and prevent the Bulldogs from playing in the NCAA tournament.<sup>64</sup> Cliff Sessions of UPI wrote that a few anonymous members of the board wanted to not only keep the MSU contingent in Starkville but also adopt an official policy against any state-supported institution playing in integrated events. Sessions also identified a "bare majority" that did not want to interfere with Colvard's decision.<sup>65</sup> Sessions cited editorial commentary from Skewes in the *Meridian Star*.

The colorful McCarthy responded to the news of the State College Board's impending meeting in a somber yet defiant manner, telling the *Laurel Leader-Call* after meeting with the Laurel-based chapter of the MSU booster club, "We've been staying home because of an unwritten law. There is no such thing in my book. . . . If we lose our ability to compete, we lose everything."<sup>66</sup> While Colvard made the decision, it was evident that the media savvy McCarthy served as the primary spokesperson and advocate for the Bulldogs' tournament bid.

Rainey and fellow *Meridian Star* sports writer Howard Beeland took to the streets of Meridian to check the pulse of local Mississippi State graduates and discovered that most of the alumni interviewed support Colvard and the Bulldogs. Former MSU football player Thomas "Shorty" McWilliams told the *Star*'s duo, "We can't isolate ourselves in the state of Mississippi. If we do, it may come to a point where Mississippi schools are only playing state schools. We need to branch out."<sup>67</sup> Fellow Meridian resident James Garnett said that he was happy to see Colvard accept the invitation and he did not think the state's segregationist

policy would be affected. Morris McCara also approved of the berth as long as integrated teams did not play in the Magnolia State. The only objection to the postseason venture by MSU came from Wayne Anders, who told Rainey and Beeland, “This is opening the door to the NAACP to put Negroes in Mississippi schools at a fast pace.”<sup>68</sup> While Rainey’s work from MSU’s past title-winning campaigns failed to address the debate surrounding the unwritten law, his article in the March 5, 1963, edition of the *Meridian Star* showed a legitimate attempt by “Sunshine” to present a fair and accurate depiction of public opinion on a controversial topic, a bold move for the typically conservative Rainey.

Despite the announcement of the State College Board’s meeting, Fulton reported in the March 6, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger* that the Bulldogs were moving ahead with preparing and planning for their trip to East Lansing.<sup>69</sup> Although State’s opposition had yet to be determined, Fulton identified the integrated five of Loyola of Chicago as the Bulldogs’ likely opponent. “Steamboat” failed to mention the State College Board’s March 10, 1963, meeting or the school’s questionable tournament status.<sup>70</sup> In the same edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, an article from the AP detailed the festering controversy surround MSU and the unwritten law. The account, penned by an unknown journalist, repeated the bulk of the information found in Sessions’ article from the previous day. However, McCarthy was quoted at the conclusion of the piece, telling the reporter, “The boys are beginning to practice today and they as well as I hope they won’t be deprived of the opportunity to play. I think we have a real good chance to go and we’ll carry through our plans to make the trip until notified by college authorities to forget it.”<sup>71</sup> Fellow Hederman publication the *Jackson Daily News* published the same article with McCarthy’s closing remarks noticeably absent.<sup>72</sup> Other articles from UPI simply reported that, despite the decision, the team was planning to leave for East Lansing.<sup>73</sup> In an AP article found in the *Laurel Leader-Call*, the faculty at MSU gave Colvard a formal vote of confidence and supported the embattled president’s decision to play in the tournament.<sup>74</sup> Meanwhile, the *Starkville Daily News* reported that the Board of

Directors of the Oktibbeha County Chamber of Commerce unanimously passed a resolution endorsing Colvard as the university's president in response to criticism the North Carolina native had received from state politicians for his decision.<sup>75</sup>

On March 7, 1963, Charles M. Hills of the *Clarion-Ledger* reported on Barnett's opinion of Mississippi State's potential venture into integrated athletics as the governor argued that the team's participation would bring undue harm to all citizens of Mississippi. "Personally, I feel that it is not for the best interest of Mississippi State University, the State of Mississippi, or either of the races," Barnett told the press.<sup>76</sup> The AP's account on Barnett's commentary also discussed the possibility that State would encounter an integrated team, such as eventual foe Loyola of Chicago, which had four blacks in its starting lineup, and the defending national champions University of Cincinnati Bearcats, which had three.<sup>77</sup> While UPI repeated the bulk of the aforementioned material, included was a nod to an editorial written by Carter in the *Delta Democrat-Times* advocating State's venture into integrated athletics.<sup>78</sup>

While MSU's initial appearance in the NCAA tournament was the primary focus for most of the reporters in Mississippi, some journalists still found the time to make the athletic accomplishments of McCarthy's quintet the primary focus of their work. In an March 7, 1963, article summarizing the Bulldog's SEC title winning campaign, an anonymous journalist only referenced the NCAA tournament twice in the story and made no mention of the controversial March 10, 1963, meeting of the State College Board. The majority of the article focused on the senior seasons registered by Gold, Mitchell, Stroud, and Bobby Shows.<sup>79</sup> In the pages of *The Reflector* of Mississippi State University, an anonymous author indicated in the biweekly newspaper that support was abundant in the press, citing the *Daily Journal*, the *Starkville Daily News*, the *Purple and White* at Millsaps College, and the *Commercial Appeal* out of Memphis, Tennessee.<sup>80</sup>



State College Board member Roberts, who would serve as one of MSU's primary adversaries in the NCAA tournament debate, used the press to call out his colleagues on the State College Board, urging them to "do its full duty to its constituents and to the Southern Way of Life."<sup>81</sup> Roberts, one of the more powerful propitiators of the Closed Society, called the debate "the greatest challenge to our way of life since the Reconstruction," a questionable contention to say the least.<sup>82</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*' William Peart wrote that the segregationist attorney from Hattiesburg "scorched speculation that a quorum would be present at the Saturday meeting," a reference to a rumor reported by the AP and UPI that Colvard's supporters would simply skip the meeting in order to prevent the board from having a quorum.<sup>83</sup> "This nettles me. Everyone of these men on the board with me are men of honor and integrity. My judgment is that all of them if at all possible, will be present at the meeting. This board of men will be there and accept its duty to its constituents and to the Southern way of life," Roberts told the Jackson-based reporter.<sup>84</sup> In regards to the State College Board, historians have pointed out that, as the social climate in Mississippi began to shift and integration began to become an inevitable conclusion, most board members were unable or unwilling to accept the changes taking place around them. Segregationists such as Roberts, Ira "Shine" Morgan of Oxford, Ray Izard of Hazelhurst, Williams O. Stone of Jackson, and Leon Lowery of Olive Branch, all of who were appointed to the board by Barnett, passionately fought against integration and looked out for their own political beliefs and those of the Closed Society.<sup>85</sup> "I look back now, and I am ashamed of the way I voted sometimes," said fellow board member Verner Homes to historian David Sansing. "I think back in those days we all, in our hearts, we were a little racist."<sup>86</sup>

Peart was one of the few staff writers who reported on Roberts' commentary as the majority of Mississippi's press depended on AP and UPI accounts of the segregationist's statements. Perhaps what was more interesting about the account of Roberts' statements was the placement of James Saggus' article for the AP in the pages of the *Clarion-Ledger*. While

Saggus' work was featured on the front page of the March 8, 1963, edition, above the article was an editorial by editor T. H. Hederman, Jr., that predicted the systematic disintegration of segregation in the Magnolia State if the Bulldogs were to play in the tournament.<sup>87</sup> In combination, the content of the two accounts sent a powerful message to the *Clarion-Ledger's* audience rife with support for the Closed Society and the unwritten law. The editorial work of the *Clarion-Ledger* was referenced by the AP in its article on Roberts' comments to the press.<sup>88</sup> UPI referred to columns by both Hederman and Ward but also included comments from the Bulldogs' would-be foe, the Ramblers of Loyola of Chicago. Head Coach George Ireland told the anonymous sports writer that his team wanted to play the Bulldogs while Jerry Harkness, a star forward and one of the team's four black starters, added that he was not surprised by the growing race-based debate in Mississippi.<sup>89</sup> A separate account on the Loyola perspective was also distributed by UPI, which appeared in the *Jackson Daily News* on March 8, 1963.<sup>90</sup>

Rainey, in another bold journalistic step for the conservative sports editor, penned a brief history of MSU's multiple battles with the unwritten law in the March 8, 1963, edition of the *Meridian Star*. Rainey wrote that a tradition would be broken one way or another as a result of the State College Board's meeting: Either the state's policy of allowing colleges and universities to make decisions on such matters would be broken or the Magnolia State's unwritten law, a nod to the historical precedent that was eventually set.<sup>91</sup> Rainey concluded his article by identifying the precarious nature McCarthy's team was in. "New uniforms were purchased for the team to wear in the tournament," Rainey wrote. "Whether J. W. (Red) Stroud, Leland Mitchell, Joe Dan Gold and Bobby Shows will ever get to wear them remains to be seen."<sup>92</sup> Rainey's work, which offered no hint of opinion, was a nod to the civic nature of "Sunshine's" role as a journalist, and his efforts on State's history with the unwritten law was a sound journalistic decision for the Meridian sports editor.

Recognizing that the Bulldogs' NCAA tournament fate could have been significantly altered by the State College Board, Fulton began his March 8, 1963, article for the *Clarion-Ledger* on the team's preparation for the tournament by stating, "If Mississippi State's basketball team doesn't go to the NCAA Regional next week, a lot of sweat and preparation will have been in vain."<sup>93</sup> Fulton again predicted that the Bulldogs would face Loyola, which was ranked third in the nation by the AP. While Fulton did not reference the integrated status of the Ramblers, he did ask McCarthy if he had discussed the possibility of encountering black athletes during the course of the tournament, to which the MSU head coach boldly said, "I told them to play against them like they would play against anybody else," he said. "We won't consider them as being black or white, but as being just another bunch of players."<sup>94</sup>

On March 9, 1963, the *Vicksburg Evening Post* and the *Clarion-Ledger* reported that the majority of the board would be present to determine the fate of McCarthy's Bulldogs. The article, which did not have a byline in either newspaper, was the first to identify Loyola as having "four Negroes in its starting lineup" and called the third ranked team in the country a heavy favorite to battle MSU in Michigan.<sup>95</sup> The unknown author cited the amount of columns and editorials that had appeared in the Magnolia State since Colvard's decision and provided a brief history of the unwritten law. In an almost hopeful tone, the writer closed his account with a quote from Georgia Tech's athletic director Bobby Dodd, who said the second-place Yellow Jackets would be more than happy to go to the tournament in State's place. The AP also penned an article anticipating the meeting by the State College Board and acknowledged that, "Mississippi State's hopes of ending years of tradition and playing in the desegregated NCAA basketball tournament" hung in the balance.<sup>96</sup>

In anticipation of the board's decision, Sessions wrote an article on McCarthy's 1960 prediction that his freshmen team, which went 21-0 and featured 1963 standouts Mitchell, Stroud, Gold, and Shows, would lead the team to the conference championship in their senior year. The four Bulldogs excelled well beyond McCarthy's expectations, winning three SEC

championships during their three varsity campaigns and finishing with a three-year total of 64 wins versus 12 losses. Despite their success, Sessions pointed out that the national perception of MSU's basketball team was skewed because they rarely ventured outside of the South due to the gentleman's agreement. "They have been denied the opportunity by a policy against Mississippi teams competing in racially integrated events but next week the Maroons will buck that policy unless the State College Board interferes," Sessions wrote in a hopeful tone.<sup>97</sup>

#### MSU Granted Permission to Play in NCAA

On March 9, 1963, the State College Board voted by an 8-3 margin to allow MSU to play in the tournament.<sup>98</sup> Bill Simpson of the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News* wrote that the gentleman's agreement was breached, providing a negative connotation to the announcement.<sup>99</sup> According to Simpson, Roberts introduced the resolution that would have barred MSU from the postseason and claimed the Bulldogs' participation would mark the end of Mississippi's "southern way of life." In defeat, Roberts angrily called a motion for Colvard's removal as the university's president, to which fellow board member H. A. Carpenter called a "slap in Dr. Colvard's face."<sup>100</sup> Rather than seconding Roberts' motion, the board gave Colvard a vote of confidence by a margin of 9-2, with the only opposition coming from Roberts and Ray Iazard. Roberts, as detailed in the *Clarion-Ledger*, explained that his resentment towards Colvard was due in part to the MSU president's "defiance" of the board's will, hence his request for the MSU leader to resign.<sup>101</sup> Board member Willis Stone told an unknown UPI reporter that, while he did not believe the team should go, interfering with Colvard's ability to make a decision would have set a negative precedent. "Great harm has already been done to the university by the president's announcement," Stone said. "If we repudiate him, it will do greater harm."<sup>102</sup> Barnett, who only days earlier professed his objection to the school's participation in the integrated tournament, said in a statement that he

would yield to the State College Board. “I have great pride in our team and I hope they will win the national championship,” Barnett told the press.<sup>103</sup>

Meanwhile, UPI’s account of the meeting predicted that the vote in favor of Colvard and the university would “abandon the state’s long-standing policy of prohibiting participating against teams with Negro athletes,” thus signaling the end of the unwritten law.<sup>104</sup> John Hall of the AP focused more on the scene in Jackson and the social issues surrounding it, saving the bulk of the above referenced material for later in his article. “Some say Saturday’s decision was a breakthrough for the forces of integration,” Hall wrote. “Others deny it, and claim the issue is state’s rights — they do it their way there and we’ll do it our way here.”<sup>105</sup> McCarthy, who was in Jackson at the state high school basketball championship, was quoted in most accounts of the meeting by saying he was grateful for the decision.<sup>106</sup> Hall’s article appeared in the Hederman-owned *Hattiesburg American* with the headline, “Is Board’s Decision a Blow to Segregation?”<sup>107</sup>

The *Mississippi Free Press*, a radical minority newspaper that was founded in 1961 under the premise of “Social Justice in Mississippi,”<sup>108</sup> focused on the vote as it pertained to the Magnolia State’s segregationist governor in the March 16, 1963, edition of the weekly newspaper, stating, “Ross Barnett’s advice was ignored last week as the State College Board voted 8-3 to send Mississippi State University’s basketball team to an integrated tournament in Michigan.”<sup>109</sup> Barnett was a frequent target of editor Charlie Butts, whose paper was designed to be an alternative to the *Jackson Advocate* and the conservative Percy Greene and often featured opinion-based material in the context of news articles.

Many newspapers, such as the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Meridian Star*, and the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, published photos of E. A. Elam, who was at the meeting with a petition signed by 130 people opposing MSU, heavily chastising Tubb. Elam told Tubb that blood would be on his hands as a result of the board’s decision.<sup>110</sup> When Mitts was asked for his thoughts, he said, “It’s not over yet.”<sup>111</sup> On the same day the board’s

decision was prominently featured on the paper's front page, the *Jackson Daily News* published a photo of the MSU team in the sports section with the heading, "Miss. State's NCAA Bound S.E.C. Champions."<sup>112</sup>

A temporary sense of order reappeared in the pages of Mississippi newspapers, as the athletic exploits of the Bulldogs temporarily became the primary focus of journalists in the state. The *Jackson Daily News* reported that the team began its final preparations for the tournament without McCarthy and assistant coach Jerry Simmons, who were in Evanston, Illinois scouting the first round tournament game between Loyola and Tennessee Tech with the winner to face the Bulldogs in Michigan.<sup>113</sup> Noticeably absent from the article, which did not have a byline or wire affiliation, was any material dealing with the debate surrounding the team's tournament entry. In light of the decision, Fulton turned his attention back to the hardwood and the Bulldogs' on-court exploits in the March 13, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*. "Steamboat" wrote that McCarthy was in awe of the Ramblers after watching Loyola's dominating victory over Tennessee Tech in the first round of the NCAA tournament by a 111-42 margin. The Bulldogs' head coach called the Chicago-based team the best MSU had ever played.<sup>114</sup> Perhaps in a nod to Fulton's inexperience addressing issues of race, the future sports editor of the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Meridian Star* identified every member of the Ramblers' starting line-up with accompanying statistical information. When Fulton addressed John Egan, "Steamboat" referred to the Ramblers' guard as the only starter who was white. In the win over Tennessee Tech, the 111 points scored by Loyola set an NCAA single game record and the 69-point margin of victory was, at the time, the highest in tournament history.<sup>115</sup>

#### The Bulldogs Escape Starkville

Only four days after Mitts' ominous comments appeared in the pages of the Hederman-owned newspapers, on March 13, 1963, it was first reported in a small article on the front page of the *Jackson Daily News* that "an unidentified group" was attempting to

secure an injunction from a chancery court judge to prevent the MSU contingent from venturing to East Lansing to play in the NCAA tournament.<sup>116</sup> The following day, *Jackson Daily News* staff writers Peart and W. C. Shoemaker not only verified that such an injunction had been secured, but that the Mississippi State team essentially ignored the decision and had already left by plane for the tournament. The injunction, which was obtained by Mitts and B. W. Lawson and signed by Chancery Court Judge L. B. Porter of Hinds County in Brandon, prohibited MSU from spending state money “to travel from the state of Mississippi to engage in any athletic contest when participation is against mixed teams” and claimed that Colvard had unnecessarily raised tensions and emotions on the Starkville campus.<sup>117</sup> Due to Ward’s political ties within the Closed Society and Mississippi’s political elite, the identification of Mitts, a founding father of the unwritten law as “an unidentified group” was suspect at best. Similar information could be found in other articles published throughout the state.<sup>118</sup> Peart and Underwood wrote that Colvard had “ignored an unwritten law against the participation with racially-mixed athletic teams.”<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, the authors called State’s potential violation of the unwritten law, “The most serious crisis in Mississippi since Negro James Meredith was enrolled at the University of Mississippi,” indicating a negative position on behalf of the authors.<sup>120</sup> While the *Jackson Daily News* was the first to have a story on MSU’s controversial exodus from the Magnolia State, it would be another day before the details of the team’s complex departure would be known.

Segregationist editor Sherill Nash covered the team’s departure for Michigan in the *Starkville Daily News* and expressed a degree of shame in the outlaw-like departure of the SEC champions. “The Bulldogs, with the credentials of heroes, departed for their greatest challenge as a criminal escaping from jail,” he wrote. “It was a picture not many Mississippians will want to refer to in the future years. Will the publicity, the injunction, the suspense hurt the play of Mississippi State tonight? No one knows. Only time will tell.”<sup>121</sup> Nash, who defended the unwritten law in the past with publisher Henry Harris, valued the

athletic accomplishments of the MSU team and used the paper's editorial outlet to express such pride. However, the Starkville editor identified the potential embarrassment for the state and the university in the aftermath of the tournament but failed to ascribe blame to either MSU or the proprietors of the Closed Society, lending a degree of confusion to his commentary.

While the front page of the March 14, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* prominently featured the news of MSU's exit from Mississippi, sports editor Lee Baker wrote in the paper's sports section that the Bulldogs were "due to keep a long overdue date" with the Ramblers in the NCAA tournament, indicating a favorable impression on integrated play on behalf of the Jackson-based sports scribe.<sup>122</sup> While Baker's work appeared to be opinion-free, the previously conservative sports editor offered his opinion on the gentleman's agreement when he wrote "the so-called 'unwritten law' barring Mississippi college athletes from participating against integrated opponents was brushed aside," questioning the validity and legitimacy of the state's athletic segregation standard.<sup>123</sup> While Baker spent past debates surrounding the merits of the unwritten law expressing little to no opinion on the matter, his slight jab to the gentleman's agreement and the Closed Society may have been his boldest statement to date and was in opposition of the opinions expressed by his editor, the outspoken Jimmy Ward.

Fellow *Jackson Daily News* sports writer Herb Phillips wrote that Atlanta-based Georgia Tech had held out hope that the Bulldogs would still be barred from the NCAA tournament, allowing the second-place Yellow Jackets to take their place. An anonymous source from Tech's athletic department told Phillips that the injunction was "a chicken thing to do to a fine bunch of young men," and quipped, "I wonder if they'll raise as much a fuss when beauty contest time rolls around and it's time to send Mississippi's lovely young ladies up to compete in the annual intergraded national contests."<sup>124</sup>



Much like Baker, the *Clarion-Ledger's* Fulton allowed his own personal hopes for the Starkville-based Bulldogs to make their way into his news-based accounts. On the day of the team's departure for Michigan, Fulton described MSU as a determined team, unfazed by their underdog status. "The big thing is that Mississippi State is finally getting the chance to represent the SEC in NCAA play," Fulton wrote in an expression of his own excitement. "Win, lose, or draw, the Bulldogs are hellbent on making a good showing."<sup>125</sup>

Others reporters in the Magnolia State wrote on the injunction, but due to the limbo-like status of its enforcement, also indicated that Mississippi State would be leaving for the tournament as planned. Crediting the injunction to "segregation forces," an unknown AP scribe even referenced a rumor that another injunction from a different judge could have been forthcoming, although no such rumor ever came to fruition.<sup>126</sup> A separate AP-based article claimed that, although the injunction had been secured, a spokesperson with MSU's athletic department told reporters that the school had yet to receive any sort of official notice and had no plans of canceling their trip to East Lansing.<sup>127</sup> John J. McDavitt of UPI reported that the Bulldogs left for the tournament, although their participation was still in a legal holding pattern. Mississippi Attorney General Joe T. Patterson told McDavitt that he would request that the injunction be thrown out, allowing MSU to play in the tournament.<sup>128</sup> Others, like *Commercial Dispatch* sports editor Eddie Dean not only acknowledged the legal purgatory of the MSU team, but also used to opportunity to cheer for the Bulldogs. "Only one thing was certain as you watched the party depart, and that was the enthusiasm of the people watching that the Maroons would win!" Dean exclaimed.<sup>129</sup> Fellow sports writer George Anderson of the *Starkville Daily News* called the NCAA tournament the team's "greatest challenge ever" but neglected the injunction and managed to pen an account that contained no references to the unwritten law.<sup>130</sup>

The *Jackson Daily News's* Peart and the AP reported the following day that Mississippi State Supreme Court Associated Justice Robert G. Gillespie had suspended the

injunction because it was “issued without authority of law and was improvidently issued without notice.”<sup>131</sup> Gillespie said an additional hearing would be held in the future to determine whether or not to dismiss the injunction altogether. With at least a temporary reprieve from the efforts of the Closed Society, Mississippi’s journalists reported that the Bulldogs and their coaches arrived in East Lansing without issue. The press in Mississippi, which expected a degree of opposition and controversy to meet McCarthy’s troops in Michigan, reported that the team arrived in East Lansing without any reports of “picketing or other incidents. . . . It had been feared that the team would be picketed due to the furor raised in the state over the Bulldogs playing against racially mixed teams in the tournament.”<sup>132</sup> While the expectation of some sort of incident showed the still present grip of the Closed Society on the press, what may have been a greater journalistic show of the white caste society’s influence was the coverage of the Bulldogs’ efforts to avoid the injunction from Hinds County.

In anticipation of the injunction, the brass at MSU, including Colvard and McCarthy, employed what many in the press called “cloak and dagger tactics” to avoid the serving of the legally binding court order.<sup>133</sup> McCarthy left in the dark of the night for Nashville, Tennessee on March 13, 1963, while Colvard drove to Alabama for a speaking engagement at Auburn University. That evening, Oktibbeha County Sheriff Tom Cook sent Deputy Dot Johnson to unsuccessfully serve the injunction as McCarthy and Colvard, who were named as the primary parties on the legal document, had already left Starkville. The next morning, assistant Jerry Simmons stayed with MSU’s starters on campus while trainer Dutch Luchsinger went to the airport with the remaining players. If the team had been detained or approached by authorities, Luchsinger was to call Simmons so he could make other arrangements to get the team out of Starkville. Johnson later contacted Bob Hartley, MSU’s sports publicity director, who told the deputy that both the university’s president and head basketball coach had left Starkville. Johnson became so impatient waiting at the Starkville Airport for any sign of the

MSU contingent that he left by the time Simmons arrived with the rest of the team. The AP reported that McCarthy joined his team in Nashville.<sup>134</sup> At his press conference on March 14, 1963, McCarthy said the team's journey was not to escape the injunction, but rather to scout their opponent. "I wanted to get the boys up here to see the fastest breaking team I've ever seen," he said, referring to the Loyola squad.<sup>135</sup> The *Starkville Daily News*' Anderson, who accompanied the team to Michigan, likened the fiasco to "comedy farce scrip."<sup>136</sup> Jerry Liska, who penned the account on State's tournament arrival for the AP, wrote, "Never had a team moved into NCAA competition under stranger circumstances."<sup>137</sup> The presentation of the news indicated that the journalistic patrons of the Closed Society were trying to save face for their fellow segregationists, who were likely embarrassed by their inability to serve the injunction.

Fulton would file his first on-location report for the *Clarion-Ledger* in the March 15, 1963, edition of the paper and, in a reference to the team's difficulties arriving to Michigan, quipped "if half the battle has already been won just getting here, Mississippi State's basketball team is all set to tackle high-g geared Loyola of Chicago."<sup>138</sup> According to the AP, upon arriving in East Lansing, Illinois head basketball coach Harry Combs led an official cheer for the Starkville-based Bulldogs, saying, "I don't care about the political aspects of this thing. I think it was a brave and right thing that McCarthy's team came."<sup>139</sup> An unknown UPI reporter, who called the impending clash between the Bulldogs and the Ramblers "one of the most controversial pairings in sports history," took a similar approach.<sup>140</sup> In another UPI-based article, which appeared in the *Delta Democrat-Times* and the *Jackson Daily News*, McCarthy told the unknown reporter that his team just wanted "to give a good showing on the court and not stir up any trouble" while Hartley, who was also Mitts' roommate during their days as students in Starkville, described those in opposition to the team's participation in the tournament as "a few fanatics."<sup>141</sup>

Phillips, who had previously worked as the sports editor at the Columbus-based *Commercial Dispatch*, took an interesting approach in seeking out opinions on the Bulldogs' entry into integrated competition when the *Jackson Daily News* sports reporter attended a conference of the Mississippi Education Association and wrote that the majority of school teachers and officials in the state supported McCarthy's troops. While all those interviewed asked that their names be omitted from Phillips' article, most of the educators balanced their own personal pro-segregationist sentiment with support for MSU. "It's simply, when in Rome do as the Romans do — they'll have to do the same when they come to Mississippi where racial segregation will continue as the way of life, always," one of the anonymous sources told Phillips.<sup>142</sup>

Even after the Bulldogs successfully made their way to East Lansing, UPI reported that Mitts and Lawson were still steadfast in their efforts to successfully enforce the injunction and were simply waiting on a hearing before Hinds County Chancery Judge Stokes V. Robertson, Jr. Interestingly enough, the UPI article also claimed that the rumored hearing was scheduled to take place after the game. On the Starkville campus, the efforts of the segregationist state senators were met with disdain and anger, as the student body hung each in effigy during a student rally.<sup>143</sup> As for the team and the work of the press, Gold said he and his teammates were cognizant of the controversy staring down the Bulldogs. "We were aware of all that was going on, but we were playing in the NCAA tournament for the first time," Gold said. "We were just so happy to be there. We knew we had a good team, but you just don't know until you play the game."<sup>144</sup>

#### "The Color Didn't Make Any Difference"

In the wake of the controversy and debate that engulfed the weeks after the Bulldogs won the SEC title, the team's ground-breaking appearance in the NCAA tournament ended just as soon as it began as the Ramblers defeated Mississippi State 61-51 on March 15, 1963. The *Jackson Daily News*, which had been at the journalistic forefront of the 1963 debate, did

not feature an article on the game on its front page, rather Ward's newspaper published a UPI article that began by stating that MSU had "stumbled Friday night against Negro-dominated Loyola of Chicago" and focused on McCarthy's postgame contention that he would endorse MSU's continued and future participation in integrated athletics. "They'll either have to be a law forbidding us to come or we'll be back," the colorful head coach told the press.<sup>145</sup> When asked about the integrated status of the victors, McCarthy stressed to the press that race played no part in the game. "The color didn't make any difference. I don't even want to talk about that because it wasn't important," he said in a dismissive tone.<sup>146</sup> In the *Meridian Star*, the UPI article on McCarthy's comments appeared with the condescending headline, "'It Was Nice Way To Get Beat,' McCarthy Says of NCAA Loss" while the *Jackson Daily News* published a photo from the AP on the front page of March 16, 1963, edition featuring Loyola's All-American Jerry Harkness, one of the Ramblers' black starters, scoring on a rebound as he was fouled by MSU's Stan Brinker.<sup>147</sup> The *Starkville Daily News*' Anderson wrote that the loss "made the historic appearance a sad one."<sup>148</sup> Nash's paper also published an article from the AP that claimed the two teams were "tense at the outset" but the teams' starters "genially shook hands before the tipoff and the game was serenely played."<sup>149</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*' Baker penned an account on the game itself for the March 16, 1963, edition, but it was featured in the paper's sport section. Fulton wrote that MSU was "less adapt at playing cat-and-mouse-with Loyola of Chicago than they were injunction servers enroute," a final nod to the team's elaborate effort to get to Michigan.<sup>150</sup> Fulton described MSU as a weary team that played its best to compete with the eventual national champions. "Although the widely-publicized NCAA tourney was marred, the Bulldogs made a contest of it, much to the delight of the 12,143 Jenison Field House spectators who warmly applauded the Mississippians time and time again," Fulton wrote.

At least two separate accounts from the AP indicated that the reporters expected some degree of violence or tension to be present during the game. In one article by the AP's

Jerry Green, the game was described as “surprisingly civilized and mundane” while an anonymous AP reporter, who referred to the Chicago-based Ramblers as “Negro-bulwarked,” wrote that “both teams were playing on best possible behavior and making every effort to avoid scuffling, shoving or bickering,” even noting Loyola’s Les Hunter, who was black, helping Stan Brinker to his feet after the Bulldogs’ forward fell going for the ball.<sup>151</sup>

In terms of the on-court action, the slow down pace of McCarthy’s Bulldogs held the highest scoring team in the nation well below its average of 95 points per game. Led by Mitchell’s 14 points, MSU took an early lead. But the play of Loyola All-American Harkness, who scored 20 points, and Vic Rouse’s 19 rebounds helped the Ramblers pull away.<sup>152</sup> Both McCarthy and Gold praised Loyola for its sportsmanship and hospitality. Ireland returned the favor, telling Fulton, “One of the things that came out of this game was the fact that you didn’t see any pushing, shoving or needling among the players. That shows that Miss. State has a good bunch of kids, just like we have.”<sup>153</sup>

For Gold, the scene in East Lansing was a memorable one. “We were just so happy to be there. We knew we had a good team, but you just don’t know until you play the game,” Gold said. “We were very aware of the outside things that were going on and, as captain, when we shook hands [and] all kinds of flashbulbs went off. It was the one thing I remember.”<sup>154</sup> Both the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* published the pregame photo of Harkness and Gold shaking hands.<sup>155</sup>

As for the loss, Gold said the debate and the pressure put on the team by participating in the historical event could have played a part. “We had one practice before we played. It’s hard to look back, but it wasn’t something we dwelled on. Our focus was on playing a basketball game. Just playing in the game was enough but the circumstances surrounding the game could have been a distraction. We played fairly well, but it wasn’t one of our better games.” Gold said. “I was in the NCAA tournament and, for us, there was a significant

amount of pressure. (But) You know, they had pressure on them as well. They knew that they were playing a team that never played blacks.”<sup>156</sup>

While not drawing the same media attention, MSU defeated integrated Bowling Green and 6-11 All-American Nate Thurmond 65-60 in the tournament’s consolation game on March 16, 1963.<sup>157</sup> Playing without Gold, who broke his hand in the game against Loyola, the Bulldogs raced out to a 34-26 halftime lead by using a fast-break offense to surprise the Falcons. Thurmond scored on a layup late in the game to pull the Ohio-based Falcons at 57-56. But State held the ball and, although they did not score a basket for the final 12 minutes of the game, the team tallied 17 points from the free throw line to hold on for the win. Mitchell finished his State career by leading the Bulldogs with 23 points and was named to the NCAA East Regional All-Tournament Team.<sup>158</sup>

#### State Returns to Starkville and Silence

In the aftermath of the school’s first venture into the integrated NCAA tournament, the Bulldogs returned home to “a thousand friends and well-wishers” on March 17, 1963. McCarthy told the masses, “People couldn’t have been nicer to us on this trip. No one tried to embarrass or humiliate us. . . . I’m proud of the boys although we weren’t able to win over Loyola. I’m personally proud of their great effort.”<sup>159</sup> The aforementioned story appeared in the *Jackson Daily News* with photos taken by Baker while Nash’s *Starkville Daily News* published a photo of the team exiting the plane upon its return to the Magnolia State.<sup>160</sup>

Fulton, in an article for the *Clarion-Ledger*, summarized the university’s inaugural tournament appearance and identified the profound difference in going to East Lansing versus the return to Starkville. “The return trip was much more pleasant and gratifying for several reasons. . . . State had received more publicity and acclaim prior to the tourney by just showing up than Loyola did by winning. Big, black headlines in the Detroit and Lansing papers heralded the Bulldogs’ long awaited and at times uncertain arrival.”<sup>161</sup> Fulton added that NCAA officials hailed State for its brave stance against the Closed Society and the

unwritten law. MSU Athletic Director Wade Walker told the *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer, “We were received like champions, we played like champions and our team acted like champions.”<sup>162</sup> While appearing as a straightforward news article, Fulton offered some editorial commentary as he praised the Bulldogs and claimed that Mississippians had accepted State’s presence in the tournament and others never would.<sup>163</sup>

While it was not necessarily reflected in the press, some Mississippi residents took issue with State’s inability to win the national championship and blamed the university and Colvard. After the Bulldogs’ defeat at the hands of the integrated Loyola five, the Sons of Mississippi distributed an essay on the Starkville campus that called the loss, “One of the worst defeats in history. . . . Any citizen of Mississippi who knowingly supports an act to integrate our schools as playing basketball against niggers cannot help but live in shame. A severe blow has been made at our great way of life in Mississippi.”<sup>164</sup> Accompanying the essay was another flyer that was distributed on campus with the headline, “NIGGERS 61-51 NIGGER LOVERS.” The rest of the flyer egregiously stated the following: “MSU, BEING THE FIRST MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL TO BE DEFEATED BY A BUNCH OF NIGGERS, HAS CAUSED OUR FOREFATHERS TO TURN OVER IN THEIR GRAVES.”<sup>165</sup>

#### The End of the Unwritten Law

While many Mississippians felt segregation would be the ultimate casualty of the Bulldogs’ appearance in the NCAA tournament, the legal and legislative barriers that held the state’s athletic teams hostage began to crumble. On March 21, 1963, the State College Board rejected a proposal that would have required the board to grant permission to teams wishing to participate in integrated competition.<sup>166</sup> The motion, which was proposed by Iazard, was based upon State’s participation in the tournament and, according to UPI, had some support from college administrators, as it would require the board to share the responsibility associated with such decisions.<sup>167</sup> The rejection of the proposal essentially ended the unwritten law, as the gentleman’s agreement was no longer observed. The *Mississippi Free*



*Press*, which was one of the few newspapers that carried an article on the board's decision, titled the account, "Trustees Pass Buck."<sup>168</sup> Eight newspapers consulted in this chapter failed to publish an article on the board's vote and the elimination of the unwritten law.<sup>169</sup>

Less than a month after the Bulldogs played in the tournament, McCarthy told the Starkville Lions Club that he and his team were treated well during their journey beyond the Mason-Dixon Line and, while he admitted that his team did not play its best game, he deferred all credit to the Ramblers.<sup>170</sup> McCarthy did not address any race-based issues during the speaking engagement. A week later, McCarthy was the keynote speaker at the Greenville High School basketball banquet and told *Delta Democrat-Times* sports editor Charles S. Kerg that the press' assumption that his team would be barred from the postseason became a motivating factor. "Reading that everyday got old," McCarthy said before praising his senior laden lineup and their performance in the tournament.<sup>171</sup>

On April 2, 1963, Hinds County Chancellor Stokes Robertson signed an order dismissing the injunction that was to bar MSU from playing in the NCAA tournament.<sup>172</sup> From a journalistic standpoint, coverage of Robertson's order was minimal. The *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Daily Journal* were the only two papers consulted that published an account of the State College Board's decision, both of which utilized work from UPI.

Weeks passed without a mention of McCarthy or the 1963 Bulldogs in the sports media. McCarthy coached at MSU for two more seasons, posting a 10-16 record during the 1964-65 campaign and a marginally better 14-11 in 1965-66. McCarthy stepped down as head coach on March 1, 1965. The winner of four straight SEC championships and the man who spearheaded MSU's first NCAA tournament appearance told UPI that, after 10 years, he could no longer do his best at MSU.<sup>173</sup> Suspicious by its absence, most Mississippi media accounts of McCarthy's resignation and his career did not mention the 1962-63 season and the NCAA tournament.<sup>174</sup> Because of his resignation, a number of Mississippi's sports columnists used the opportunity to reflect on McCarthy's legacy in Starkville. Carl Walters of

the *Clarion-Ledger* credited McCarthy for making State into a national basketball power and wished him well in his future endeavors.<sup>175</sup> Thompson followed suit and recalled the colorful McCarthy's battles with Kentucky's Adolph Rupp, and his 1959-60 team that featured future Basketball Hall of Famer Bailey Howell.<sup>176</sup> However, neither Walters nor Thompson mentioned the 1963 Bulldogs or the NCAA tournament. Fulton, who had moved on from the *Clarion-Ledger* to the *Meridian Star*, briefly referenced the 1963 NCAA tournament, but called the team's victory over Kentucky in Lexington as the crowning achievement for the 1962-63 MSU squad.<sup>177</sup> An editorial in the *Starkville Daily News* also mentioned the NCAA tournament but claimed that McCarthy "was bitter" because he only had one chance to participate.<sup>178</sup>

The colorful McCarthy, who never played college basketball and only coached at the middle school level before Mississippi State College hired him, is still considered one of the greatest coaches in MSU history. McCarthy left Starkville with a 169-85 record, which is third all-time at MSU, and a .665 winning percentage, fourth highest in school history.<sup>179</sup> McCarthy was not away from the hardwood for long, as he became the head coach at George Washington University in 1966 where he finished his only season a pedestrian 6-18.<sup>180</sup> McCarthy returned to the south as head coach of the American Basketball Association's New Orleans Buccaneers in 1967. McCarthy became a visible figure in the ABA, coaching the Memphis Pros, the Dallas Chaparrals, and the Kentucky Colonials, winning the league's Coach of the Year award twice, becoming the first coach in the league to win 200 games.<sup>181</sup> In 1973, McCarthy agreed to return to the SEC as the head basketball coach at the University of Georgia but, five months into the job, resigned to coach the ABA's Kentucky Colonials without coaching a single game in Athens.<sup>182</sup> Roughly a year later, McCarthy became ill with cancer and died in March 1975.<sup>183</sup> The Baldwin native was inducted in both the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and the SEC Hall of Fame.

As for Colvard, he remained an unpopular figure in the state long after the team's revolutionary actions as the venture into East Lansing became more of a nod to the success of the Bulldogs and less about playing integrated competition.<sup>184</sup> Colvard remained in Starkville until 1966 when he returned to his native North Carolina as the chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He held that post until his retirement in 1978. Colvard died in 2007.

Gold, who became the university's freshman head coach after his career ended with MSU's win over Bowling Green in 1963, was named McCarthy's replacement six days after his resignation.<sup>185</sup> While media accounts noted Gold's successful playing and brief coaching career, there was no mention of the 1963 NCAA tournament even after Gold was identified as the captain of that team. The task of following the legendary McCarthy was a difficult one for Gold, who coached in Starkville for six years and compiled a record of 67-82.

"I was very naive. I never really thought I was replacing a legend. When he left, I didn't know what the future was. I had no idea who was going to be coach and I never even applied for the job," Gold said, explaining his ascension to the head coach's position and his relations with McCarthy. "He was good to me personally. He was very good with people and the community, but he use to always say 'I don't know if we're doing this right or wrong, but we're going to do this together.' He was a competitor and he was an innovator with his coaching. I respected him."<sup>186</sup>

#### The Journalistic Battlelines Are Drawn

Because of the changing times in the Magnolia State with the integration of the University of Mississippi, the plight of the Bulldogs generated the same sort of racist rhetoric from some of the Closed Society's stalwart protectors, led by Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*. However, the changing social climate in the state had a profound influence on the opinions of journalists, who, in total, offered the most supportive editorial commentary for MSU and a venture into integrated athletics in the eight-year existence of the unwritten

law. Overall, the musings of the reporters in the Magnolia State, especially from sports journalists and editors, was an indication of how things had changed in Mississippi since the inception of the gentleman's agreement. Once a collection of silent journalistic benchwarmers, Mississippi's sports reporters finally went into the ideological game and, universally, offered the Bulldogs support for their foray into integrated competition. Despite the progress made by journalists in Mississippi, the team's elimination from the tournament was a sign of retreat for many in the press as reporters and editors tried to take a silent step backwards despite the damage already inflicted on the Closed Society.

During MSU's previous SEC-title winning seasons, any debates surrounding the unwritten law or the merits of a State appearance in the integrated NCAA tournament were met head on by the staffs of the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*. While the sports reporters at the two papers did little to distinguish themselves in terms of expressing a definitive opinion on the issue, the silent approach employed offered support for the unwritten law and the Closed Society. Teamed with the damning commentary of Jimmy Ward and T. H. Hederman, Jr., this combination of racially-based discontent and silence was an effective way of helping maintain the solitude and sanctity of the Closed Society. However, 1963 offered evidence of a prevailing change in the Jackson-based newspapers as sports editor Lee Baker and sports reporter Robert "Steamboat" Fulton of the *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger* columnist Carl Walters offered opinions and perspectives much different from the segregated elite they answered to. In both the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, the publications' news editors damned the thought of violating the unwritten law and protected the Closed Society while their sports writers and editors supported and encouraged McCarthy's troops to seek the national championship while never citing civil rights as their justification.

The plight of the 1963 SEC champions and the debated merits of the unwritten law again caught the hateful gaze of *Jackson Daily News*' Jimmy Ward, one of the foremost

supporters of the Closed Society. Ward, whose commentary on the Magnolia State's basketball scene had been dormant since the 1959 Maroons of Bailey Howell pushed the limits of the unwritten law, returned with a spiteful vengeance, saving some of his more derogatory and racist commentary for the eventual NCAA participants. Ward first voiced his opinion on the MSU-NCAA issue in the March 5, 1963, edition of "Covering the Crossroads," historically, a refuge for the segregationist's spiteful and insensitive commentary. Ward, in a sarcastic tone, wrote that the NAACP, which was "obviously elated over the announcement by President D. W. Colvard of Mississippi State University that the Maroon basketball team would indulge in a 'little' integrating," had filed a lawsuit to force the integration of classrooms in Jackson.<sup>187</sup> Ward's reference to the civil rights-based organization was bewildering since the Jackson editor quickly returned to the Bulldogs and offered no additional commentary on the organization's legal action. Rather, Ward pointed to MSU's decision to enter the tournament and predicted the potential destruction of the Closed Society. "It should be borne in mind that the decision made at Starkville involved more than a Roman lust for another basketball trophy," the segregationist editor wrote. "Athletic fans went nuts and lost their sense of values in the days of Caesar and great was the fall of the Empire."<sup>188</sup>

Ward's obsessive protection of the Closed Society continued in the March 6, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* when the racist editor applauded the decision by the State College Board to review Colvard's decision. Damning any notion of support for the Starkville five, Ward wrote that "the glitter of another basketball trophy can blind rabid basketball fans or over-eager sports writers, but it should not be so dazzling as to prompt grown men of grave responsibility to dash off into an experimental expedition that has been found time and time again to produce sordid results."<sup>189</sup> Ward continued by calling any violation of the unwritten law as "diluting a principle that wise men of Mississippi inaugurated years ago for valid, tested reasons and all the hysterical harping over a crack at a

mythical national championship isn't worth subjecting young Mississippians to the switchblade knife society that integration inevitably spawns."<sup>190</sup> Ward finished his column by referencing the integrated status of MSU's likely foe Loyola, inaccurately calling the Ramblers' starting line-up "all Negro" and predicting the possible eruption of violence if the two teams were to meet. "It would be a most unfortunate if friction developed during this sports contest," Ward cryptically warned.<sup>191</sup>

Only days before the State College Board's meeting, Ward's racially insensitive commentary continued in the March 7, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. Under the misleading and sarcastic heading "Apology to Mississippi State," Ward addressed, by name, the Bulldogs' second-round foe Loyola of Chicago and apologized, correcting his March 6, 1963, comment that the team's starting lineup was composed of nothing but African-Americans. Ward admitted that he was incorrect, citing a photo from the AP, as only four of the five starters for the Ramblers were black. In a mocking voice, the segregationist editor wrote, "If the *Daily News* said all five were Negroes, it was an honest error based on the best sources of information then available. Or maybe a lucky white boy graduated to the first team. . . . A study of the photo indicates strongly that only four of the five starters are Negroes."<sup>192</sup> Ward, who published the same photo in the paper's sports section, told his readers to save the image and send it to one of the members of the State College Board. Once again, Ward did not disappoint the zealous members of the Closed Society, using his biting wit and condescending tone to object to MSU's venture into integrated competition. News of Ward's comments also appeared in the *Starkville Daily News* by way of a UPI article.<sup>193</sup>

While Ward often pushed the boundaries of journalistic taste, the segregationist editor began to disseminate racist rhetoric towards State's team and its supporters. After the State College Board voted to allow the Bulldogs to play in the tournament and gave the school's embattled leader a vote of confidence, Ward expressed nothing but dismay and contempt for the ruling in the March 11, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. Writing

with the acidity of a bottle of vinegar, Ward called the decision, “A big, bald-faced blunder, dressed up like a faceless tuxedo bound for a raw-meat banquet to celebrate the debut of ‘progressive education and brotherhooding’ in Mississippi.”<sup>194</sup> Ward, who claimed to be “as good a Roman as the next fellow,” offered a hollow cheer for the MSU team “in the mild, civilized game of roundball.” Ward then warned his audience that a win over Loyola would not clinch a championship for the Bulldogs, as the team had “yet to engage Tougaloo and the University of Congo. But don’t complain. Give them time.”<sup>195</sup> Rife with contempt, Ward concluded that he was “not patiently vindictive about the decision” and offered a final cheer for McCarthy’s squad. “Beat the Hell out of them State. We Romans are thirsty,” Ward quipped.<sup>196</sup>

Ward again attacked MSU's supporters, in particular, Hazel Brannon Smith of the *Lexington Advisor* and the *Northside Reporter*, in the March 14, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, writing that Smith and her paper had gone “goo-goo with glee, gushing with joy, and flumed ecstasy” over the State College Board’s decision to honor the school’s acceptance of the bid.<sup>197</sup> In Ward’s words, State was going to East Lansing to “engage in just a little bear hugging under the wicket with Loyola University’s famed, sepia-toned, basket-whisking, bucket-poppin’ quintet.”<sup>198</sup> Ward mocked Smith’s commentary on the progressive nature of the decision, writing, “Wee, what a glorious day for the liberals!”<sup>199</sup> Once again, Ward’s venomous pen attempted to protect the interests of the Closed Society by using ridicule and degradation as a means to an end. Ward’s continued attacks against MSU’s supporters, as demonstrated in the following passage, used his trademark insensitivity and sarcasm.

Yes, it is such an abundant victory. Had the Starkville boys not been granted permission to play in that gosh awfully important tournament, the hysterical, liberal advocates of race-mixing would still be in the middle of the street like Chicken Little screaming in panic that the sky was falling. Sure, man, the decision was downright momentous to be superseded on the calendar of historic events only when Scotland Yard and the U.S. Department of Justice combine their resources and announce to the world the name of the dastardly fellow who shot cock robin.<sup>200</sup>

In his last nod to the eight years of debate surround the unwritten law, Ward would address the April 1963 decision by the State College Board to eliminate the state's segregated standard on integrated competition. Ward claimed that the vote from the board would relieve its members from pressure placed on them by "excited students and rabid sports fans."<sup>201</sup> While the meeting was closed to the press, Ward inexplicitly told his audience how each board member voted, with only strident segregationists Roberts, Lowery, Izard, and Morgan voting to keep the gentleman's agreement in play. Sarcastically, Ward closed his column by writing, "So, in the event of another crisis on the subject, don't bother the board. The fountainhead of policy on this subject rests with the college presidents, athletic directors and cheerleaders."<sup>202</sup> The foremost journalistic protector of the Closed Society, Ward's work was pungent with contempt for those who showed weakness in maintaining the "Southern way of life" and scorn for those who dared to insight change.

Meanwhile, in the pages of the *Clarion-Ledger*, editor T. H. Hederman, Jr., was also in the midst of launching a verbal attack on the Bulldogs and their supporters in an effort to protect both the unwritten law and the Closed Society. While Hederman did not write with the same frequency as Ward, his commentary was nevertheless biting. Upon the announcement that the State College Board would meet to review Colvard's decision, Hederman praised the board and urged them to study the trends that threatened "the traditional way of life in Mississippi."<sup>203</sup> Citing a letter written by Brigadier-General Sam Long of Tupelo, who called the game a concession to integrationists that would lead to their goal of domination and control, Hederman argued that allowing State to play in the tournament could lead to blacks gaining control in Magnolia State.<sup>204</sup> In the following passage, the *Clarion-Ledger's* editor viewed MSU's presence in the tournament as the beginning of the systematic destruction of the Closed Society's separatist way of life.

The college board needs to take a long look before it lowers a barrier or opens a door that cannot but mean deterioration in our present preferred position. If Miss. State U. plays against a Negro outside the state, what would be greatly different



in bringing the integrated teams into the state? And then why not recruit a Negro of special basketball ability to play on the Miss. State team? This is the road we seem to be traveling.<sup>205</sup>

Only days later, Hederman would write another editorial on his fear of the repercussions of the possible NCAA trip for the Bulldogs, citing the college football recruitment of Bennie Blocker, a black teen from Lancaster, South Carolina, who had received 57 scholarship offers from predominantly white Southern colleges. After the citation, Hederman wrote of MSU head football coach Paul Davis' contention to alumni in Atlanta that the school's appearance in the NCAA tournament would also lead to integration on the gridiron. Hederman, ever fearful of racial equality and challenges to the Closed Society, quipped, "We play integrated teams abroad, next we play integrated teams at home, next we recruit Negro stars to strengthen our team, and the fast cycle of integration is complete."<sup>206</sup> While absent of Ward's venom, Hederman shared the fear of the collapse of the state's white caste system with his fellow Jackson-based editor, and his commentary objected to the team's venture into the tournament.

From an ideological perspective, perhaps no other newspaper editor had as much in common with the racist and insensitive Ward as James Skewes of the *Meridian Star*. Like Ward and Hederman, Skewes tried to protect the Closed Society from the inner threat posed by MSU and had no difficulty expressing his separatist beliefs in, perhaps, the most damning opinion-based article found in this study. In the March 5, 1963, issue of the *Meridian Star*, Skewes began his only editorial during the 1963 MSU debate by writing that Colvard's decision "apparently was made regardless of the danger that the university may have to play teams which include Negroes."<sup>207</sup> While the editor wrote that he believed the MSU president had good intentions, his actions "constituted a breach of the walls of segregation. Especially in these times we should make no compromise regarding our Southern Way of Life. Any concessions in this field will encourage integrationists by making them think we are 'ready' for further inroads against segregation."<sup>208</sup> While Skewes argued that State's presence in the

NCAA tournament would lead to integrated play in the Magnolia State, in one of the more insensitive and downright asinine comments made, the *Meridian Star* editor insinuated that integrated athletic competition would lead to interracial sexual interaction between black athletes and the white women of Mississippi. “The Negroes will participate in after-game social affairs and so on, one thing leading to another,” Skewes wrote. His commentary was picked up by UPI and published in the *Delta Democrat-Times*.<sup>209</sup>

Unlike previous debates involving the Bulldogs, other known segregationists in the Hederman journalistic empire failed to offer any sort of definitive protection of the Closed Society. Surprisingly, Tom Ethridge, another one of Hederman’s loyal journalistic minions and a member of the Citizens’ Council, used his regular column in the *Clarion-Ledger* to focus on the various opinions that had formed both for and against MSU. While the opinion-based work of such editors as Carter, Skewes, and Harry Rutherford of the Tupelo-based *Daily Journal* appeared in Ethridge’s “Mississippi Notebook,” the musings of fellow noteworthy journalists Hazel Brannon Smith of the *Lexington Advertiser*, Mary Cain of the *Summit Sun*, F. A. Parker of the *Prentiss Headlight*, and Thomas Alewine of the *Rankin County News* also appeared verbatim. Smith wrote that the MSU contingent should be allowed to go to the tournament, as she didn’t “believe that young people in Mississippi should be shackled and hampered by the prejudice, cowardice, ignorance and stupidity of their elders who have been setting the ‘stay at home’ policy in the past.”<sup>210</sup> Along with the work of the progressive Smith, the venomous and spiteful tones of Cain, Parker, and Alewine offered protection to the Closed Society. Cain followed the lead of the controversial Mitts, attacking Colvard’s North Carolina background as she stressed her personal desire to keep the state segregated and argued that most Mississippians would object to integrated athletics. Parker added that he was shocked that anyone within the state of Mississippi would support such a decision and risk possible integration for “a paltry ball game” while Alewine simply wrote that he found no difference between the NCAA and the NAACP.<sup>211</sup> The only inference

of opinion to come from Ethridge was in the column's subhead, which read, "We Vote 'Nay,' And Other Say," a feeble attempt by the opinionated Ethridge to express his opposition to MSU.

Ethridge later failed to defend the Closed Society in his March 20, 1963, edition of "Mississippi Notebook." Rather the segregationist began his work by claiming that he hoped to wave a white and maroon flag in celebration of the team's successful venture in the tournament but was, nevertheless, impressed with the team's effort. Ethridge took McCarthy to task for his pregame comments on the greatness of the Loyola squad, arguing that the MSU coach's constant praise for the Ramblers contradicted State's tournament purpose, which was to "uphold the prestige of basketball as it is played in Mississippi and the Southeastern Conference."<sup>212</sup> Although he referenced his opposition to MSU playing the integrated Ramblers, Ethridge's columns in 1963 were not reflective of that opposition.

Longtime *Jackson Daily News* cartoonist Bob Howie also chimed in on the Bulldogs' venture into the integrated NCAA tournament. While the debate raged on the entry of State into the NCAA tournament, Howie's cartoons took on a surprisingly mundane tone. Howie first offered an opinion on the MSU team with a cartoon in the March 4, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* that depicted an MSU basketball player stepping on the foot of an Ole Miss Rebel while reading an invitation to the postseason tournament.<sup>213</sup> Howie, who was as stringent a segregationist as Ward and often opposed State efforts to enter into integrated competition, expressed a degree of support for the Starkville contingent. His next cartoon, in the March 8, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, simply depicted an MSU basketball player tucked into a ball with the label "State's NCAA Participation Hopes" as he is being tossed back and forth from two large hands representing the State College Board, with one hand labeled "pro," the other "con."<sup>214</sup> Rather than expressing an opinion in his work, Howie simply captured the level of debate within the board and the Magnolia State.

Howie used the March 15, 1963, edition of “Hinny” to express a potential opposition to integrated competition, depicting the donkey in a suit and holding a sign cheering on the Bulldogs, saying, “Th’ Injunction That’ud Keep ‘Em Home Is What Some Folks Tried Usin’ Th’ Injunction Hinny’d Like To Get Would Keep Our Boys From Losin.”<sup>215</sup> While Howie’s previous work during the 1963 debate may have been an accurate depiction of the segregationist’s feelings on State’s NCAA appearance, the March 15 edition of “Hinny” indicated a fear that the all-white Bulldogs may lose to the integrated Ramblers, thus causing a damning blow to the Closed Society and the way of life Howie often used his artwork to protect. In the same edition’s sports section, Howie’s cartoon, titled “The Last Act?,” seemed to strike a familiar cord with Ward’s past commentary on the MSU contingent as the SEC champions were illustrated in the form of “Caesar” with the establishing dialog indicating that the Bulldogs were entering “A public place, A great crowd following, among them a soothsayer.” The “soothsayer,” dressed in a suit and fedora, was an “oddsmaker” who was telling the MSU squad, “Beware (it’s) The Ides of March!” In response, the Bulldogs or “Caesar,” with a look of panic on his face, said emphatically, “I know!” While Howie’s work could have been interpreted as a warning about the upcoming battle with the eventual national champions and the Bulldogs’ underdog status, Ward’s past commentary utilized the same analogy, likening the Closed Society to the Roman Empire and warning of its eventual demise.

Despite his admitted fear of a Bulldog loss at the hands of Loyola’s integrated five, Howie penned one last cartoon in honor of Mississippi State’s historic appearance in the NCAA tournament, depicting a proud basketball player saying, “At least I didn’t come home empty handed” as he carried a large trophy with the label “3<sup>rd</sup> Place,” a reference to the team’s victory over Bowling Green. While the cartoonist expressed a degree of pride in the effort of the MSU team, his pleasure from the team’s third place finish also could have had more to do with who they beat, the integrated Falcons. While the bulk of Howie’s work

reflected a positive aura around McCarthy's team, his segregationist past and ties to the state Citizens' Council were hard to ignore.

Despite the mounting opposition in the Hederman-owned newspapers, Gold said in a 2009 interview that he never had much contact with journalists, much less paid attention to the derogatory comments being disseminated across the state. "Most sports writers were pretty supportive," he said. "I didn't get the impression that the sports world was against us going. It was very different time. I wasn't exposed to those issues as much. At the university, it was an isolated and protected environment. It just didn't have the impact on campus."<sup>216</sup>

While Ward, Hederman, and Skewes were unwavering in opposition to the Bulldogs, a ideological division was developing in their newspapers that would see the sports writers of the Hederman empire, intentional or not, offer a degree of opposition to the editorial protectors of the Closed Society, demonstrating, at the least, a temporary journalistic change in the Magnolia State.

#### The Hederman Empire, the *Meridian Star* Loses Their United Front

In the past debates involving the MSU team and its efforts to challenge the unwritten law, sports editor Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* and longtime sports columnist Carl Walters of the *Clarion-Ledger* typically held the white line of the Closed Society by either offering little to no opinion on the matter or by rejecting any and all notions as unattainable. However, in 1963, while their individual editors continued to serve as the journalist watchdogs of Mississippi's all-white caste system, Baker and Walters offered the Bulldogs a degree of support in their efforts to win a national championship.

Baker first wrote on the potential NCAA bid in the February 19, 1963, edition of "Baker's Dozen," as the longtime Jackson sports writer focused more so on the speculation that McCarthy might have left Starkville if any NCAA tournament bid were to go unaccepted. Baker, who acknowledged that McCarthy had publicly lobbied for the chance to play in the tournament, said he was of the opinion that MSU's head coach would remain in

Starkville for the foreseeable future. “The impression I get is that Babe simply would like to get the chance to accept the bid if State qualifies for it. . . . McCarthy wants to stay at Mississippi State University as much as it wants him to stay.”<sup>217</sup> However, Baker did not express an opinion on the Bulldogs’ possible integrated venture.

In the aftermath of the team’s title-clinching win over Tulane, Baker again referenced the team’s hopes for a postseason berth in the February 28, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* but did so by citing the commentary of Tulane head basketball coach Cliff Wells, who Baker described as “one of the few great men in the world of athletics.”<sup>218</sup> Wells told Buddy Diliberto of the New Orleans-based *Times-Picayune* that the MSU team was, by far, the best in the conference. “It will be against everything that’s right if these boys aren’t allowed to compete in the NCAA tournament,” Wells said. “I don’t care what the implication – it just won’t be right if they can’t play.”<sup>219</sup> While Baker abstained from expressing a definitive opinion of his own, it appeared, by focusing on the comments made by Wells, that he agreed with the Tulane head coach.

In the wake of MSU’s win over rival Ole Miss and Colvard’s public acceptance of the NCAA tournament invitation, Baker wrote that the Starkville campus was filled with “expectancy to see just how good these Maroons are now that they’ve at last come out of post-season hiding.”<sup>220</sup> Baker described State’s multiyear tournament absence as a “burial,” which carried a negative connotation and insinuated that the sports editor had opposed MSU’s past ostracism from the integrated postseason tournament.<sup>221</sup> Baker’s bold acknowledgement of the Closed Society’s southern-base sequestering of the MSU team was in line with the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor’s editorial commentary at the end of the Bulldogs’ 1962 campaign. While Baker correctly identified Loyola of Chicago as MSU’s likely tournament foe, he did not mention that the team was integrated. Baker closed by expressing a positive sentiment for the team, writing that “whatever may happen, at least State is getting the opportunity to have a crack at the national championship.”<sup>222</sup>

While Ward was pleased with the decision by the State College Board to meet, Baker did not express the same enthusiasm. Rather, the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor feared the threat of penalties from the NCAA for the team's possible withdrawal. "If the Maroons pull out, it could be the axe from the NCAA," Baker warned. "That's the risk they run now. And it can be hoped the board fully understands just how sharp the NCAA axe can be when it swings."<sup>223</sup> Baker also wrote that the meeting was only being held in the hopes of developing a "roadblock" to keep the Starkville-based Bulldogs from the tournament, again insinuating a degree of support from the Jackson-based sports editor.

Baker took a departure from the political and social issues surrounding the MSU team, focusing on the game only in his March 8, 1963, edition of "Baker's Dozen." Baker described McCarthy's practices and preparation for the Ramblers as almost having a sanctity-like quality due to all the attention being paid to the building controversy. Baker made no mention of the impending decision by the College Board.<sup>224</sup> Baker took a similar approach in his March 13, 1963, column, writing only on the match-up between the Bulldogs and the Ramblers and, in particular, McCarthy's glowing evaluation of the Loyola of Chicago team. Baker added that the teams' contrast in playing styles would give the public one more reason to watch the game, an obvious nod to the controversy surrounding MSU's first NCAA appearance.<sup>225</sup>

In his first column after the State College Board rendered its decision, Baker wrote that fans of the Delta State College basketball team were upset that the unwritten law had been successfully applied to that team's potential bid to the small NCAA national title tournament. Baker cited the school's treatment of the invitation, which was not reported in the press nor addressed publicly for justification. The *Jackson Daily News* sports editor added that fans of Magnolia State athletics wanted the gentleman's agreement to remain dormant. "Athletic folks, chafed in the past by the 'unwritten law' straightjacket, hope the thing is

dead,” Baker wrote.<sup>226</sup> Despite his nod to the public opposition to the unwritten law, Baker expressed no real opinion of his own.

While Baker commentary continued to focus primarily on the athletic components of State’s trip to the NCAA tournament in his March 14, 1963, column, the Jackson-based sports editor hoped for a successful trip to Michigan in light of the illegal injunction staring down the MSU contingent. “Injunctions not applying to such a wretched fraternity as po’ ol’ sports writers, it is hopefully on to East Lansing this day and whatever fate awaits the Mississippi State basketball team,” Baker wrote.<sup>227</sup> On the day of the game, Baker again referenced the attempts to keep the Bulldogs in state. Expressing a degree of relief as MSU had successfully made its way to the tournament, Baker wrote of the anxious atmosphere in East Lansing. “Panic had been growing in the ranks as each hour brought new bulletins out of Mississippi of Wednesday’s last desperate effort to stop the Maroons’ participation in the tourney here,” Baker reported.<sup>228</sup> While Baker clearly took comfort in knowing that the Bulldogs had made their way to East Lansing, he stopped short of endorsing or opposing the team’s presence.

In the aftermath of MSU’s loss to Loyola, Baker described McCarthy’s team as “dejected.”<sup>229</sup> While he avoided expressing any sort of definitive opinion on the trip, of greater consequence was Baker’s citation of Ireland’s assessment of the game in which the Loyola head coach said the game featured “12 boys with no shoving or bickering or needling, just playing basketball like it should be played. There were good boys on both sides,” especially in light of many media-based accounts that assumed the game would yield some sort of violent incident.<sup>230</sup>

The following day, Baker wrote in the March 17, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* that Ireland would like to play a future game against the Bulldogs in Chicago, a point the Jackson spots editor found unlikely, not because of racial issue, but because he did not think MSU would be as successful in the 1963-64 season with the loss of Gold, Stroud, and



Mitchell.<sup>231</sup> While Baker detailed the number of reporters in attendance at the game and the panic tournament organizers were thrown into by the possible withdrawal of MSU due to the injunction, Baker did not discuss the actual game or his opinion, in closing, on State's violation of the unwritten law and subsequent loss to an integrated foe.

In anticipation of any criticism from the stalwarts of the Closed Society, Baker used his final column on the NCAA tournament to show support for the Bulldogs. "The only possible regret for the trip was the loss Friday night to Loyola and in that there can be little to apologize about. . . . It will take a whole lot of basketball team to beat the Chicagoans — and Mississippi State's Maroons showed that they were close to being such a team."<sup>232</sup> While Baker had and failed to use the opportunity to definitively state an opinion on the matter, the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor offered support to the Bulldogs and was quick to defend the contingent when they returned from Michigan, a far cry from his work during State's previous SEC title-winning campaigns. In total, Baker's column was not reflective of the values and beliefs held true by his segregationist editor Ward.

*Clarion-Ledger* columnist Carl Walters, a past supporter of the unwritten law, was perhaps the most telling sign of change during the 1963 debate. Going into the Bulldogs' finale against Ole Miss, Walters surprisingly endorsed the MSU contingent's efforts to go to the postseason. "This writer definitely favors the Bulldogs, SEC champions, carrying the banner of their conference and the state of Mississippi into battle for national laurels that will be up for grabs in the NCAA tournament," Walters wrote. "When we expressed the opinion that there is no chance for a change in the policy that has kept State out of the three previous events, we were being realistic. . . . In the event we prove to be mistaken on this, with the Bulldogs being permitted to accept a reward which they, themselves, have earned through hard work, determination, and rare skill, we will be plenty pleased."<sup>233</sup> While Walters' endorsement was refreshingly odd, his skepticism allowed him to keep favor with the political elite of the Closed Society and, specifically, the Hedermans.

Walters' surprisingly supportive tone for the MSU team continued in the March 4, 1963, edition of "Shavin's" as the veteran sports writer expressed a sense of relief that his own skepticism was proven false. Walters argued that most Mississippians would have approve of Colvard's decision and was pleased that he was wrong in assessment of the unwritten law's power. "[It is] our pleasure and privilege to commend Dr. Colvard for having the courage and integrity to do what he believes was the right thing to do," Walters wrote.<sup>234</sup> While Walters supported the Bulldogs, he remained vague in terms of his justification.

In the days after the State College Board's decision to allow the Bulldogs to enter the tournament, Walters attempted to bring the athletic aspects of the debate back to the forefront, hoping that McCarthy could get his team to focus on the game itself. "We are confident that the State squad will compete in such a manner and behave in such a manner as to reflect upon their school, the State of Mississippi and the Southeastern Conference," he wrote.<sup>235</sup> Again, while Walters did not express a definitive opinion, his commentary seemed to support the Bulldogs' hopes for a national championship.

While Walters focused on the game in his March 13, 1963, edition of "Shavin's," the veteran sports columnist hoped for a Bulldog win against the Ramblers of Loyola. Walters identified MSU's size, rebounding, and McCarthy's coaching strategy as reasons to like the Bulldogs in an upset. Confidently, Walters wrote that the Ramblers would "learn a thing or two or three, and maybe to their own sorrow."<sup>236</sup>

After the Bulldogs 61-51 loss to Loyola, Walters praised the efforts of McCarthy's troops in the March 18, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger* and credited the coach for "making no effort whatsoever to 'alibi' his team's defeat."<sup>237</sup> While never expressing an opinion on State's decision to play in the tournament, Walters admitted that he was "pleased with and proud of the Bulldogs for the way in which they handled themselves in Michigan both on the court and off it."<sup>238</sup> Never known for his sensitivity on issues of race, Walters' support for MSU was surprising. While it was likely that his motive was fueled by the desires

for the national championship to reside in Starkville, his work in 1963 was a progressive step for the Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer.

Despite his role as the *Clarion-Ledger's* sports editor, Robert Fulton slowly became one of the team's bigger advocates. Only a year early, the *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer claimed that the unwritten law hindered the Magnolia State and should have been eliminated. During the 1963 debate, while his comments were not as straight forward as his remarks on *Commercial Dispatch* sports editor Herb Phillips' radio show, the man known by all as "Steamboat" offered a degree of support to the Starkville-based Bulldogs.

In the wake of MSU's title-clinching win over the Tulane, Fulton wondered in his March 2, 1963, column "High N' Inside," if McCarthy would leave MSU if the unwritten law would have had its way with his team again. Fulton explained that his work was written "in the hope that it will help to sway the thinking of the person or persons who must make the decision to either allow McCarthy to take his SEC championship team to the NCAA or tell him to swallow his pride and stay at home while a team he had convincingly beaten goes instead."<sup>239</sup> Fulton, who professed his friendship for the head coach, argued that another rejection of a NCAA tournament invitation could have been the last straw in Starkville for the Baldwin native because of his competitive nature. "When a fence is built around a bull or thoroughbred, the grass is always greener on the other side," he wrote. "Mississippi's 'unwritten law' prohibiting the state's athletic teams from competing in integrated tournament has built such a fence around McCarthy."<sup>240</sup> Fulton closed by calling a potential exit of the MSU head coach the end of an era in Bulldog basketball. While Fulton's work looked more at the MSU head coach, it was clear that "Steamboat's" intentions were to argue for the acceptance of the invitation, not in the name of social progress, but to keep his friend in Starkville.

While his next edition of "High N' Inside" did little in terms of expressing a definitive opinion on the tournament bid and the unwritten law, Fulton used his editorial

forum to write the only account found in the newspaper consulted to capture the thoughts and opinions of each member of the State roster on the prospects of foregoing the unwritten law and playing in the integrated postseason. Through the duration of media coverage of the MSU controversy, the players offered little to no opinion on the merits of integrated play, but in Fulton's March 9, 1963, column, of the thirteen players interviewed, seven of the Bulldogs specifically addressed integration and all of them used their SEC championship as justification for accepting the NCAA bid. Mitchell told Fulton that he did not see anything wrong with playing against other races while Jackie Wolford pointed to the exploits of Meredith as reason for the team's participation. "One college in the state is already integrated so it shouldn't make any difference if we went and played against integrated teams," the sophomore guard said to Fulton.<sup>241</sup> Perhaps the one player who illustrated the greatest foresight was Gold, who identified the potential civil rights impact of the team appearing in the tournament, telling Fulton that playing in the NCAA tournament could change outside perceptions of MSU and the level of prejudice in the state.<sup>242</sup>

Another member of the *Clarion-Ledger's* sports staff, Wayne Thompson, also expressed a degree of support for McCarthy's squad, offering his congratulations to the MSU team on winning the SEC and going to the NCAA playoffs. In a vague reference to his past musings, Thompson wrote that his personal feelings on the acceptance of the bid had already been stated. "Otherwise, the earth is still spinning on its axis, the sun came up this morning, and income taxes are to paid by April 15," Thompson quipped in an effort to comfort those in the Closed Society who took issue with the decision.<sup>243</sup> On the eve of the State College Board meeting, Thompson wrote that basketball was still the primary point of conversation in social circles around the Magnolia State but, before citing the obvious issue surrounding the Bulldogs, the sports writer pointed to the state high school playoffs as justification, a slight overstatement to say the least. Of MSU and the State College Board meeting, Thompson wrote, "Will they or won't they play? Will the board give approval, not make any decision or

veto the idea and the trip? Those are the questions being asked by every Mississippian, both who love sports and sportsmanship and others who delve deeper into the overall picture.”<sup>244</sup>

Thompson expressed no opinion on the matter.

Thompson’s next column made it a point to ignore the social issues surround the MSU-NCAA fiasco, writing, “Completely disregarding talk about segregation, integration, politics of the price of eggs in Laos,” before discussing the team’s chances against Loyola.<sup>245</sup> In regard to the game, while Thompson called a win over the Ramblers “just one more step to the title,” he added that a loss “would be a giant step back home.”

In Thompson’s final nod to the MSU team and the NCAA tournament, the Jackson sports writer lamented for a return to competition without the controversy. Thompson called it “a real pleasure” to write about basketball and only basketball in regards to the Bulldogs. “I can remember when sports was sports and the controversy, not counting those blind umpires and other officials, was left up to politicians and crooks who usually inhabit the front pages. No more,” the sports reporter wrote.<sup>246</sup> Thompson’s diatribe, while not directly attacking the Closed Society, was a swipe at the frequent interference of the state’s segregationist politicians like Barnett, Mitts, and Lawson, all of whom viewed the tournament and participation in it as a possible gateway for all out integration in Mississippi.

Like his sports writing colleagues at the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, Billy Rainey of the *Meridian Star* also demonstrated a change in heart and, for the first time in eight years, offered any commentary that supported MSU. The sports editor known as “Sunshine” tried to strike a balance between his beliefs in segregation and offering any sort of congratulatory commentary to the MSU contingent. Rainey, who was noncommittal in terms of his views during MSU’s previous SEC title-winning campaigns, wrote his most forthright expression of opinion during the various debates surrounding the Bulldogs in the February 26, 1963, edition of the *Meridian Star*. In the aftermath of the win over the Green Wave, Rainey wrote that, despite the happy occasion, the Bulldogs’ tempered their celebration

because of the expectation that Georgia Tech would take their place in the postseason. “You can count on the Engineers going to the NCCA tournament as the Southeastern Conference representative,” Rainey predicted, expecting the unwritten law to flex its ideological muscles again.<sup>247</sup> Despite his negative forecast for MSU, Rainey surprisingly called for the elimination of the gentleman’s agreement if college teams from the Magnolia State continued to have the same level of success as the basketball-based Bulldogs.

I’ll not argue the merits of Mississippi’s unwritten law that prohibits our athletic teams from playing against integrated competition, even outside the boundaries of Mississippi. I will say this, however. If Mississippi State is to continue producing outstanding basketball teams AND if Ole Miss, Mississippi State and the University of Southern Mississippi are to have successful football teams in the years that lie ahead, Mississippi must abandon this rule.<sup>248</sup>

Rainey’s justification for his proposed elimination of the unwritten law was due to the future recruitment of high school players who would hunger for the recognition of playing on a national stage as opposed to competing on the white-only courts of the South. “The stand Mississippi has taken may or may not be the right one. I don’t know. I do know that it’s not a stand that will lead to continued success — on a national level — for the athletic teams of our state,” Rainey wrote.<sup>249</sup> “Sunshine” ended his commentary, cryptically predicting that the success MSU had experienced in the past would end, regardless of the unwritten law and its enforcement. It was the only column by Rainey during this time frame.

#### Sports Writers Unite Against the Unwritten Law

As the debate in Mississippi about the merits of the unwritten law and MSU’s potential appearance in the NCAA tournament progressed, new voices of support could be found throughout the Magnolia State’s journalistic landscape. This emergent voice of support was most evident in the sports sections of the state’s newspapers as *Daily Journal* sports editor Bill Ross, Dick Lightsey of the Biloxi-based *Daily Herald*, and Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post* led Mississippi’s sports writing fraternity against the unwritten law.

During the 1963 MSU season, no other journalist expressed an opinion as bold and as socially significant as the Tupelo-based Ross. The *Daily Journal* sports editor addressed the MSU-NCAA issue frequently in his column “Round and About” and, like Carter and Emmerich, supported the Bulldogs’ eventual violation of the unwritten law. In the February 27, 1963, edition of the *Daily Journal*, Ross interviewed MSU athletic director Wade Walker, who told the Tupelo sports editor that, while he would like to see the Bulldogs in the postseason, he did not think it was likely because, “There has been no change in the basic policy of bypassing integrated athletic events.”<sup>250</sup> Ross later wrote that the general perception was that the majority of Mississippians would welcome State’s acceptance of the NCAA invitation and argued that public opinion should be considered in the decision-making process. Ross predicted that the matter would likely go before the State College Board, to which the editor wrote, “This board was created to serve the public not to dictate to the public. Perhaps these tradition-bound folks have let that slip their minds over the years. . . . More good would come of such a move than any number of paid speakers or national advertising or anything else done to promote the state’s image around the countryside.”<sup>251</sup>

The following day, Ross warned the various members of the Closed Society that a change in their social ideology was coming. “You can’t forever remain aloof to everyday living — that cutting off the nose to spite the face solves nothing,” wrote Ross, identifying the changing social view in Mississippi.<sup>252</sup> The Tupelo sports editor made many an opinion-based statement, concluding his article by calling the potential absence of the Bulldogs a tragedy. “It’s a cotton-pickin’ shame to by-pass such a golden opportunity to get in a good lick for the state’s image.”<sup>253</sup>

While Ross would continue to write about MSU in his March 1, 1963 column, the Tupelo sports editor addressed the team’s 84-12 record over the past three seasons and marveled at the Bulldogs’ ability to continue to win without an opportunity of a postseason appearance, writing “it’s frustrating to give it a real effort for nowhere.”<sup>254</sup>

Ross identified the social and historical significance of the team's venture into integrated play in both the March 2 and 3, 1963, and the March 5, 1963, editions of the *Daily Journal*. In his March 2 and 3 column, the Tupelo sports editor wrote that tradition "dies hard," a reference to Mississippi's unwritten law and segregationist mindset. In the following passage, Ross predicted a change that would yield a positive outcome in the Magnolia State, regardless of the team's performance in the tournament.

This diehard minority may make the rules for a little while longer, but sooner or later somebody will get the real message. For it's more than sending a team to participate in a basketball tournament. It's one of the best opportunities in years to send a group of young men — good will ambassadors if you will — into a section of the country where they can do some good. Win or lose in this tournament, State would pick up some helpful friends. For regardless of sectionalism, most folks respect a good competitor. And whether State goes or not, when this long rope is finally coiled, some good has resulted. More and more people have begun to think about the matter. What will they have seen? — That to continue such an unprogressive attitude will eventually ruin first rate athletic programs at schools all over the state.<sup>255</sup>

Ross would further develop his pro-MSU sentiment in his March 5, 1963, column when he called Colvard's decision "an important contribution to the state."<sup>256</sup> Ross identified the team's detractors, writing that some may think that playing in the tournament was too drastic a departure from the tradition of the unwritten law, but Ross predicted that "many who condemn the action will now will turn to laud it as one of the more significant developments in years . . . when the returns are posted, neighbor Dr. Colvard nor anyone of us who lives within the boundaries of the state will regret his decision."<sup>257</sup> Ross concluded his pro-NCAA tournament commentary by calling the Bulldogs' participation in the tournament the start of a new era in Mississippi. Then from this first beginning, a new and brighter day may develop in the field of athletics. Perhaps the thinking will spread from there, demanding a more realistic role in such matters.<sup>258</sup> Ross' commentary was picked up by UPI and published in newspapers such as the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, and the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>259</sup>



Ross later detailed a conversation he had with McCarthy after it was announced that the State College Board would be meeting to review Colvard's decision. In the March 8, 1963, edition of the *Daily Journal*, Ross wrote that most at the Starkville-based university assumed that Colvard's decision would hold up and the team would continue to prepare for the upcoming tournament. "There are no Negroes or white boys, just a real good basketball team," McCarthy told Ross.<sup>260</sup> The Tupelo-based sports editor suggested that members of the State College Board talk to some of the Bulldogs about their desires to play. "There is no negative mindset around here. It's a healthy climate, one that makes you mighty proud of the young people who attend the state's colleges and universities," Ross observed. "If adults handled themselves as well as these young men do, everything would find itself in mighty good shape in a lot of other areas other than athletics."<sup>261</sup>

After his March 8, 1963, column, Ross would not reference McCarthy's team again until March 29, 1963, when he called the 1963-64 season a rebuilding year for the defending SEC champions.<sup>262</sup> Despite his frequent support for the MSU contingent, Ross failed to write anything on the board's decision, the team's loss, and subsequent return from the NCAA tournament. However, it was clear that Ross understood the enormity of the situation and identified the potential social repercussions of such an event. The Tupelo-based sports editor was one of the few in Mississippi who had the foresight to see, not only the elimination of the Closed Society's profound influence on the state's athletic scene, but the social good that could come from State's participation in the integrated postseason.

Some of the Magnolia State's more forthright opposition to the unwritten law, regardless of their own personal justifications, were Dick Lightsey of the *Daily Herald* and Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*. In past debates surrounding the Bulldogs and the NCAA tournament, both Lightsey and Ray advocated the school's participation in the integrated postseason while professing their own loyalty to the Closed Society as

segregationists. While both continued to advocate State's place in the tournament neither sports editor validated their individual belief in segregation.

After the win over Tulane clinched a share of the SEC conference championship, Lightsey did not mince words in his February 27, 1963, column, arguing that there was a place in the integrated postseason for the Bulldogs. "State should definitely be allowed to participate in the NCAA tournament against the other top teams in the nation," Lightsey wrote. "The Maroons have the best basketball team in the SEC. There wasn't a doubt in our mind about that fact before Monday's game and we came away more convinced than ever — if that's possible."<sup>263</sup>

Citing a pregame conversation with McCarthy, Lightsey said he felt the team would not accept a bid to the tournament, but the Biloxi-based sports editor admitted that he found little justice in MSU's absence. "It ain't right," Lightsey wrote. "The boys deserve the opportunity of playing against other leading teams in the nation. Even if they lose they will at least have had the opportunity at competing."<sup>264</sup>

After Colvard's decision, Lightsey wrote that he was genuinely surprised in the March 4, 1963, edition of his column, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," and whole-heartedly agreed with the MSU president. "State has a fine ball club and is deserving of the chance to participate against the other top teams in the country. Regardless of how the Maroons come out, at least they will have had the opportunity of playing. Dr. Colvard is to be congratulated for his stand," Lightsey wrote.<sup>265</sup> While Lightsey identified Loyola of Chicago as the Bulldogs' likely second-round foe, the integrated status of the team was not referenced. Based upon his past expressions as a segregationist, Lightsey favored the postseason trek of the Bulldogs for the chance at national championship laurels and not as a nod to the progression of civil rights in the Magnolia State.

The day before the State College Board was to meet to determine if it would put a stop to the Bulldogs, Lightsey wrote that, despite the mounting opposition, McCarthy's team

went forth with its preparations for the trip to East Lansing. Despite the objections of Barnett and other in the state's political realm, Lightsey wrote that he was still "in favor of allowing the Maroons to participate."<sup>266</sup> Lightsey also used his March 8, 1963, column to educate his audience on the history of the unwritten law and cited MSU's victory over the University of Denver in December 1956 as one of the first challenges to the gentleman's agreement. Lightsey said he was unable to identify who actually put the unwritten law into place or find out when it was officially adopted, verifying the secretive nature of the agreement. Furthermore, the sports editor warned against the potential punishment of State by the NCAA for, once again, rejecting a tournament bid.

As one of the Bulldogs' forthright supporters, Lightsey called the State College Board's decision to allow State to go to Michigan and the vote of confidence offered to Colvard, "satisfying to say the least" in the March 11, 1963, edition of "Bunts, Boots and Bounces."<sup>267</sup> Lightsey called the board's justification and lack of support for the Starkville quintet "disgruntling," but the sports editor expressed excitement and optimism over the team's entry into the postseason despite facing the Chicago-based juggernaut.<sup>268</sup> "We would like to see the Maroons go all the way to the NCAA title, but whether they win it or not, at least they will have had the chance of playing for it against the best teams in the country," Lightsey exclaimed. "Let's get behind the Maroons and wish them well!!!"<sup>269</sup>

Lightsey focused his next column on McCarthy's admiration of his team's second round foe, Loyola of Chicago in the March 14, 1963, edition of the *Daily Herald*. While the bulk of Lightsey's work stayed grounded in the sporting aspects of the team's tournament entry, the sports editor concluded by identifying the historical significance of the team's participation in the tournament. "This will be the most important game a Mississippi State basketball team has ever played," observed Lightsey. "And if they win, each succeeding game will be more important than the last one. Win or lose, at least the Maroons are getting a chance to participate."<sup>270</sup> Noticeably absent from Lightsey's commentary was any mention of

the injunction. The Biloxi-based sports editor admitted in the March 15, 1963 edition of the *Daily Herald* that he avoided the topic because he thought the legal ramblings of Mitts and Lawson would be unsuccessful. “It turns out, we were right,” Lightsey quipped before predicting a victory for MSU.<sup>271</sup>

Lightsey would conclude his commentary on the Bulldogs and the NCAA tournament in the March 18, 1963, edition of the *Daily Herald* after State’s 10-point loss to the Ramblers. Lightsey wrote that MSU put forth a game effort and that he was especially impressed with the team’s victory over Bowling Green. Again, Lightsey stressed the significance of State’s appearance in the tournament rather than simply focusing on wins and losses. “We’re sorry the Maroons were unable to win the tournament, but at least they had a shot at it, and they did a good job representing the state, their school and the Southeastern Conference,” Lightsey wrote. “It may be a long time before another Mississippi State team is good enough to win the SEC basketball title. However, we’re inclined to believe that as long as McCarthy remains at State he will put out representative teams.”<sup>272</sup>

Despite his almost yearly insistence that he was a segregationist, Lightsey’s work, in total, was a progressive nod from a member of Mississippi’s sports-based press. His constant defense of Mississippi State’s basketball team showed, at the least, that the Biloxi-based sports editor found nothing wrong with the state’s finest competing against integrated teams, a bold statement to say the least.

Another one of MSU’s past journalistic supporters was *Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray. Despite his past claims as a segregationist, Ray still supported a State appearance in the national title tournament if, for no other reason, to win the national title and physically demonstrate the correctness in Mississippi’s belief in segregation. In the February 27, 1963, edition of the *Evening Post*, Ray called MSU’s 1962-63 SEC title win and possible appearance in the postseason a chance for the Bulldogs to bring positive national attention to the state. Ray cited the unwritten law for MSU’s yearly rejection of the invitation and, while

he wrote he did not see the harm in State's participation, he predicted that McCarthy's troops would "be deprived of a chance at bringing recognition to Mississippi and the Southeastern Conference that money alone or the State's best orators could not obtain."<sup>273</sup> Regardless, Ray was hopeful. "Personally, we can't possibly see any harm that would come of the Bulldog's participating and undoubtedly there's thousands more like us from the response the matter has been receiving."<sup>274</sup> Ray concluded his column with the fearful sentiment that a rejection of the bid would lead to the exodus of the Mississippi's best athletes and, eventually, McCarthy. "It's disheartening to even think about it!" exclaimed the Vicksburg sports editor.<sup>275</sup>

Citing supportive comments from Tulane's Wells and Georgia Tech basketball coach Whack Hydlar, Ray wrote on February 28, 1963, that MSU's fellow SEC members wanted to see the Bulldogs in the tournament. But, due to the opposition from Mississippi's political elite, Ray wrote that the final decision was the State College Board's. "It's now in the hands of the 'big boys' in Jackson. . . . Nothing else can be said or done. Mississippi, and other parts of the country eagerly await their decision."<sup>276</sup>

In the aftermath of the team's acceptance of the invitation, Ray called Colvard's decision "startling" because, as detailed in the following passage from March 5, 1963, the Vicksburg sports editor expected the power of the unwritten law to supersede, forcing the university to decline the bid. "We had given up all hope of the old tradition being broken and we had reconciled ourselves once again that the SEC's second best would represent the conference . . . we join hundreds of others in the state wishing 'Babe' and his boys the best," Ray wrote. "We know they will represent Mississippi State, Mississippi and the SEC well."

277

The following day, Ray again stressed the deserving nature of the Bulldogs but thought that the debate surrounding MSU and the unwritten law was far from over. "We still contend that Dr. Colvard, the university's president, did the right thing. Those folks who are

against State participating are speaking out . . . and they are fewer in number as compared to those who want the Bulldogs to go,” Ray wrote.<sup>278</sup>

Ray expressed a degree of excitement after the Bulldogs had been given the green light to play in the tournament by the State College Board in his March 12, 1963, edition of “Press Box Views.” While Ray spent the majority of his column detailing the logistics of the team’s venture to East Lansing, the Vicksburg sports editor noted the comments made by Barnett in the aftermath of the board’s decision.<sup>279</sup> Ray would wrap up his column by wishing for the best for the MSU Bulldogs. “Win or lose, we feel certain they will play like gentlemen and be a great credit to Mississippi, their school and the Southeastern Conference.”<sup>280</sup>

Ray, like many in the Mississippi sports writing fraternity, tried to give his readers a column that was focused on the athletic aspects of MSU’s game against Loyola of Chicago and while, for the most part, he was successful in the March 13, 1963, edition of the *Evening Post*, Ray devoted some of his musings on McCarthy’s comments pertaining to the integrated status of the Ramblers. After pointing out that Loyola had “four Negro starters on its front line,” Ray wrote that the skin tone of the opponent matter little to the MSU head coach. “This doesn’t seem to phase McCarthy one bit. He said he didn’t care who he played against,” Ray wrote. “He would play them just as he would anybody else. They would be trying to win and his players would be trying to win.”<sup>281</sup> While Ray offered little in terms of his opinion on McCarthy’s comments, he was one of the few sportswriters in Mississippi who noted it in an opinion-based forum, indicating that he found merit in the coach’s commentary.

Days later, after the Bulldogs fell to the integrated Ramblers, Ray used his March 17, 1963, column to focus on the game and the suspicion that some sort of violence would erupt between the two teams.

There were no incidents reported on either side as some folks feared might take place. Joe Dan Gold, Bulldog captain, said Loyola’s players “were perfect gentlemen just like the rest of the teams we played.” Several times when State players hit the floor, Loyola players reportedly helped them to their feet . . . and when the game was over there was the customary handshakes and congratulations from

both teams for a game well played. That's the way we thought it would be and that's the way it should have been.<sup>282</sup>

Two days later, while summarizing the Bulldogs' plight in Michigan through his conversations with Robert "Steamboat" Fulton, Ray reiterated that there was no racial tension between the two teams. "The tournament was played without incident. There was no bickering, no intentional shoving, no punching . . . just two top-rated teams playing the game the way it should be played in trying to win."<sup>283</sup> While Ray never expressed any sort of support for integration, the Vicksburg editor felt compelled to dispel any hearsay involving the conduct of both the Bulldogs and the integrated Ramblers. Ray's simple explanation of the way in which the two teams behaved dismissed any such thought and showed that, while he may not have approved of integration, Ray supported the efforts of MSU and, from a journalistic standard, reporting the truth.

Much like Ward, Ray wrote one final column on the unwritten law, using some of the March 24, 1963, edition of "Press Box Views" to acknowledge the State College Board's vote to eliminate the gentleman's agreement. Ray wrote that the board "took themselves off the hook" and relinquished all decision making power on integrated competition to the individual university president.<sup>284</sup> Ray predicted that the state's university and college leaders would exercise common sense and the various opinions expressed by the public, alumni, and students when making such a decision. "This puts quite a bit of pressure on the school leaders, but it takes a lot off them too," Ray concluded.<sup>285</sup> While Ward's opinion-based musing on the decision was done out of disgust for the ruling, Ray clearly found the positive benefits in the elimination of the unwritten law, again, demonstrating how the professed segregationist, over time, became one of the more progressive voices in Mississippi-based sports journalism.

Following the lead of Ross, Lightsey, and Ray, *Commercial Dispatch* sports editor Eddie Dean also spoke out on behalf of the Bulldogs and advocated a tournament appearance

by McCarthy's troops. Dean made his first argument for State in the February 26, 1963, edition of the *Commercial Dispatch*, writing with a skeptical tone, "As much as we would like to see the Bulldogs make the trip, there is little or no indication that the State officials will make any variation from the policies that have governed such things in the past."<sup>286</sup> Dean later countered any opposition to a tournament appearance by the Bulldogs, writing that the Starkville five, as SEC champions, had won the right to play and the rejection of another invitation in the aftermath of a title-winning season would put a black eye on the Magnolia State. "We talk about how proud we are of the State and all of that but just one such refusal does more harm than good in the period of one administration in the State Capital," Dean concluded.<sup>287</sup>

Dean continued to express a degree of skepticism in his February 28, 1963, column, writing that the team's chances of playing in the tournament were "slim and none," citing Barnett's objections to integrated competition. "Personally we believe the governor is just one in several that must give the okay for participation. There is plenty of time for a decision in favor of the team to be made but what we don't understand is why they would make a change now in their policies that have been so strictly enforced the past five years when the Bulldogs had chances to go," Dean warned.<sup>288</sup> Much like his previous column, despite expressing support for McCarthy's team, Dean's doubt overshadowed any pro-NCAA tournament sentiment.

Despite his half-hearted support of the Bulldogs, Dean wrote in the March 3, 1963, edition of the *Commercial Dispatch* that, with Colvard giving the team permission to play in the tournament, that the "most disappointed city in the United States must be Atlanta, Georgia," the home of the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets and the SEC representative had State declined the invitation.<sup>289</sup> However, Dean failed to express an opinion on the Colvard decision or acknowledge that his expectation of the unwritten law's enforcement would keep the team from playing in the tournament.



As opposition from the Closed Society to MSU's possible participation in the tournament began to mount, Dean feared that any decision to keep the team out of the tournament could result in penalties from the NCAA and, what may have been of greater consequence to the Magnolia State, the possible exodus of McCarthy from Starkville. "If a decision is rendered against the trip, we honestly believe that Mississippi State will be looking for a new basketball coach and their reign as a major basketball power in the South and Nation is at an end," Dean wrote.<sup>290</sup> While Dean failed to express an opinion either way, his fears indicated that the *Commercial Dispatch* sports editor was hopeful that State would participate in the national title tournament.

Dean also addressed *Sports Illustrated's* coverage of MSU in his March 14, 1963, edition of his column, "Scramblin," when he objected to the magazine's treatment of the Starkville-based Bulldogs. "Even with Mississippi State winning the SEC basketball championship, this magazine wouldn't even list them among the top three teams in the South until they accepted the bid to the NCAA and now the two-faced editors are giving nothing but praise for the Maroons," Dean quipped.<sup>291</sup> Intentional or not, Dean's scathing evaluation of the editors of *Sports Illustrated* acknowledged what sports writers in Mississippi had failed to admit in the past: The absence of an NCAA tournament appearance and the lack of integrated foes on the Bulldogs' schedule had created a less than stellar national perception of the team. In past debates involving MSU and the unwritten law, the school's place in both the AP and UPI national polls was a topic of conversation yet this obvious absence in the Bulldogs' résumé was never cited as a possible culprit.

Dean wrote little on the team's exodus from Starkville, but in the March 15, 1963, edition of the *Commercial Dispatch*, the paper's sports editor claimed that the game between the Bulldogs and the Ramblers would be listened to by everyone in the Magnolia State, including State's white detractors, who would "be pulling for a win, whether they admit it or not."<sup>292</sup>

Perhaps Dean's most opinionated column appeared after the Bulldogs' loss to the Loyola, when the *Commercial Dispatch's* sports editor wrote that the team was not deserving of "the sharp criticism that is now being heard from people that didn't have the guts to say one way or the other how they stood on the situation."<sup>293</sup> Dean defended MSU, writing that the loss should not have been viewed as a disgrace and criticism of the team should be reserved for those who took an active role in the debate. "Second-guessers are having a field day with the loss and should State have won, not a word on the contrary would have been heard, only praise," Dean wrote. "We respect the right of a person to oppose the trip if they did so before the game was played, not the people that took the wait and see if we win attitude."<sup>294</sup>

#### Support Grows for the Bulldogs From Mississippi's Editors

Although he was not a consistent voice in terms of the sheer number of editorial statements during the duration of the unwritten law's existence, the opinion of Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times* was never in question as the Pulitzer Prize winning editor offered the Bulldogs his journalistic support every time he penned a column on the team's efforts to buck the gentleman's agreement. In the March 4, 1963, edition of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, Carter called Colvard's decision "extremely brave" and credited the MSU president for exercising a degree of common sense in his ruling. Carter, who quipped that he did not belong to any "extremist segregationist group," wrote that he was in favor of Colvard's action and, because of the positive public reaction Colvard had received across the state, that most Mississippians thought the unwritten law was "for the birds."<sup>295</sup> Carter continued to drive his point home, calling the debate "ridiculous" and predicted the inevitable arrival of integrated sports to the Magnolia State. "Interracial athletics are virtually inescapable, and in very few years there will not be many teams in the Southeastern Conference which do not have Negroes," Carter wrote.<sup>296</sup> Despite Carter's complementary

content, he was still fearful of a possible action by the State College Board, even urging readers to offer support to the embattled MSU president.<sup>297</sup>

Only days later, Carter took note of the political support for the enforcement of the unwritten law, writing in his March 7, 1963, editorial that, “The big guns of the professional haters and their political allies are now being brought to bear on the State College Board” in an effort to end State’s bid for an NCAA appearance.<sup>298</sup> Never shy about holding his journalistic brethren responsible for their actions, Carter called out both the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, writing that the two newspapers “echo the fanatic’s line, (and) have come out with a strong denunciation of Dr. Colvard and are falling all over each other to prove what good segregationists they are.”<sup>299</sup> Labeling those who favored such a ban as “extremist,” Carter wondered if the segregationist ideology ran deeper than he initially believed and sarcastically suggested a radical solution for Mississippians in opposition of the Bulldogs. “For if it is bad for five members of a basketball team to ‘mix’ on the court, surely it is worse for state and local officials and representatives to ‘mix’ while they ride, eat, and sleep. In short, let’s wash our hands of the United States and be done with it,” Carter quipped.<sup>300</sup> Carter ended his commentary by, again, urging readers to contact members of the State College Board and voice their opinions on the matter. Carter was fearful that the board, yielding to the pressures of the Closed Society, would tow the segregationist line and keep State out of the tournament.

The following day, in the March 8, 1963, edition of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, Carter published an editorial from Ira B. Harkey, Jr.’s *Pascagoula Chronicle*, which hailed Colvard’s decision and said it should “gain the applause of both white supremacists and sportsmen.”<sup>301</sup> Harkey explained that white supremacists would have a chance to test their separatist ideology of being superior to blacks, while sports fans would have a chance to watch MSU win a national championship. The column also advocated the appearance of MSU to rebuff any stereotypical notions held by segregationists. Harkey was at the forefront

of journalistic opposition to the segregationist beliefs of white Mississippians and felt that state residents were “making fools of themselves.” Harkey won the Pulitzer Prize in May 1963 for his pro-civil rights work.<sup>302</sup>

Carter’s strongest work appeared in the March 11, 1963, edition of the *Delta Democrat-Times*. In a defiant and confident tone, Carter wrote in the following passage that the decision of the State College Board to support MSU signaled a new social position in the state.

Decent people of Mississippi are sick of letting the professional haters make all of the decisions and control all the shots. The issue of whether Mississippi State’s basketball team should or should not play in the NCAA tournament was obviously not the most significant in the world but the fact that the big-time bigots chose to make it a major issue and were defeated is significant.<sup>303</sup>

In Carter’s words, the proprietors of the Closed Society attempted to use every weapon in their “extremist” arsenal, including the objections of the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, Barnett, and the various comments made in the press from members of the Citizens’ Council, yet to no avail. While Carter recognized the potentially fleeting nature of the impact of the decision, he called it a healthy sign. “The people decided they were sick of stupidity — no matter under what guise it travelled — and an official body of government correctly sensed the people’s mood,” Carter wrote. “We can only hope it was not a passing whim, and that having once discovered that lightning does not strike when the bateists are defied, the people will defy them again and again in the future.”<sup>304</sup> Although the amount of original commentary could not compare to that of the *Clarion-Ledger* or the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Delta Democrat-Times* held its own in combating the negative, segregationist ideology of those newspapers. Carter, who was considered a liberal journalist in Mississippi during this time period and an advocate of civil rights, poignantly and powerfully made his opinion known.

While the volume of news-based editorial content in J. Oliver Emmerich’s *Enterprise-Journal* was minimal, the long time supporter of integration backed the MSU

contingent. While Emmerich did support states' rights, he also held a belief in fair journalism and attempted to adhere to those principles, regardless of the issue.<sup>305</sup> In his March 2, 1963, editorial, Emmerich called Colvard's decision "both wise and responsible" and provided various reasons why the team should have accepted the bid. Emmerich argued that it was time for the Magnolia State to abandon what he called "athletic isolation" and claimed that the constant rejection of boycotting national tournaments only hurt the credibility of college sports in the Mississippi.<sup>306</sup> Despite the past and frequent enforcement of the unwritten law, Emmerich offered a contradiction to the gentleman's agreement, identifying that there was nothing illegal about playing integrated teams. "There is no board policy which prevents the acceptance of an invitation to participate in a national tournament," Emmerich explained.<sup>307</sup> The McComb-based editor, who had long recognized the need for civil rights in Mississippi, argued that the continued observance of the unwritten law would not be superseded by the eventual integration of southern sports, rather it would lead to the degeneration of college athletics as they knew it. "It is inevitable that Mississippi in time abandon the policy of athletic isolation for the alternative is abandonment of top flight athletics," Emmerich predicted. "Furthermore, the inevitability of abolishing the rule of boycott against national competition is seen in the attitude and actions of other Southern universities and colleges as well as the attitude of the Mississippi Sports fan."<sup>308</sup> Emmerich's supportive commentary was picked up by the AP and could be found in the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, the Columbus-based *Commercial Dispatch*, and the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>309</sup> It was the only opinion-base commentary offered by the McComb editor.

Emmerich's son, John Emmerich also wrote on the issue for the March 18, 1963, edition of the *Enterprise-Journal*, confessing that he did not understand why the acceptance of the NCAA bid generated "so much hoopla."<sup>310</sup> By playing Loyola, which Emmerich identified as being integrated, the reporter asked, "What great principle will have been sacrificed?" Directing a degree of criticism at M. M. Roberts for his Reconstruction remarks,

Emmerich claimed that segregation had not “changed in Mississippi just because a basketball team — a good one too — played on the same court with Negroes. I learned long time ago that skin color doesn’t rub off.”<sup>311</sup> Citing his own childhood experiences, Emmerich made a logical appeal for equality on the court, writing in almost a romantic fashion of his youthful days playing with both white and black children. “I thought it was down here in the South — with a long tradition of casual and friendly relations — that every young white lad had a dark skinned friend with whom he shared many boyhood experiences. So what’s all the shouting about just because Mississippi State goes to a tournament and does what southern kids have been doing for as long as anyone can remember — that is until recently when we got so sensitive about what you can’t do in a segregated system.”<sup>312</sup> While the younger Emmerich did not denounce segregation in any way, his commentary advocated civil rights and attempted to offer his audience with a relatable and seemingly stereotypical scenario that they could identify with. Emmerich would later leave Mississippi to take a position with the *Baltimore Sun*.

Following the lead of his sports editor, Harry Rutherford of the *Daily Journal* echoed the sentiments of Ross, writing in the March 6, 1963, edition of the Tupelo newspaper that he doubted the team’s participation in the postseason would lead to the eventual integration of schools statewide and, as demonstrated in the follow passage, that if such barriers were to be broken, federal legal action such as the one perpetuated by James Meredith would be the likely culprit.

We repeat: The integration of Mississippi schools will come down only when and if such action is ordered by federal courts and all avenues of escaping such decisions are closed. Let us then not penalize a fine group of Mississippi State basketball players and one of the nation’s best coaches by trying to place the blame on them for something which will be decided completely outside the realm of their competition in the national tournament they so strongly desire to enter. . . . Let our boys play.<sup>313</sup>

Rutherford's commentary pulled no punches and, while he did not advocate integration or the elimination of the unwritten law, his work was a direct challenge to the status quo maintained by the Closed Society.

#### The Surprising Views of Starkville

While located in the epicenter of Mississippi State's multiple and controversial challenges to the unwritten law, the *Starkville Daily News* of segregationist editor Sherrill Nash and publisher Henry Harris offered a surprisingly supportive editorial voice to their hometown Bulldogs, frequently expressing their editorial support for Colvard and the decision he made. In the paper's first editorial statement after State had clinched a tie for the SEC championship, Nash wrote that, regardless of the decision rendered by MSU's administration, the paper would stand behind the university. Nash also told his audience that bigger things were at stake than just a basketball game and, while Nash wanted to see the Bulldogs in the tournament, he believed, "The final decision will be weighted in the best interest of Mississippi State University. Because of our confidence in the University administration, the official response to the NCAA invitation will be for the best interest of all concerned."<sup>314</sup>

Nash again penned an editorial supporting Colvard's decision in the March 6, 1963, edition of the *Starkville Daily News*, calling the embattled MSU president a strong leader, writing that his accomplishments in Starkville were "beyond criticism."<sup>315</sup> Nash noted the mounting pressure from Mississippi's political elite with the State College Board's meeting looming over the Magnolia State. However, Nash did not identify any of Colvard's opponents and, thus, the purveyors of segregated Mississippi in his work. For the political elite who were threatening to cut off "legislation appropriations," Nash attempted to appeal to the North Carolina native's critics, citing, in total, his tenure in Starkville. "Whether you approve of Dr. Colvard's decision on the basketball team or not, he has earned your support through the progressive and sincere work he is doing as President of State University," he wrote.<sup>316</sup>

While Nash's work offered a vote of confidence to the embattled MSU president, the paper's sports staff took a similar approach. Shortly after Colvard publicly accepted the NCAA invitation, a column with the byline "Daily News Sports Staff" appeared in the March 5, 1963, sports section of the *Starkville Daily News* and applauded the opportunity afforded to McCarthy's club. After writing the MSU had become accustomed to playing championship-level basketball, the paper's sports staff lamented, "It's a real good feeling to see them finally get the chance to prove it to the rest of the country."<sup>317</sup> The rest of the opinion-based article did not go so far as to predict a national championship for the local Bulldogs but argued that it would take a talented team to eliminate MSU. It was also suspected in the column that Loyola would be the Bulldogs' first opponent, but the Chicago-based team's integrated status was not referenced. While the column supported the Bulldogs' place in the postseason, an actual opinion on the merits of integrated athletics was not present. The same could be said of the sports staff's next column when, on March 13, 1963, the staff focused on the Ramblers' dominance and challenge to the Bulldogs but did not address the team's trip into the NCAA tournament or the unwritten law.<sup>318</sup>

In the aftermath of the Bulldogs' exit from the national tournament, *Starkville Daily News* sports writer George Anderson wrote in the paper's "Time Out for Sports" column that the game marked the potential end to one era and the start of another. While on the surface Anderson's commentary identified the historic and social significance of the event, Anderson focused on the graduation of Bulldog standouts Mitchell, Gold, and Stroud rather than the possible end of segregated athletics in the Magnolia State.<sup>319</sup> While Anderson did reflect on the team's play in the tournament and the swell of crowd support for the MSU contingent, the Starkville sports writer went no further. Like his Starkville peers, while Anderson supported MSU's venture into the national title tournament, he did little to validate his opinion. In total, Nash's paper seemed content to remain on the ideological sidelines, abstaining from expressing neither segregationist beliefs nor supporting integration.



*The Reflector*, Mississippi State's student-based newspaper, contained a litany of pro-NCAA commentary in support of the Bulldogs and was critical of the unwritten law. The editorial staff of the student paper separated their own personal views on integration with an opinion that the unwritten law was dated and MSU was being robbed of an opportunity to play in the NCAA tournament. In the February 21, 1963, edition of *The Reflector*, student editor Jim Yancey published an opinion-based article on the debated NCAA tournament and the merits of violating the unwritten law. Yancey called it a shame that the team may be absent from postseason basketball because of the unwritten law and described views to the contrary as "somewhat pigheaded."<sup>320</sup> Yancey utilized sarcasm in his editorial, writing that participating in integrated competition would be difficult for MSU because "it would be hard for our boys to place themselves on the same court as the negroid race, since all of their lives our boys have been protected from such close personal contact."<sup>321</sup> Yancey concluded by arguing that the notion of positive race relations in the state rarely, if ever, made it beyond Mississippi's borders and, by playing in the tournament, a greater sense of goodwill would be created for the Closed Society.

On March 7, 1963, Yancey again voiced his objections to the unwritten law in the pages of *The Reflector* as the student editor presented a line of questions for the political purveyors of the Closed Society that supported Colvard and demonstrated the student journalist's opposition to the white social structure of the state.

Will the state's legislature try to cut the salary of Governor Ross Barnett because the Governor got close enough to a negro to shake his hand during a recent industry hunting trip? Will thousands of Mississippians, for fear of violation of their segregation principles, fire the negro maids who have daily contact with their children? Have the practices mentioned above presented the appearance of relaxation of Mississippi's segregation laws? Should a dynamic university be led by a man with the intelligence to make a decision on the merits of the case, and guts to back it up? Or, should that university be led by a man, who out of fear for his job, would listen to and be persuaded by the politicians who are usually trying to create votes?<sup>322</sup>

Throughout the duration of the 1963 Mississippi State debate, *The Reflector's* Malcolm Balfour proved to be, not only a solid college journalist, but held his own with

Mississippi's professional scribes when it came to getting the news. In the February 28, 1963, version of his column "Sports Talk," Balfour addressed the team's NCAA hopes, writing that McCarthy's plea for his team to play in the postseason tournament "sounded pitiful" after the Bulldogs won the SEC championship.<sup>323</sup> Balfour called the reaction from the student population a positive one and claimed that most students wanted the Starkville-based team to play in the tournament. Citing the 1961-62 season, Balfour wrote that justification for State's past absence was valid. "To remain segregated, we had to make sacrifices," Balfour wrote. "[However] James Meredith knocked the legs under that argument by being admitted to Ole Miss. . . . Whether we like it or not, schools in Mississippi are now integrated, and those of us who feel that integration has been a burden deserve to reap some benefit by being able to play against integrated teams. As McCarthy put it, 'Preventing us from going to the Nationals is like closing the stable door after the horse is out.' Ole Miss is integrated."<sup>324</sup>

In the aftermath of Colvard's landmark decision, Balfour anointed the MSU president as the new "Mr. State College," a title he said was previously held by McCarthy, in his March 7, 1963, edition of "Sports Talk." Balfour recognized the seriousness of Colvard's announcement and wrote that the university's president "stuck his neck way out by making his statement, and none knew it better than he."<sup>325</sup> As for Colvard's critics, Balfour wrote, "There are those who would like to send Mississippi back into the dark ages and I suppose they'd like to lead the cheers for State in the Mississippi Conference with Ole Miss and Southern," a nod to the ideological borders that kept Mississippi teams inside the Magnolia State.<sup>326</sup>

Balfour continued to address the Bulldogs and the NCCA tournament when, on March 14, 1963, the student journalist called State's play in the tournament, "The best advertising that the State has had in a long time, and we are proud that such a team will be representing us. We all know that the team has a greater burden on its shoulders than the basketball game, but still the game is the number one consideration."<sup>327</sup> Balfour then focused

on the game itself, returning to the ideological solitude of athletics. Balfour concluded his commentary on the Bulldogs in the March 21, 1963, edition of *The Reflector*, writing that, “The folks up there took Mississippi State to heart as their Cinderella team. . . . Mississippi State lost that first ball game, but it won the hearts of East Lansing.”<sup>328</sup>

Sports writer Bill Lunardini also made his opinion known on the matter, writing in an opinion-based column titled “Sports Shorts” that it was “a great injustice” to keep the team out of the tournament. “It’s very ridiculous to keep sending the second best team in the SEC to the biggest basketball tournament in the country,” Lunardini wrote. “Who would have thought that after winning four SEC championships the only trip our boys get is the long walk back to the dorm. I don’t know what else can be said about a group of boys who gave so much on the court year after year. But I know how they can be rewarded.”<sup>329</sup>

The student newspaper also published the opinions of other students on the Starkville campus through guest editorials. On February 28, 1963, three separate opinion-based articles were published in *The Reflector* with two such accounts featured on the paper’s editorial page. The first, which did not have a byline, advocated an appearance by the Bulldogs in the NCAA tournament but as a means of validating the state’s belief in segregation. “The only reason given by the people who would keep our team from playing in the national tournament is that it would prevent State from remaining segregated. This reason fails to hold water. . . . We have faith in our Mississippi State team that they can prove to the nation the superiority of Southern athletes — and Southern ideals,” the anonymous author wrote.<sup>330</sup> On the same page, another opinion piece by an anonymous writer addressed “the problem of the NCAA” and questioned whether or not it was “fair to let some unwritten law keep us from going even further?”<sup>331</sup> The author stressed that State should play in the tournament but, more importantly, the column dealt with segregation in athletics and argued in the following passage that sports was an area affected little by integration.

The negro has proven himself a strong match for the white man in this area. As a matter of fact, many a negro has surpassed the whites in sports events. In other words, they can be pretty tough competition; I hope we are not afraid of this competition. If in any area, sports is the one area in which negroes are considered equal. If they are not considered so, then it is clearly a case of prejudice, that dirty word.<sup>332</sup>

After discussing the advancements of blacks in sports, the writer took the remainder of the column to make a striking statement against the unwritten law and the Closed Society. “Is an unwritten law going to continue to govern our policy on this issue, or are we going to finally stand up for what is just and logical? How much longer can we stand this absurdity, until it is too late?”<sup>333</sup>

In the pages of the March 14, 1963, edition of the student newspaper, another anonymous writer claimed that students on the Starkville campus had been temporarily discouraged by the legal ramblings of Mitts and the subsequent injunction but, because of the charismatic McCarthy, overlooked the meddling of the Closed Society on the school’s national title aspirations. The author added that the vast majority of MSU supporters in the Magnolia State were being opposed by “a small group of legislatures who are apparently fighting for their own personal political gains. . . . If this group wins this struggle, justice will be an obsolete word in the law books of Mississippi.”<sup>334</sup>

After the Bulldogs returned to Starkville, *The Reflector* focused on the trip itself and the treatment of the team while in Michigan. On the paper’s editorial page, the staff of *The Reflector* chose to publish an editorial written in the Ripley-based *Southern Sentinel* about the Bulldogs and the legal hullabaloo that shrouded its late season run to the NCAA tournament. The article, which was published without a byline, focused on the State College Board’s decision to allow State to play in the tournament and attacked the legitimacy of the unwritten law. “For so many years, the so-called ‘unwritten’ law has prevailed where a few misguided people have set the precedent for everything including athletics in state schools, that no group could participate in tournaments which had negro players on the teams,” the unknown author

wrote. “All of it seems rather useless and far-fetched to have such a ‘law’ that they had to go by. The matter of segregation and integration has gone a little but too far.”<sup>335</sup> From there, the anonymous scribe defended segregation and, in essence, the Closed Society.

There is not a person, negro or white, in the state who doesn’t actually believe in segregation. There are none of the two races who actually live together to themselves, for there isn’t a single business or enterprise where the whites don’t serve some negro customers. The negro attends his own schools and churches, as the white people attend theirs, and to save me, I can’t see anything wrong with it. There is one hope that I have and that the Mississippi State Basketball team wins the tournament.<sup>336</sup>

Equal parts radical and subservient, the editorial represented a common belief within the Magnolia State that, while the unwritten law may have run its course, MSU’s participation against integrated competition would not fracture the Closed Society. The ideological boundaries of the Magnolia State and the white status quo were changing, ever so slightly. In time, the cracks created in the Closed Society’s racist foundation by the debates surrounding the unwritten law became the chasms that would help eliminate the white caste system.

#### Members of the Black Press Speak Up

For the first time during the Bulldogs’ multiple challenges to the unwritten law, a newspaper representative of Mississippi’s black community offered some sort of commentary on racial issues surrounding Mississippi State’s basketball team and the enforcement of the gentleman’s agreement. The *Mississippi Free Press* and the work of editor Charles Butts was opinion-based, regardless if the article was intended to be such an expression or a news account. The newspaper, which generally served as the antithesis for the predominant white media in the state, addressed the MSU issue in a number of articles. In the March 9, 1963, edition of the *Free Press*, Butts took Republican gubernatorial candidate Rubel Phillips to task for his public views on the MSU issue. “He is amusing-or perhaps, disgusting,” Butts wrote of Phillips.<sup>337</sup> While Butts did not openly support MSU, he brought some light to the issue and saw the impending controversy when he wrote, “What is the reaction of all these

people going to be who want to go when they've been told, 'you better not, some of them are dark.'”<sup>338</sup>

Butts wrote another column in the March 16, 1963, issue of the *Free Press*, on the board's decision to allowing State to play. Butts wrote, “Don't tell Ross,” an obvious reference to the segregationist governor.<sup>339</sup> *Free Press* columnist Emmett Morris opened his March 23, 1963, work in a somber tone and denounced the behavior of the politicians and segregationists who tried to stop MSU from playing. Morris, who was identified as a sophomore from Jackson State College, called the efforts of Mitts, Larson, and Roberts “the poorest example of sportsmanship and the greatest example of fear that can exhibit itself in any form. . . . The segregationist is so fearful that it will appear that he is giving in until he refuses to make progress. And who is hurt buy this action? Him, of course.”<sup>340</sup> Morris also complemented Colvard, calling the MSU president “a symbol of progress in the state because of his bold step in the face of strong opposition.”<sup>341</sup>

The *Jackson Advocate* of Percy Greene, which had a reputation for taking a moderate approach to issues of race, only addressed the MSU-NCAA issue once during the eight years of the unwritten law's existence. Greene wrote in the March 16, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Advocate* that, no matter what his individual views were on the unwritten law, he would be cheering for the MSU team because he had pride in his state.<sup>342</sup> Greene failed to express a definitive opinion on the unwritten law or the merits of State's place in the integrated tournament.

#### Taking the Familiar Route

Some journalists stuck to their ever-familiar tendency to stay out of offering any opinion on controversial issues or items that dealt with race. The third of the Hederman journalistic triad, the *Hattiesburg American* again did little to distinguish itself in the MSU-NCAA tournament debate, expressing no real opinion either supporting or refuting the efforts of MSU.

*Hattiesburg American* sports editor Ed Staton first addressed the possibility of an MSU appearance in the integrated postseason in his February 25, 1963, column, titled “Statin’ Ideas,” when he wrote that McCarthy was “still pretty firm in his belief that Bulldogs, currently leading the SEC, will be allowed to go to the NCAA tournament.”<sup>343</sup> Staton failed to express an opinion on the matter in his work. The same could be said for his next opinion-based musings, writing in the February 27, 1963, *Hattiesburg American* that, after the Bulldogs clinched a share of the conference title with its win over Tulane, he thought the conference would likely be represented by the Atlanta-based Yellow Jackets. “At Babe’s place, they still wait and hope, knowing all along that they’ll probably be reading in the papers about Georgia Tech playing in the NCAA tournament,” Staton predicted.<sup>344</sup> While the *Hattiesburg* sports editor failed to express a definitive opinion on the matter, the presence of his prediction, at best, gave his work a skeptical connotation and, at worse, provided a degree of editorial opposition for the MSU team.

After the State College Board made its decision on the matter, the editorial staff of the *Hattiesburg American* acknowledged the tradition-breaking precedent set but devoted more ink to the reporters at the meeting. “Almost everybody, of course, is familiar with the arguments, pro and con, of whether the team should play,” the anonymous journalist wrote. “Something that may not be known by the public, however, is the fact that Saturday was the first time the board has allowed newsmen to sit in on a meeting.”<sup>345</sup> The rest of the editorial failed to address the issue, demonstrating a degree of journalistic neglect on behalf of the *Hattiesburg American*. Rather than express an opinion on the merits of the MSU team or the unwritten law, the paper ignored the issue from an editorial standpoint.

Staton wrote on the MSU contingent for a final time in the March 15, 1963, version of the *Hattiesburg American*, using his column to pen a feature-like account on McCarthy. While Staton spent the majority of his opinion-based forum profiling the Baldwin County native, he expressed little to no editorial support for the MSU head coach or the team. In his

final remark in the column, Staton wrote in an almost poetic tone, “Win or lose, at least the Babe’s dream came true.”<sup>346</sup> Keeping true to its historic form, the *Hattiesburg American* maintained its silent-like treatment of any issues involving MSU and the unwritten law and, to a greater extent, anything involving race. This lack of voice allowed the paper to support the Closed Society by omission.

*Delta Democrat-Times* sports editor Charles Kerg, who advocated a Bulldog trip to the 1962 NCAA tournament, did not comment on the Bulldogs until the March 3, 1963, edition of his column, “Kerg’s Korner,” and offered little in terms of the debate. Kerg simply challenged Robert “Steamboat” Fulton’s argument that a tournament absence would lead to McCarthy’s departure from Starkville, countering that the MSU head coach’s love for the Magnolia State would keep him in Mississippi.<sup>347</sup> *Laurel Leader-Call* sports editor Odell McRae took a similar route; using his March 5, 1963, column to discuss McCarthy’s effect on the level of interest in basketball in the Magnolia State, and McRae claimed that the MSU head coach’s success in Starkville had contributed to the state’s growing interest in high school basketball.<sup>348</sup> Despite his complementary remarks on McCarthy, McRae did not reference the NCAA tournament.

#### The Public Takes to the Printed Press

While columns and editorials served as a source for both opposition and support of the unwritten law, a more accurate measurement of public opinion could be found in letters to the editor. Because of the prevailing opinions of the newspaper’s editors, many of the published letters reflected the thoughts of the newspapers themselves. The primary example came from the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*. The Hederman-owned newspapers were at the forefront of public opinion, with the *Clarion-Ledger* publishing thirty letters and the *Jackson Daily News* printing twenty-six on the MSU-NCAA debate. In combination, the other papers consulted during this time period printed only six. Only two days after the Bulldogs’ SEC title-clinching victory, four letters appeared in the *Clarion-*



*Ledger*, all in support of the team. One letter, signed by nine different men, was addressed to Barnett and asked him to do everything in his power to assure that State would play in the tournament.<sup>349</sup> Another letter, from the “third floor of McKee Hall Dormitory” on the campus of MSU, also supported State’s efforts but indicated that the authors felt the segregationist status of the university and the state would only be compromised if “little brother Bobby decides to shove it down our throats with the aid of federal troops,” a reference to Robert Kennedy and the federal government’s involvement in Meredith’s integration of Ole Miss.<sup>350</sup> While letters from Buddy Graves of Greenville and T. J. Smith of Florence supported the Bulldogs, Smith’s letter offered five justifications for the team to play in the tournament, none of which pertained to integration or the playing of integrated teams.<sup>351</sup>

On March 4, 1963, the *Clarion-Ledger* published letters in opposition to MSU that questioned the need for the teams to play. T. N. Powell of Greenwood blamed sports writers and politicians for creating the controversy surrounding the Bulldogs and claimed that those who supported playing integrated teams were, “prostituting their principles” and predicted integration would cause the downfall of Mississippi State athletics.<sup>352</sup> Another letter, from a Jackson student who claimed an affiliation to the *Rebel Underground*, voiced “fraternal pride” for the accomplishments of MSU but asked that they showed the same courage by “refusing the plum that is being dangled so temptingly before them by a common enemy,” politicians and the press during past debates involving MSU and the unwritten law.<sup>353</sup>

The *Clarion-Ledger* published two more letters, each with split views on MSU’s participation on March 8, 1963. The first, written by Rex Barber, suggested the university allow the students to vote on the matter and accept their decision rather than be forced to accept integration. Barber wrote that he disliked the idea of integration but claimed he knew it was inevitable. Another letter attacked Colvard; however, the writer, J. B. Collier of Meridian, suggested State should have played a black college in Mississippi before playing in the NCAA tournament.<sup>354</sup>

The March 8, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger* featured a score of letters, the majority of which condemned the possibility of athletic competition with integrated teams. One letter called the Bulldogs' tournament desires "another attempt at the integration of the state of Mississippi."<sup>355</sup> The author, Louis Leman of Brookhaven, wrote that the students of MSU were nothing but pawns of the "left wing" that were using them to "weaken the entire state."<sup>356</sup> T. B. Templeton of Natchez called for "enough white men with guts enough to stop the Kennedys and their do-good stooges" in an effort to preserve Mississippi well after "that coach and his players are forgotten."<sup>357</sup> Edwin White of Lexington added, "Surely, as soon as we enter the integrated tournament in Michigan, our many enemies will proclaim that we have given way and yielded" and Thaddie Screws of Bentonina claimed, "I hope the leaders of Mississippi will wake up and see what lies ahead."<sup>358</sup> Both of these letters also appear in the March 7, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. While these letters, in part, sounded of an apocalyptic conclusion facing the Closed Society, it was evident there was a fear that the MSU tournament bid would change Mississippi forever.

As the state awaited the State College Board's decision, more citizens took their opportunity to voice objections for the NCAA bid in the *Clarion-Ledger*. Tom Barrentine of Greenwood claimed that Colvard and McCarthy were in favor of integration and simply lacked the courage to say so.<sup>359</sup> N. E. Dacus of Tupelo followed Barrentine's lead, calling the decision "disastrous." Dacus also claimed that pro-integration forces had pulled off a coup and that "only our own people following false leadership" would cause the demise of the southern way of life, a jab at Colvard, a North Carolina native.<sup>360</sup>

While many editorials and letters to the editor viewed the unwritten law as a way to keep Mississippi's superior athletic teams from playing inferior integrated competition, at least one reader saw it the other way around. Erich Kronfield wrote the *Clarion-Ledger* and, on March 12, 1963, the Massachusetts resident identified with a northern perspective of the rule, writing that it was only a response to the state's fear that their teams would be

dominated by integrated competition.<sup>361</sup> Kronfield argued that MSU should play in the tournament to solidify their views on segregation and to show the “superiority of their way.” In the March 13, 1963, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Alan Johnson of State College called the justification to not play in the NCAA “ridiculous” while Ray Henderson of Carthage called Colvard’s decision one that would lead a great university down a road of ruin.<sup>362</sup>

The most damning letter to Barnett’s opposition appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger* on March 14, 1963. From a person identified as “Alphonse Cincere” of Jackson, the letter was composed in a manner similar to a stereotypical, racist view of the verbal skills of an African-American. “Cincere’s” letter, filled with misspelled words, mockingly attacked the segregationist ideology of Barnett and addressed the MSU controversy by asking, “Can’t we blame dis basketball ruckus on dem dirty feds or der commies? We have everyting else, eh Barnett?” “Cincere” ended the letter by calling the situation, “most embarressin to me Barnett. I feel like I been unmasked.”<sup>363</sup> While coming across as a criticism of the governor and segregation, the use of a racial stereotype actually supported the state’s separatist ideology and painted blacks as being less intelligent than their white counterparts. Along with the letter from “Cincere,” four other letters appeared in the same issue, all in opposition of MSU.

The *Jackson Daily News* also featured a slew of correspondents, the majority of which backed up the segregationist views of Ward and the newspaper. The first letter appeared on February 28, 1963, from William Farmer of State College who made a logical appeal to the Bulldogs’ participation in the NCAA tournament by noting that the state would not step in if a local athlete were to participate in the integrated Olympics.<sup>364</sup> Charles Wallace of Jackson wrote a sarcastic letter congratulating McCarthy on his success while suggesting to the coach that he find a new job at a university meeting his “specification” rather than appealing for NCAA tournament support.<sup>365</sup> Gene Goulding of Ole Miss wrote to the *Jackson Daily News* in a March 6, 1963, letter in and argued that it would take little courage to allow

Georgia Tech to take MSU's place in the tournament, and the Bulldogs had won the right to go.<sup>366</sup>

As decision day loomed closer for the State College Board, more letters in opposition began to appear in the *Daily News* in the form of the aforementioned letters from White, Luckett, and Barrentine.<sup>367</sup> In the March 8, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Presley Snow of Philadelphia called MSU's tournament play, "the most disgusting and shameful thing to happen to our state since the Warren Court made state rights and constitutional government a mockery of this nation," and referred to integration as the "Kennedy-backed cancer."<sup>368</sup> Letters to the editors in the March 9, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News* overwhelmingly opposed MSU's tournament play, led by E. W. Anderson of Hattiesburg who called Ward's apology to the Bulldogs sickening.<sup>369</sup> However, Anderson did not support the integration of Mississippi or athletics, rather just a forum where a fair account of the facts can be presented. Others, such as William S. Deale of Gloster, Sam Farrington, Harper Foundry and Machine Co., and Herbert Lester, all of Jackson wrote in opposition of State and cited the fear of state integration as being the eventual outcome.<sup>370</sup>

In the March 11, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, three letters of support for MSU were published, led by Morris Bloodworth and Billy Boyd of State College who told Ward to "cram" the Loyola photo and asked the segregationist editor why he refused to publish material in support of State. Ward, in an editor's note below the letter, simply wrote, "We do."<sup>371</sup> Harold Unland, Jr., also of State College, supported State's cause and called the approach by Ward and Barnett "cowardly."<sup>372</sup> Paul Bailey of Ottawa, Illinois also wrote to the paper and argued that Mississippians simply feared that State would be defeated in a rout by a superior team. Despite the varied tones of support in these three letters, Dacus essentially canceled them out. Under the heading "Intergrations-110, MSU, Ole Miss -0," Dacus wrote that the desire for an NCAA title win had led "suckers" down a similar path. In a letter ripe with racial prejudice, the Tupelo native wondered if history would still be written 100 years

from now in “the American Jungle” that would be inhabited “by a dark brown race of men living in clusters of thatched huts super-imposed upon the ruins of brick and steel.”<sup>373</sup> The last letter to the editor appeared in the March 15, 1963, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, fittingly from Dacus. The segregationist noted the MSU student body’s support for the team and wondered if State was offering a class in “how to become a first class moron in only a few lessons.”<sup>374</sup> Citing the “adopted North Carolina style,” a reference to Colvard’s background, Dacus claimed he was not surprised by the supportive expression of MSU students.<sup>375</sup> After the Bulldogs’ loss to Loyola, W. P. Pinney of New York wrote the decision by the State College Board tore down the loyalty between that organization and the people of Mississippi.<sup>376</sup>

In the *Starkville Daily News*, a letter appeared from Warren Barker of Starkville who asked McCarthy not change the principles of Mississippi for a basketball game and indicated that the integration of Mississippi would lead to chaos.<sup>377</sup> In the aftermath of State’s loss to Loyola, A. R. Ballinger of Appleton, Wisconsin, wrote the Starkville-based paper to commend the efforts of MSU and called it, “a step in the right direction.” He also noted his new sense of pride in being a native of the state.<sup>378</sup>

While Emmerich expressed nothing but support for MSU, even the McComb-based *Enterprise-Journal* featured a letter to the editor that opposed the Maroons’ NCAA efforts. On March 7, 1963, the newspaper published a letter from Harry Marsalis of McComb who wrote that he loved the Southern morals of the state and would not succumb to Emmerich’s notion that the integration of athletics and the state was inevitable.<sup>379</sup> Marsalis’ letter was the only one to appear in Emmerich’s paper during the MSU-NCAA controversy.

The *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News* served as the predominant outlets in terms of overall public opinion, continuing the influence and dominance of the Hederman franchise. The content of these correspondents reflected the overall outlook of the Jackson-based publications. While the majority of content in these newspapers was against Colvard’s

decision, Colvard receive 335 various letters and telegrams supporting the Bulldogs' NCAA trip.<sup>380</sup>

Another surprising source for public opinion came in the form of *The Reflector* and letters to the editor published by the university's student newspaper. While college newspapers are not normally seen as a haven for such commentary, the biweekly publication nevertheless featured some of the more supportive public pleas for the MSU faithful. *The Reflector* published two letters to the editor in the March 7, 1963, edition of the paper concerning the Bulldogs and the chances of playing in the integrated postseason. The first, from Oscar T. Brookins, congratulated both the team and the school for the season and the decision to play in the NCAA tournament. Brookins, a self-professed Mississippian, wrote that he hoped the citizens of the Magnolia State realized that playing in the tournament was necessary to continue on as one of the predominant basketball powers in the South.<sup>381</sup> A second letter, from State College resident Edward Prisock, questioned the need to play in the tournament and asked what kind of damage would State's participation have on the Closed Society. Prisock called it a "ironical if not hypocritical" move to play in the tournament, adding that MSU's supporters were putting "personal pleasure before moral principles" and those that opposed segregation would take this proverbial inch and run a mile.<sup>382</sup> Prisock cited the integration of Ole Miss and Meredith's enrollment, stating that it had only been months earlier that many fought Meredith's admittance into the all-white university and "some of those same students want our team to play in an integrated tournament."<sup>383</sup> By published two letters of opposite perspectives and arguments, *The Reflector* demonstrated a degree of journalistic balance.

After the team returned to Starkville, *The Reflector* also continued to be a forum for public sentiment, surprisingly, for individuals outside of the student paper's target audience. In the March 21, 1963 edition of the paper, Elmo Collins of Toledo, Ohio wrote to both congratulate the Bulldogs and dispel any negative misconceptions about the state. "I feel the

team and coaches in their play and conduct did much to put a truer perspective to the University and the state,” Collins wrote.<sup>384</sup> In closing his complimentary letter, the Ohio resident added that he hoped that the loss to Loyola would not “deter them if a chance to go again is present in the future.”<sup>385</sup> A week later, Dennis Day of East Lansing wrote that MSU was an excellent basketball team, and the longtime fan had “seen few better coached” than the Bulldogs. Day lamented that it “was certainly unfortunate that the segregation controversy and its publicity clouded the issue at hand — basketball! Even though, your team represented Mississippi State University and her student body, both on the court and off, in such a manner that you may well be proud — their sportsmanship was outstanding as was their brand of basketball.”<sup>386</sup>

#### Conclusion

From an examination of the material presented, the winds of change blew through the Magnolia State during the Bulldogs’ 1962-63 SEC championship winning season. While the debate surrounding the validity of the unwritten law would emerge once again, due to the bravery of Colvard and the swagger of McCarthy, the Bulldogs successfully emerged from the Closed Society and, despite their loss in the integrated tournament, demonstrated the slow but evolutionary change in Mississippi’s journalists. While segregationist mavens like Ward and Skewes continued to protect Mississippi’s ideological borders and acted like the journalistic police of the Magnolia State, their individual shows of discontent and hate did little to alter the drive of State’s administration and change the opinions and views of their journalistic colleagues. Unlike past debates, there was a universal tone of goodwill for the Bulldogs and, regardless of each individual’s social and ideological justification, Mississippi’s journalists and supported State’s entry into the integrated postseason. On the heels of Meredith’s admission to Ole Miss, the almost radical show of support for MSU and the eventual elimination of the unwritten law was one more step in the direction of integration in the Magnolia State. While it is, perhaps, inaccurate to identify Mississippi State’s

basketball team as the origin of this change in the press, nevertheless, the coverage and the expression of opinion in Mississippi's newspapers exposed the crumbling united front of the Closed Society and, at the least, showed that inroads to equality and the end of racial tyranny in Mississippi.

"In my opinion, what we did was a significant step for both the university and the state," Gold proudly said. "I don't think the team understood the social significance of the event (at the time). When we came back, we had a celebration on campus and we had this huge crowd supporting us. But as far as knowing, I don't think it sunk in."<sup>387</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "A Glimmer Of The Future?" *Delta Democrat-Times*, 11 March 1963, 4.

<sup>2</sup> "They Were Gentlemen' Loyola, Miss. Both Say," *Chicago Defender*, 18 March 1963, 22. McCarthy's almost terroristic fears were not expressed in any articles found in the Mississippi press.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 428; and David G. Sansing, *Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 139.

<sup>4</sup> David R. Davies, *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.

<sup>6</sup> "Babe Expecting Okay This Time," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 25 January 1963, 1.

<sup>7</sup> "Miss. State Slaps LSU, Kentucky Blasts Auburn," *Hattiesburg American*, 25 February 1963, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Fulton, "Bulldogs Chew Tigers 99-64 In Baton Rouge," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 24 February 1963, 1B.

<sup>9</sup> Jim Hackleman, "Tulsa Gives Cincy A Scare," *Hattiesburg American*, 25 February 1963, 17.

<sup>10</sup> "State Needs But One Victory to Clinch Tie for SEC Crown," *Meridian Star*, 25 February 1963, 9; and David M. Moffit, "State Needs But One Victory to Clinch Tie for SEC Crown," *Meridian Star*, 25 February 1963, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Fulton, "Bulldogs Defeat Tulane To Clinch Tie For Title," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1963, 11.



- 
- <sup>12</sup> Phil Wallace, "'Played It Safe' Says McCarthy," *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1963, 9.
- <sup>13</sup> "Babe Wants Playoff Spot," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1963, 11; Robert Davenport, "State Clinches Tie For SEC Cage Title," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 February 1963, 14; "State Tops Waves in 78-67 SEC Tilt," *Natchez Democrat*, 26 February 1963, 7; "Bulldogs Trounce Tulane," *Starkville Daily News*, 26 February 1963, 1; "State Quintet Certain of Least Share of This Season's SEC Laurels," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 26 February 1963, 2; and Malcolm Balfour, "State Cagers Cop Third Straight Championship," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 1, 8.
- <sup>14</sup> "Babe Says Boys Want NCAA Berth," *Starkville Daily News*, 28 February 1963, 1.
- <sup>15</sup> Patrick B. Miller and David Kenneth Wiggins, *Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Rutledge, 2004), 279-283.
- <sup>16</sup> Keith Dunnavant, *The Missing Ring: How Bear Bryant and the 1966 Alabama Crimson Tide Were Denied College Football's Most Elusive Prize* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007), 83.
- <sup>17</sup> Tom Dygard, "Bulldogs win third SEC title in a row; NCAA play doubtful," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 8; Tom Dygard, "Bulldogs Trounce Tulane To Win SEC Title," *Starkville Daily News*, 26 February 1963, 3; Robert Davenport, "Georgia Tech probably will play in NCAA Tournament," *Hattiesburg American*, 26 February 1963, 13; Robert Davenport, "Maroons Win But Tech's NCAA Chances Increase," *Enterprise-Journal*, 26 February 1963, 5; Robert Davenport, "State Ride Over Wave; Babe Makes Appeals," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 26 February 1963, 8; and Robert Davenport, "McCarthy Wants State To Go To NCAA," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 26 February 1963, 8.
- <sup>18</sup> United Press International, "State Clinches Tie In SEC – Tech Earns NCAA Berth," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1963, 5; and United Press International, "Tech Expected To Go To NCAA," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 8.
- <sup>19</sup> United Press International, "State Clinches Tie In SEC – Tech Earns NCAA Berth," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1963, 5.
- <sup>20</sup> "Bulldogs Clinch At Least Tie," *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February 1963, 7.
- <sup>21</sup> Ted Meier, "Duke Is Moving Up Fast in AP's Cage Ratings," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 9; and "State Moves to Seventh in UPI Basketball Poll," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 9.
- <sup>22</sup> "Phillips Says MSU Should Play" *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1963, 5; "Rubel in Favor of NCAA Tourney for State Team," *Commercial Dispatch*, 27 February 1963, 2A; "To Go Or Not to Go IS Question," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1963, 11; "Rubel Phillips Says MSU Should Play in NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 27 February 1963, 2; and "Phillips Favors Bulldogs, NCAA," *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1963, 3.

<sup>23</sup> David M. Moffit, "Ga. Tech Coach Wants State In NCAA Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1963, 13; "College Board May Not Okay State's Trip," *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February 1963, 1; "College Board Official Opposes MSU To NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 26 February 1963, 1; "State May Be Forced To Reject NCAA Berth," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 27 February 1963, 8; "State Unlikely For NCAA Cage Tourney: Evans," *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1963, 9; "To Go Or Not to Go Is Question," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1963, 11; "Maroons Await Decision on Trip To NCAA Tourney," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 27 February 1963, 11; "State May Know Friday About Playing in NCAA," *Enterprise-Journal*, 27 February 1963, 9; "State's NCAA Hopes Faint," *Tupelo Daily Journal*, 28 February 1963, 2; and "State May Know NCA Verdict In A Few Days," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1963, 8.

<sup>24</sup> "Senator Opposes State to NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1963, 1; "NCAA Play Decision is Refused," *Enterprise-Journal*, 1 March 1963, 1; "Senate Declines Resolution For 'Dogs In NCAA,'" *Natchez Democrat*, 1 March 1963, 2; and "Solons Drop NCAA Stand," *Starkville Daily News*, 2 March 1963, 1.

<sup>25</sup> "College Board Official Opposes MSU To NCAA," *Delta-Democrat Times*, 26 February 1963, 1.

<sup>26</sup> David M. Moffit, "Tech Flexes Muscles For NCAA," *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1963, 8.

<sup>27</sup> "Tech Meets Vandy In Final Tuneup Before NCAA Meet," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 27 February 1963, 8.

<sup>28</sup> David Moffit, "SEC Cage Action To End Saturday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1963, 3D; and "SEC Basketball Finish On Saturday," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 28 February 1963, 5.

<sup>29</sup> David Moffit, "SEC Cage Action To End Saturday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1963, 3D.

<sup>30</sup> "Curtain Down On S.E.C. Cage," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1963, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Associated Press, "State Can Win Title Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 2 March 1963, 11; Associated Press, "State Maroons Head For Title," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 2 March 1963, 5; and Associated Press, "State Can Wrap-Up SEC Title Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 March 1963, 3.

<sup>32</sup> Bill Ross, "Prospects Better For NCAA Trek," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 March 1963, 7; and Bill Ross, "Babe Figuring NCAA Chances Much Improved," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 1 March 1963, 3.

<sup>33</sup> "State Alumni In County Back Administration On NCAA Play," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 27 February 1963, 1; and "State Alumni Will Support MSU IN Move Toward NCAA," *Natchez Democrat*, 28 February 1963, 13.

<sup>34</sup> "Area Citizens Petition State To Permit 'Dogs To Play NCAA,'" *Natchez Democrat*, 1 March 1963, 6; "Cage Fans Want State To Play In NCAA," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 February 1963, 24; "NCAA Trip Requested," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 March 1963, 1;

---

“Babe’s Battle For NCAA Bid Gets Added Support,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 1 March 1963, 9; “Area Citizens Petition State To Permit ‘Dogs To Play NCAA,” *Natchez Democrat*, 1 March 1963, 6; and “NCAA Trip Requested,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 March 1963, 1.

<sup>35</sup> “Tuesday Deadline On State Decision,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1963, 19; “Deadline Set On NCAA Bid,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1963, 6; “Tuesday Deadline On Whether State Will Enter NCAA,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 1 March 1963, 6; “Decision on NCAA Play Must be Made Tuesday,” *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1963, 9; and “State Is Given Until Tuesday To Reach Decision,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 March 1963, 3.

<sup>36</sup> “Moore Says No Penalty For Withdrawal,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 7 March 1963, 3.

<sup>37</sup> “High Cage Stakes On Reb Hardwood,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1963, 2.

<sup>38</sup> “State Can Take SEC Title With Win Over Rebs,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 1 March 1963, 9; and “State and Ole Miss Meet Tonite,” *Natchez Democrat*, 1 March 1963, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>40</sup> D. W. Colvard Presidential Papers, Box 2 (Department of Archives Mitchell Memorial Library Mississippi State University) and Box A85-203, Volumes I and II, Colvard Miscellaneous Collection. Athletic Department – 1962-1963, NCAA Basketball Tournament, A79-39, Box 9, Statement By D. W. Colvard, President of Mississippi State University, Relative To Participation In National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship Competition, 2 March 1963.

<sup>41</sup> Michael B. Ballard, *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003* (Oxford, MS.: University of Mississippi Press), 143.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-150.

<sup>43</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, correspondence from Dick Saunders, Jackson, Mississippi, 3 March 1963.

<sup>44</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, correspondence from J. O. Emmerich, McComb, Mississippi, 5 March 1963.

<sup>45</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, correspondence from Owens F. Alexander, Jackson, Mississippi, 6 March 1963.

<sup>46</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, correspondence from Jocko Maxwell, Newark, New Jersey, 9 March 1963.

<sup>47</sup> “State Is Granted Permission To Play in NCAA Tourney,” *Clarion-Ledge* and *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1963, 1C; “State President Favors Playing,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1963, 18; “State Gets Permission To Enter NCAA Play,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1963, 1; “State ‘Dogs To Play In NCAA Cage Tourney,” *Natchez Democrat*, 3 March 1963, 10A; “Trustees To Meet, Study NCAA Trip,” *Starkville Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 1-2; “Mississippi State To Go To NCAA Tournament,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1963,

---

8; and "Mississippi State Wins SEC Title, Will Get Chance At National Crown," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 4 March 1963, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Billy Rainey, "President Of Mississippi State Okays Play In NCAA Tournament," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1963, 1,2.

<sup>49</sup> "All Still Quiet On Segregation Front," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1963, 9; "State President Favors Playing," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1963, 18; "Miss. State 'Repeals Law,' Plans to Play in NCAA," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 March 1963, 18; and "Barnett Has No Comment On Decision By Dr. Colvard," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1963, 5.

<sup>50</sup> "Maroons finally get shot at NCAA," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 March 1963, 17; Associated Press, "Maroons Win Crown, Accept Tourney Bid," *Laurel Leader-Call*, March 1963, 10; and Associated Press, "Chicago Loyola May Be State's First Opponent," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1963, 5.

<sup>51</sup> "MSU Student Senate Votes To Go NCAA," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1963, 4C; "State Gets Permission To Enter NCAA Play," *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1963, 1; "President Colvard Says State Will Play in NCAA Tourney," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 4 March 1963, 2; and Carolyn Williams, "Bulldogs Should Be Allowed To Play In NCAA Tourney," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 8.

<sup>52</sup> "Maroons Undisputed SEC Champions," *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1963, 6; "Gold Sparks State Over Ole Miss, 75-72," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 March 1963, 5; "State Wins Third SEC Title in Row," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1963, 8; "State Beats Ole Miss 75-72 in SEC Warp-Up," *Natchez Democrat*, 3 March 1963, 11A; Robert Davenport, "SEC Stax," *Natchez Democrat*, 4 March 1963, 5; United Press International, "Mississippi State Wins SEC Title, Will Get Chance At National Crown," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 4 March 1963, 2; "Miss. State Edges Ole Miss 75 To 72," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 4 March 1963, 2; "State Cage Team Wins Third SEC Crown in Row," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1963, 11; Malcolm Balfour, "State Cagers Cop Third Straight Championship," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 1, 8; and "State Edges By Ole Miss," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1963, 5.

<sup>53</sup> "Babe McCarthy Comes To Laurel," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 4 March 1963, 10; Bob Green, "Jubilant Maroons Await NCAA Play," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1963, 7; "State Coach Exuberant For Team," *Natchez Democrat*, 4 March 1963, 5; and Bob Green "McCarthy Beaming Over Verdict," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1963, 5.

<sup>54</sup> Lee Baker, "State Downs A Tough OM," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1963, 1C.

<sup>55</sup> Associated Press, "NCAA-Bent State Holds 7<sup>th</sup> Rank," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 9.

<sup>56</sup> David M. Moffit, "Maroons Joyous But Cautious Over Trip," *Commercial Dispatch*, 4 March 1963, 3; United Press International, "Joy and Caution Is Today's Mode At State," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 March 1963, 5; United Press International, "National Crown, Here Comes State," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1963, 9; and David M. Moffit, "Bulldogs Beat Rebels 75-72 To Win SEC Title," *Starkville Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 5.

---

<sup>57</sup> United Press International, "N.C.A.A. Bids State Club 'Welcome,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1963, 9.

<sup>58</sup> "Little Opposition Heard To State's NCAA Entry," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1963, 1, 12; and "Protest, Plaudits On MSU Play," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 March 1963, 1.

<sup>59</sup> "Jubilant Babe Rejoices Over NCAA Green Light," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1963, 13.

<sup>60</sup> MSU Entry Brings Additional Criticism," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1963, 1; "Solon Calls NCAA Trek 'A New Low,'" *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 10; "Basketball Decision Is Blasted," *Enterprise-Journal*, 5 March 1963, 5; "MSU Decision Is 'New Low' Lawmaker Says," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1963, 1; and Wayne Freeman, "5 Members Ask Board To Convene," *Starkville Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 1, 2.

<sup>61</sup> "MSU Entry Brings Additional Criticism," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1963, 1; "State College Board Meets Saturday To Consider MSU Issue," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1963, 1; and "Hester Charges MSU Action Is Mix Surrender," *Natchez Democrat*, 5 March 1963, 8.

<sup>62</sup> "Barnett Has No Comment On Decision By Dr. Colvard," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1963, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid; "Protests, Plaudits on MSU Play," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 March 1963, 1; and "State NCAA Trip Gets Talk," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 5 March 1963, 3.

<sup>64</sup> "Board To Discuss State Cage Play," *Daily Herald*, 6 March 1963, 19; "Board Reviews Colvard's Acts," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 6 March 1963, 1; "Board Will Discuss NCAA Trip," *Enterprise-Journal*, 6 March 1963, 9; "State College Board Meets Saturday To Consider MSU Issue," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1963, 1; "College Board To Confer On Participation," *Natchez Democrat*, 6 March 1963, 1, 8; "Board of Trustees Meeting May Throw Block at NCAA," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 1; "State Quintet Must Wait Outcome Of Board Confab," *Tupelo Daily Journal*, 6 March 1963, 8; and "Will State Go To NCAA?" *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 March 1963, 8.

<sup>65</sup> Cliff Sessions, "State College Board To Discuss Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 1; Cliff Sessions, "Roadblock For State NCAA Play?," *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 March 1963, 1; "To Ban MSU To NCAA?," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 5 March 1963, 1; and "Maroons' Journey May Be Menaced," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 10.

<sup>66</sup> "McCarthy Hopes Nothing Will Prevent NCAA Trip," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 5 March 1963, 6.

<sup>67</sup> Billy Rainey and Howard Beeland, "Alumni Happy with State's NCAA Plans," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1963, 7.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Fulton, "MSU To Attend NCAA in Style," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 17.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

- 
- <sup>71</sup> “State’s NCAA Berth In Jeopardy Still,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 17.
- <sup>72</sup> “Maroons Still Not ‘In’ NCAA Cage Tourney,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 12.
- <sup>73</sup> “Maroons Going Ahead With Plans For Trip,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 6 March 1963, 1; “State Making N.C.A.A. Plans,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 13; “MSU Cage Team Going Ahead With Its Plans,” *Meridian Star*, 6 March 1963, 1, 2; and “State Makes Plans To Take Basketballers To NCA Site,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 7 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>74</sup> “Board Reviews Colvard’s Act,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 6 March 1963, 1.
- <sup>75</sup> “Chamber Directors Back Colvard Move,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 1.
- <sup>76</sup> Charles M. Hills, “Gov. Barnett Opposes State Playing in NCAA,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March, 1A, 12A; “Obstacles Mount Before Maroons,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 1D; and “Barnett Throws Weight Against Tournament Play,” *Natchez Democrat*, 7 March 1963, 13.
- <sup>77</sup> “State’s Bid To Play In NCAA Opposed by Barnett,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 March 1963, 30; “Obstacles Mount in MSU’s Path,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1963, 1; “Ross Decries Decision on Tournament Entry,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 7 March 1963, 1-2; “Barnett Opposes State NCAA Trip,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 7 March 1963, 8; James Saggus, “Barnett Seeks Halt To NCAA Journey,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 1, 5; and “Ga. Tech May Still Go To NCAA Event,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 March 1963, 14.
- <sup>78</sup> Barnett Opposes Trip to NCAA by Mississippi State,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 7 March 1963, 8; “Barnett Opposes State Play,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 7 March 1963, 1; “Gov. Barnett Is Opposed To MSU Tourney Plans,” *Meridian Star*, 7 March 1963, 1; and “Barnett Says No To State Tourney Trip,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 7 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>79</sup> “Bulldogs To Carry 21-5 Mark To NCAA,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1963, 8B; “State Now Getting Ready For NCAA Cage Tourney,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 March 1963, 19; “Maroons Get Crown Habit,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 12; “State Winner Of SEC Title Again,” *Natchez Democrat*, 7 March 1963, 13; “State Wins SEC Trophy,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 3; “State NCAA Trip Gets Talk,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 5 March 1963, 3; and “Mitchell, Stroud State’s Big Boys,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 March 1963, 15.
- <sup>80</sup> “NCAA Opposition Small Pro Groundswell Gathers,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1963, 1, 5.
- <sup>81</sup> James Saggus, “Big Challenge Seen In Tourney Debate,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 1; “Full Board Expected at Tournament Talks,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1963, 1,12; James Saggus, “Will Board Reverse Colvard’s Action?,” *Natchez Democrat*, 8 March 1963, 5; James Saggus, “Controversy Continues Over NCAA,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 1; and “College Board Member Hints NCAA Rejection,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 8 March 1963, 2.

---

<sup>82</sup> “Board To Decide State’s Future,” *Biloxi Daily Herald*, 8 March 1963, 15; “Full board expected at tournament talks,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 March 1963, 1; “Controversy Continues Over NCAA,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 1; and “College Board Member Hints NCAA Rejection,” *Tupelo Daily Journal*, 8 March 1963, 2.

<sup>83</sup> William Peart, “Board Member Says Quorum Will Decide,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 1A, 12A.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Sansing, 198-199.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>87</sup> “Coaches Seek Negroes, Walls Begin To Fall,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 1.

<sup>88</sup> “Board To Decide State’s Future,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 March 1963, 15; “Showdown Saturday for Mississippi State,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 March 1963, 6; “State Awaiting Showdown On NCAA Issue Tomorrow,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 1; “State’s Team Ready For Play,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 8 March 1963, 1; “NCAA Showdown Is One Day Away,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 8 March 1963, 5; and “State Continues Practice,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 March 1963, 7.

<sup>89</sup> “Plentiful Advice on NCAA Vote,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 8 March 1963, 1; “NCAA Decision Due,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 8 March 1963, 1; and “Pressure Applied on College Board In MSU Issue,” *Meridian Star*, 8 March 1963, 1.

<sup>90</sup> “Loyola Wants At State; Not Surprised By Fire,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 9.

<sup>91</sup> Billy Rainey, “Tradition is Bound to Fall Saturday,” *Meridian Star*, 8 March 1963, 6. In discussing the history of the unwritten law, Rainey referenced the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl between Jones County Junior College and Compton Junior College; however, he incorrectly identified the year as 1958.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Cagers Point Towards Playoff Foe,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 2C.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> “Most of College Board Set to Attend Meeting,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1963, 1; and “Board Meets Today To Vote On State,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 March 1963, 3.

<sup>96</sup> “Maroons To Meet Loyola This Month,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 March 1963, 16.

<sup>97</sup> Cliff Sessions, “Prediction Really True,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 March 1963, 3; and Cliff Sessions, “Maroons ‘Coach’s Dream,’” *Meridian Star*, 7 March 1963, 6.

---

<sup>98</sup> Cliff Sessions, "Colvard Tells State To Go To Tournament," *Commercial Dispatch*, 10 March 1963, 1; "Board Gives Nod to State Maroons," *Natchez Democrat*, 10 March 1963, 10; "College Board Rules State's Cage Team Can Play NCAA Tournament," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 11 March 1963, 2; "Officials Back State's Move To Play In NCAA Cage Meet," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 March 1963, 1; and "Colvard's Decision Stands," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 9 March 1963, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Bill Simpson, "Board Votes In Favor Of Playing In Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger and Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1963, 1A, 10A.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Bill Simpson, "Board Votes In Favor Of Playing In Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger and Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1963, 1A, 10A.

<sup>102</sup> "MSU's Bulldogs Given Chance To Complete In National Tourney" *Delta Democrat-Times*, 10 March 1963, 1; and "Green Light Given MSU Team To Participate In NCAA Play," *Meridian Star*, 10 March 1963, 1, 2.

<sup>103</sup> "Governor Hopes Miss. State Wins National Championship," *Clarion-Ledger and Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1963, 1.

<sup>104</sup> "MSU's Bulldogs Given Chance To Complete In National Tourney" *Delta Democrat-Times*, 10 March 1963, 1.

<sup>105</sup> John Hall, "State Quintet Gets NCAA Green Light," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 March 1963, 19; John Hall, "Is Board's Decision a Blow to Segregation?" *Hattiesburg American*, 11 March 1963, 10; John Hall, "Decision To Let State Play Presents Hot Arguments," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 14; John Hall, "Decision Of Board Promotes Argument," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 11 March 1963, 11; "Argument Over Game Rages On," *Enterprise-Journal*, 9 March 1963, 1, 3; and John Hall, "Even Women Couldn't Stop State From Going To NCAA," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 March 1963, 3.

<sup>106</sup> John Hall, "Decision To Let State Play Presents Hot Arguments," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 14; "McCarthy's Happy With Board's Vote," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 12; "McCarthy Grateful Of Board's Decision," *Natchez Democrat*, 10 March 1963, 10A; "Team Grateful Says Maroon Cage Coach," *Natchez Democrat*, 11 March 1963, 5; and McCarthy Gratified With Go Ahead Vote," *Starkville Daily News*, 12 March 1963, 3.

<sup>107</sup> "McCarthy's Happy With Board's Vote," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 12.

<sup>108</sup> Julius Eric Thompson, *The Black Press in Mississippi, 1865-1985* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Publishing, 1993), 62.

<sup>109</sup> "There Goes MSU To The NCAA – Don't Tell Ross," *Mississippi Free Press*, 16 March 1963, 1, 4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*; "Babe M'Carthy Likes Decision," *Commercial Dispatch*, 11, March 1963, 3; and "'You Got Blood On Your Hands,' Tom Tubb Told," *Meridian Star*, 10 March 1963, 1.



---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> “Miss. State’s NCAA Bound S.E.C. Champions,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1963, 1C.

<sup>113</sup> “Maroons Begin Final Practices,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 March 1963, 13.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Fulton, “Loyola Best Team State Has Ever Met-McCarthy,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 March 1963, 15.

<sup>115</sup> United Press International, “Ramblers Ready For State Friday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 March 1963, 12; and George Sainsbury, “Babe McCarthy Scouts Loyola, Is Impressed by Great Speed,” *Meridian Star*, 12 March 1963, 7.

<sup>116</sup> “Group May Try To Stop State Trip To NCAA,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 March 1963, 1.

<sup>117</sup> William Peart and W.C. Shoemaker, “Court Order Fails To Halt Bulldogs,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1, 14A.

<sup>118</sup> “Ask Hinds Court To End Miss. State U. Injunction,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 March 1963, 1A, 11A; “State Enjoined From Participating In NCAA Basketball Tournament,” *Natchez Democrat*, 14 March 1963, 12; James Saggus, “Injunction Issued To Block MSU Trip,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1; “Court Injunction Seeking To Keep State Five Out Of Integrated NCAA Basketball Tourney,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 14 March 1963, 2; and Malcolm Balfour, “Mississippi State Maroons Now On The Way To History Making Bout With Loyola Of Chicago,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 14 March 1963, 5.

<sup>119</sup> William Peart and W.C. Shoemaker, “Court Order Fails To Halt Bulldogs,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1, 14A.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Sherrill Nash, “Harassed Bulldogs Prepare for Loyola,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1.

<sup>122</sup> Lee Baker, “State Sets Guns For NCAA Debut,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1B.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Herb Phillips, “Tech Counted On Maroon Drop-Out,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 2B.

<sup>125</sup> Robert Fulton, “State Leaves For Tourney,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 March 1963, 1E.

<sup>126</sup> “State Team Takes Off For NCAA Event,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 March 1963, 31; “Miss. State Heads for Tourney,” *Hattiesburg American*, 14 March 1963, 1, 2; “Bulldogs Head for Tournament,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 14 March 1963, 9; and “Maroons Enplane For NCAA Despite State Court Order,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 March 1963, 1, 8.

---

<sup>127</sup> “State Flies To Lansing In Face Of Injunction,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 14 March 1963, 14; “School Spokesman Says Maroons Will Leave Today As Scheduled,” *Natchez Democrat*, 14 March 1963, 12; and “Bulldogs Head North To Tourney,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1.

<sup>128</sup> John J. McDavitt, “State Cagers Fly North, Wait For Court to Okay Play,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 March 1963, 1; “State Team Goes Despite Injunction,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 14 March 1963, 1; “MSU Team on Way to NCAA Playoff,” *Meridian Star*, 14 March 1963, 1, 2; and “MSU Team Off to Integrated Tourney,” *Meridian Star*, 14 March 1963, 1, 2.

<sup>129</sup> Eddie Dean, “Fans Watch ‘Dogs Leave,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 March 1963, 1.

<sup>130</sup> George Anderson, “MSU Team Leaves Today for NCAA Tourney,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 3.

<sup>131</sup> William Peart, “Legal Barrier Removed For State Team,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1, 16A; “Injunction Suspended,” *Natchez Democrat*, 15 March 1963, 8; “Injunction Is Removed By Justice,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1; and “Injunction Held Up, State’s Cagers Set For Loyola Tilt,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 15 March 1963, 1.

<sup>132</sup> William Peart, “Legal Barrier Removed For State Team,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1, 16A.

<sup>133</sup> “Mississippi State Tackles Loyola In NCAA Playoff,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 15 March 1963, 2.

<sup>134</sup> McCarthy Picked Up In Nashville,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1.

<sup>135</sup> “No Demonstrations Mar MSU Michigan Arrival,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 March 1963, 1, 24.

<sup>136</sup> George Anderson, “State Plays Loyola Team Tonight,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 3.

<sup>137</sup> Jerry Liska, “Maroons Lauded For Making Trip,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 15 March 1963, 27; “Maroons Face Loyola Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 March 1963, 10; Jerry Liska, “State Has Free Rein To Tangle With Loyola,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 15 March 1963, 15; “Bulldogs Are Ready For Tonight’s Clash,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 15 March 1963, 9; and Jerry Liska and Robert Fulton, “State’s Escape Over ‘Wall’ Well-Planned,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 March 1963, 6.

<sup>138</sup> Robert Fulton, “Bulldogs Cagers Arrive For NCAA Play Friday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 March 1963, 25.

<sup>139</sup> “State Finally Set For State, Loyola,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 13.

<sup>140</sup> Bulldogs, Loyola Hold Cage Spotlight Tonight,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 15 March 1963, 8; “Miss. State Meets Chi Loyola,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 15 March 1963, 5; and United Press International, “State Plays Tough Loyola Tonight,” *Meridian Star*, 15 March 1963, 7.

---

<sup>141</sup> “McCarthy Has High Hopes Miss. State Can Upset No. 4 Loyola Team Tonight,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 15 March 1963, 5; and United Press International, “Lansing Play Heads Menu,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 13.

<sup>142</sup> Herb Phillips, “Educators Solid For Maroons,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 13.

<sup>143</sup> “Injunctioners Get ‘Rope’ From State Students,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 1B; “Effigy Hangings On State Campus,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 14 March 1963, 14; and Lewis Jackson, “Students Protest,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 14 March 1963, 1.

<sup>144</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>145</sup> “Maroons Lead Early But Fall to Ramblers,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 17 March 1963, 10.

<sup>146</sup> “State’s Coach Counting On Another Shot,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 March 1963, 1, 20A; and “Maroons Lead Early But Fall to Ramblers,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 17 March 1963, 10.

<sup>147</sup> “‘It Was Nice Way To Get Beat,’ McCarthy Says of Loss,” *Meridian Star*, 16 March 1963, 1.

<sup>148</sup> George Anderson, “Loyola Drops State 61-51; Bowling Green Foe Tonight,” *Starkville Daily News*, 16 March 1963, 1, 3.

<sup>149</sup> “State Stall Stuns NCAA,” *Starkville Daily News*, 16 March 1963, 3.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Fulton, “Miss. State Cagers Defeated By Loyola In NCAA Tourney,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 March 1963, 9.

<sup>151</sup> Jerry Green, “No Incidents In State-Loyola Tilt,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 March 1963, 16; Jerry Green, “‘Talk About the Way Loyola Played’ – Babe,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 March 1963, 8; Jerry Green, “Ramblers Too Tall For State Maroons,” *Laurel Leader-Call*, 16 March 1963, 6; “State is Defeated by Loyola in First NCAA Appearance,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 March 1963, 8; “State Hoping For Consolation Win,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 March 1963, 2; and “State Bows To Loyola Of Chicago,” *Natchez Democrat*, 16 March 1963, 4.

<sup>152</sup> “State Beaten By Loyola In NCAA Event,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 March 1963, 16; Jerry Liska, “Loyola Ramblers Best MSU Bulldogs 61-51,” *Meridian Star*, 16 March 1963, 7; and “Loyola Crubs Ambitious State 61-51 As Illinois Tags Bowling Green Five,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 16-17 March 1963, 2.

<sup>153</sup> Robert Fulton, “Miss. Cagers Defeated By Loyola In NCAA Tourney,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 March 1963, 9.

<sup>154</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>155</sup> “Just Before The Battle,” *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 March 1963, 3E; and “Mississippi State-Loyola Captains Shake Hands,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 18 March 1963, 5.

---

<sup>156</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>157</sup> Robert Fulton, "State Cage Aces Win Consolation Contest," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 17 March, 1E; Lee Baker, "Maroons Control Charity Tosses," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 17 March, 1E; "Bulldogs Win In Consolation," *Commercial Dispatch*, 17 March 1963, 6; Sheldon Sakowitz, "Ramblers Take Title, Maroons Finish Third," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 18 March 1963, 10; "State Cagers Head Home After Victory," *Meridian Star*, 17 March 1963, 1; Jerry Liska, "Bulldogs defeat Bowling Green 5," *Meridian Star*, 17 March 1963, 8; "State Rolls To 65-60 Win Over Bowling Green," *Natchez Democrat*, 17 March 1963, 9A; George Anderson, "State Cagers Win One And Lose One In First NCAA Tourney," *Starkville Daily News*, 19 March 1963, 3; "State Third In NCAA Bid," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 18 March 1963, 3; and "Miss. State Holds Off Bowling Green Five, 65-60," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 March 1963, 12.

<sup>158</sup> "All NCAA Tourney Selection," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 18 March 1963, 9; and "Mitchell Is Named On All Tourney," *Starkville Daily News*, 19 March 1963, 3.

<sup>159</sup> "Return of the Heroes," *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 March 1963, 1C; "Babe McCarthy Proud of Maroons Efforts In NCAA," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 18 March 1963, 9; "McCarthy Proud of Maroons," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 March 1963, 12; "Bulldogs get Big Welcome Home," *Meridian Star*, 17 March 1963, 7; and "Wants State To Play In NCAA Meet Again," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 18 March 1963, 2.

<sup>160</sup> Lee Baker, "You Bet, Maroons, We Still Love You, Win or Lose," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 March 1963, 12; and "Champs Return," *Starkville Daily News*, 19 March 1963, 1.

<sup>161</sup> Robert Fulton, "Miss. State's NCAA Tourney Debut Memorable, Rewarding, Satisfying," *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 March 1963, 3C.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, "Citizens Of Mississippi," Sons of Mississippi/The Rebel Underground, date unknown.

<sup>165</sup> Dean Colvard Papers, Basketball team Participation In N.C.C.A Tournament, A8, Box 9, flyer, unknown author, unknown date.

<sup>166</sup> "College Board Will Shun Sports Issue," *Jackson Daily News*, 21 March 1963, 1.

<sup>167</sup> "'Mixing' Proposal Refused By State's College Board," *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 March 1963, 1; "College Board Defines Policy," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 22 March 1963, 1; "Board Defeats Plan To Make Them Responsible For Integrated Play," *Commercial Dispatch*, 22 March 1963, 6; and "State College Board Rejects Motion," *Natchez Democrat*, 22 March 1963, 12.

<sup>168</sup> "Trustees Pass Buck," *Mississippi Free Press*, 30 March 1963, 4.

<sup>169</sup> The following newspaper failed to publish an article on the State College Board's decision to give all power on decisions involving a college or university's potential participation in integrated athletic competition, essentially ending the unwritten law: *Jackson Advocate*, *Laurel Leader-Call*, *Hattiesburg American*, *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), *Enterprise-Journal*, *Meridian Star*, *Starkville Daily News*, and the *Daily Journal* (Tupelo).

<sup>170</sup> "Babe Lauds Northern Hospitality," *Starkville Daily News*, 27 March 1963, 1.

<sup>171</sup> Charles S. Kerg, "MSU Coach Praises His SEC Champions," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 2 April 1963, 5.

<sup>172</sup> "Injunction Against MSU Is Dissolved," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 April 1963, 12; and "Judge Ends NCAA Suit," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 3 April 1963, 2.

<sup>173</sup> "Babe Resigns As Coach At Miss. State," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 March 1965, 15; "McCarthy Leaves State," *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1965, 6A; "Babe Steps Down At Mississippi St.," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1965, 1; "Coach Babe McCarthy Resigns," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 March 1965, 3; and "State Looking For New Cage Mentor," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 3 March 1965, 10.

<sup>174</sup> "Babe Steps Down At Mississippi St.," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1965, 1. Of the noted articles on McCarthy's resignation, only the *Jackson Daily News* mentioned the 1962-63 Bulldogs and their NCAA appearance.

<sup>175</sup> "Carl Walters, 'Shavin's,'" *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1965, 5.

<sup>176</sup> Wayne Thompson, "Hind Sight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1965, 7.

<sup>177</sup> Robert Fulton, "Babe's Resigning . . . Scoop No One Wanted," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1965, 10.

<sup>178</sup> "No Definite Plans For A Successor," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 March 1965, 3.

<sup>179</sup> *2009-2010 Mississippi State University Men's Basketball Media Guide*, (Starkville, MS: Mississippi State University Athletic Department, 2009), 147-148, 180.

<sup>180</sup> Basketball (Men), *The GW and Foggy Bottom Historical Encyclopedia*, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, George Washington University. [http://encyclopedia.gwu.edu/gwencyclopedia/index.php?title=Basketball\\_%28Men%29](http://encyclopedia.gwu.edu/gwencyclopedia/index.php?title=Basketball_%28Men%29) (accessed on 6 December 2010).

<sup>181</sup> Terry Pluto, *Loose Balls: The Short, Wild Life of the American Basketball Association* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 75, 247, 272-273, 337-338.

<sup>182</sup> "For the Record," *Sports Illustrated*, 17 September 1973, 147.

<sup>183</sup> "For the Record," *Sports Illustrated*, 31 March 1975, 85.

<sup>184</sup> Ballard, 152.

---

<sup>185</sup> “Joe Dan Gold Named State Basketball Coach,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1965, 1B; Wayne Thompson, “Gold Discuss Coaching Plans,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1965, 1B, 8B; and George Anderson, “Joe Dan Gold Is Named Basketball Coach for Bulldogs,” *Starkville Daily News*, 9 March 1965, 9.

<sup>186</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

<sup>187</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 1.

<sup>188</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 May 1963, 1.

<sup>189</sup> “The Trustees To Reconsider Breach In ‘Unwritten Law,’” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 10.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> “Apology To Mississippi State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 10.

<sup>193</sup> “Paper Slap Decision Of Dr. Colvard,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 4.

<sup>194</sup> “A Lusty Yell For State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 8.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid. Tougaloo College is a private, historically black liberal arts college in Tougaloo, Mississippi, outside of Jackson.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> “Battle of East Lansing,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 12.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Jimmy Ward, “Covering the Crossroads,” *Jackson Daily News*, 22 March 1963, 1.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> “College Board Should Utilize Opportunity To Review Trends,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 10.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> “Coaches Seek Negroes, Walls Begin To Fall,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 1A.

- 
- <sup>207</sup> “Infinitely More Precious,” *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>208</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>209</sup> Ibid; and “*Meridian Star* Questions Wisdom Of MSU In NCAA,” *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 March 1963, 5.
- <sup>210</sup> Tom Ethridge, “Mississippi Notebook,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1963, 4, 9.
- <sup>211</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>212</sup> Tom Ethridge, “Mississippi Notebook,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 March 1963, 10A.
- <sup>213</sup> Bob Howie, “On To East Lansing,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>214</sup> Bob Howie, “Jump Ball,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>215</sup> Bob Howie, “Hinny,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 1A.
- <sup>216</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.
- <sup>217</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 19 February 1963, 11.
- <sup>218</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1963, 1C.
- <sup>219</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>220</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>221</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>222</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>223</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 12.
- <sup>224</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>225</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>226</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>227</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 March 1963, 2C.
- <sup>228</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 13.
- <sup>229</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 March 1963, 2.
- <sup>230</sup> Ibid.

- 
- <sup>231</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 17 March 1963, 4E.
- <sup>232</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 March 1963, 12, 15.
- <sup>233</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 March 1963, 18.
- <sup>234</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1963, 15.
- <sup>235</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>236</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 March 1963, 18.
- <sup>237</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 March 1963, 4C.
- <sup>238</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>239</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1963, 7.
- <sup>240</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>241</sup> Robert Fulton, "High N' Inside," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1963, 7.
- <sup>242</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>243</sup> Wayne Thompson, "Hind Sight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1963, 20.
- <sup>244</sup> Wayne Thompson, "Hind Sight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 3C.
- <sup>245</sup> Wayne Thompson, "Hind Sight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 March 1963, 2E.
- <sup>246</sup> Wayne Thompson, "Hind Sight," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 March 1963, 3D.
- <sup>247</sup> Billy Rainey, "Mixed Emotions," *Meridian Star*, 26 February 1963, 8.
- <sup>248</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>249</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>250</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal (Tupelo)*, 27 February 1963, 3.
- <sup>251</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>252</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal (Tupelo)*, 28 February 1963, 3.
- <sup>253</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>254</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal (Tupelo)*, 1 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>255</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal (Tupelo)*, 2 and 3 March 1963, 3.



- 
- <sup>256</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 5 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>257</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>258</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>259</sup> "Tupelo Editorial Says NCAA Play By MSU Is Good Thing," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1963, 18; "MSU In The NCAA Won't Bring About Integrated Schools," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 6 March 1963, 5; and "Tupelo Paper Defends Maroons' NCAA Rights," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 13.
- <sup>260</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 8 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>261</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>262</sup> Bill Ross, "Round And About," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 29 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>263</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1963, 22.
- <sup>264</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>265</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1963, 17.
- <sup>266</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 March 1963, 14.
- <sup>267</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 March 1963, 18.
- <sup>268</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>269</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>270</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 March 1963, 28.
- <sup>271</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 15 March 1963, 27.
- <sup>272</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Bunts, Boots and Bounces," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 18 March 1963, 18.
- <sup>273</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1963, 8.
- <sup>274</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>275</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>276</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 February 1963, 14.
- <sup>277</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>278</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 March 1963, 9.

- 
- <sup>279</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 March 1963, 11.
- <sup>280</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>281</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 March 1963, 13.
- <sup>282</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>283</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 19 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>284</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 24 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>285</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>286</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 26 February 1963, 7.
- <sup>287</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>288</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 28 February 1963, 8.
- <sup>289</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 3 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>290</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 7 March 1963, 8.
- <sup>291</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 14 March 1963, 8.
- <sup>292</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 15 March 1963, 8.
- <sup>293</sup> Eddie Dean, "Scramblin,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 17 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>294</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>295</sup> "Colvard's Bravery . . . And Common Sense," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 4 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>296</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>297</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>298</sup> "Will Rationality Prevail?," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 7 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>299</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>300</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>301</sup> "A Champ Decides To Meet Challenge," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 8 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>302</sup> Davies, 174, 196.
- <sup>303</sup> "A Glimmer Of The Future?," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 11 March 1963, 4.

---

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Davies, 112.

<sup>306</sup> “State’s Team Should Compete In Tournament,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 2 March 1963, 2.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> “State Decision To Enter Meet,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1963, 1, 8; “Editor Praises Colvard’s Move,” *Commercial Dispatch*, 5 March 1963, 4; and “Newspaper Commends Colvard,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 9.

<sup>310</sup> John Emmerich, “What’s All the Shouting About?” *Enterprise-Journal*, 18 March 1963, 2.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> “Mixing to Be Decided in Court, Not Gym,” *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 6 March 1963, 13.

<sup>314</sup> “Hour of Decision,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 March 1963, 4.

<sup>315</sup> “We Stand Pat,” *Starkville Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 4.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

<sup>317</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, “Time Out for Sports,” *Starkville Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 5.

<sup>318</sup> The Daily News Sports Staff, “Time Out for Sports,” *Starkville Daily News*, 13 March 1963, 3.

<sup>319</sup> George Anderson, “Time Out for Sports,” *Starkville Daily News*, 19 March 1963, 3.

<sup>320</sup> “Should Our Basketball Team Be Allowed To Play In The NCAA?,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 21 February 1963, 4.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> “NCAA?,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1963, 1.

<sup>323</sup> Malcolm Balfour, “Sports Talk,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 6.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid.

- 
- <sup>325</sup> Malcolm Balfour, "Sports Talk," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1963, 5.
- <sup>326</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>327</sup> Malcolm Balfour, "Sports Talk," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 14 March 1963, 5.
- <sup>328</sup> Malcolm Belfour, "Sports Talk," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 21 March 1963, 5.
- <sup>329</sup> Bill Lunardini, "Sports Shorts," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 7.
- <sup>330</sup> "NCAA," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 4.
- <sup>331</sup> "Another Look At The NCAA And The Justice In Our Participation," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 February 1963, 4.
- <sup>332</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>333</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>334</sup> "Pep Rally," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 14 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>335</sup> "NCAA And Colvard," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 21 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>336</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>337</sup> "Charles Butts, "Comments," *Mississippi Free Press*, 9 March 1963, 2.
- <sup>338</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>339</sup> "There Goes MSU To The NCAA – Don't Tell Ross," *Mississippi Free Press*, 16 March 1963, 1.
- <sup>340</sup> Emmett Morris, "NCAA Affair Hurt Mississippi," *Mississippi Free Press*, 23 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>341</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>342</sup> "Go...Go...Maroons," *Jackson Advocate*, 16 March 1963, 3.
- <sup>343</sup> Ed Staton, "Statin' Ideas," *Hattiesburg American*, 25 February 1963, 17.
- <sup>344</sup> Ed Staton, "Statin' Ideas," *Hattiesburg American*, 27 February 1963, 14.
- <sup>345</sup> "In The Open," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 March 1963, 12
- <sup>346</sup> Ed Staton, "Statin' Ideas," *Hattiesburg American*, 15 March 1963, 11.

- 
- <sup>347</sup> Charles S. Kerg, "Kerg's Korner," *Delta Democrat-Times*, 3 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>348</sup> Odell McRae, "Sports Views," *Laurel Leader-Call*, 8 March 1963, 11.
- <sup>349</sup> *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1963, 8A, 5B.
- <sup>350</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>351</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>352</sup> *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1963, 4 and 11 and *Commercial Dispatch*, 1 March 1963, 10.
- <sup>353</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>354</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1963, 8.
- <sup>355</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1963, 2C.
- <sup>356</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>357</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>358</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>359</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March, 1963, 4 and 9.
- <sup>360</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>361</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 March 1963, 8.
- <sup>362</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>363</sup> "Voice of the People," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 March 1963, 8A.
- <sup>364</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1963, 9.
- <sup>365</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1963, 4.
- <sup>366</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1963, 9.
- <sup>367</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>368</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>369</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 March 1963, 6.
- <sup>370</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>371</sup> "Our Readers' Viewpoint," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1963, 5.

---

<sup>372</sup> Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

<sup>374</sup> “Our Readers’ Viewpoint,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1963, 3.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> “Our Readers’ Viewpoint,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 March 1963, 5B.

<sup>377</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Starkville Daily News*, 28 February 1963, 4.

<sup>378</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Starkville Daily News*, 23 March 1963, 4.

<sup>379</sup> “Letters to the Editor,” *Enterprise-Journal*, 7 March 1963, 2.

<sup>380</sup> D. W. Colvard Presidential Papers, Box 2 (Department of Archives Mitchell Memorial Library Mississippi State University) and Box A85-203, Volumes I and II, Colvard Miscellaneous Collection.

<sup>381</sup> “Letters To The Editor,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1963, 4.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> “Letters To The Editor,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 21 March 1963, 4.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> “Letters,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 28 March 1963, 7.

<sup>387</sup> Joe Dan Gold, interview with author, 23 July 2009.

## CHAPTER VIII

## I'VE MADE MY LAST TRIP TO PLACES LIKE MISSISSIPPI

Years passed before the grip of the Closed Society completely let go of Mississippi's college basketball courts. Despite the continued introduction of blacks into Mississippi's predominantly white colleges and universities, athletics remained untouched by equality until 1968. While the Southeastern Conference integrated its ranks in 1966 with Tulane University's addition of Steve Martin to the baseball team, the gymnasiums in Starkville, Oxford, and Hattiesburg did not welcome a black college basketball player until freshmen Perry Wallace of Vanderbilt University took to the court against Mississippi State on February 27, 1967. Wallace later likened the experience to a trip to hell and, upon graduating, claimed, "I've made my last trip to places like Mississippi."<sup>1</sup> Despite Wallace's integration of SEC basketball, it was another two years before one of Mississippi's historically segregated colleges and universities welcomed a black athlete to its white-only ranks. Wilbert Jordan, Jr., walked on to the freshman team at The University of Southern Mississippi in 1968, becoming the first black athlete at Southern Miss, the University of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University, and signaling the end of the segregated era in Mississippi sports. Racial equality was on the horizon in Magnolia State sports whether the purveyors of the Closed Society liked it or not. "It was unusual to them, and odd," Jordan said in an August 2010 interview of the influx of African-Americans to the formally segregated university structure in Mississippi. "It was uncomfortable. But it was a sign of the times. Certain things (in Mississippi) were designed for white people and integration started to change that."<sup>2</sup>

In the 1963 aftermath of the unwritten law, Mississippi's newspapers continued to support the ideals and values of the Closed Society and ignored the historical and social significance of athletic integration as the appearance of Martin and Wallace on the SEC circuit garnered little attention from the state's sports press. Along those same lines, the 1968 addition of Jordan to the Hattiesburg-based Southerners was met with the same neglectful

coverage that once poisoned the journalistic ranks during the era of the unwritten law.

Jordan's historical rise through the previously segregated ranks of Mississippi sports was not evident in the press as the local *Hattiesburg American* never identified Jordan's status as the state's first black athlete at USM, Ole Miss, or MSU during his first two years as a member of the "Golden Giants."

However, over time, the views on race in Mississippi began to change. From a historical perspective, events like the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and 1968, Freedom Summer, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., demonstrated that the ideological borders placed around Mississippi could not stop the progression of equality and civil rights. While the integration of Southern Mississippi's basketball team occurred during the same calendar year as the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, the continued addition of blacks to the previously segregated ranks of the Magnolia State's basketball rosters seeped into the 1970s and the fervor that once surround issues of race began to diminish. Evidence of this transformation in Mississippi's press was apparent during the basketball-based integration of Ole Miss and Mississippi State as the additions of Coolidge Ball at Ole Miss in 1970, and Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins at MSU in 1971 to the once segregated universities. Ole Miss' 1970 signing of Ball as the school's first black athlete garnered little attention for the majority of the press. Only two of the newspapers consulted during this 1970-71 season identified the pioneering forward's ethnic status during his first season as a member of the Rebels' freshman squad. However, signs of progress were abound as the emergence of "Cool-Aid" on Mississippi's basketball landscape garnered both human-interest articles and photos from the historically conservative *Oxford Eagle* and the *Meridian Star*, a far cry from the era of the unwritten law. Furthermore, the outward expressions of hate and degradation were absent, most notable from the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*. While both newspapers were still in the firm grips of the Hederman family and Jimmy Ward and supporters of the state Sovereignty Commission, a new tone of



temperament began to emerge in the pages of the Jackson-based publications that, in part, could be attributed to the social evolution going on in the Magnolia State. By 1971, the schools in Jackson were integrated and later, with the 1972 election of Governor William “Bill” Waller, who followed through on campaign promises to put blacks in important positions within the state’s political structure and vetoed all political efforts to fund the Sovereignty Commission in 1973, racial equality had slowly made its way through Mississippi’s previously Closed Society.<sup>3</sup> Despite the presence of Ward at the *Jackson Daily News* through the 1970s, even the fiery and once spiteful segregationist tempered his views both in the pages of the newspaper and in his interactions with his staff.<sup>4</sup> By the time Ball, in 1972, and Fry and Jenkins, in 1973, had concluded their first varsity seasons, the press had rarely referenced the ethnicity of the trio, not out of neglect, but as a sign of progress. Newspapers, including local and on-campus publications, found little news value in the history-making addition of Jordan, continuing in the silent tactics that were once approved by the Sovereignty Commission, as a way to combat the Civil Rights Movement. However, by the time Ball, Fry, and Jenkins made their presence known as their individual school’s first black basketball players on the formally all-white rosters, the press was actually acting out of respect rather than racial outrage. It must be clarified that not every reference to Jordan, Ball, Fry, and Jenkins necessitated an identification of their ethnicity. However, an initial nod to race would have been sufficient recognition of their place in history and would have allowed the press to report on an item of public interest.

The newspapers consulted in this chapter include the local news outlets of Hattiesburg, Oxford, and Starkville, respectively. The *Hattiesburg American*, the *Student Printz* of The University of Southern Mississippi, the *Oxford Eagle*, the *Daily Mississippian* of Ole Miss, the *Starkville Daily News*, and *The Reflector* of Mississippi State were all examined in the four athletes’ first two seasons at each school, as freshmen were still ineligible for varsity play per the NCAA. Plus, all six publications were more likely to take a

special interest in the historic events that happened on campus and to depend on the work of staff writers and editors, thus lessening the dependence on wire services such as the Associated Press and United Press International. Furthermore, the Hederman-owned *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, both of which, historically, opposed any notion of racial equality and usually relied on content generated from staff reporters rather than wire services, were also examined during the time periods referenced above. The *Meridian Star*, which was published and edited by Citizens' Council member James Skewes, was also consulted in this chapter because of the paper's segregationist tone and the amount of staff-produced articles, in particular, the work of sports editor Robert "Steamboat" Fulton. Other newspapers in the state, including the *Vicksburg Evening Post* and the *Daily Herald* of Biloxi, were chosen for examination because of the presence of sports editors Billy Ray in Vicksburg and Dick Lightsey in Biloxi, both former adversaries of the unwritten law. Other publications that were considered, including the *Jackson Advocate*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, and the *Commercial Dispatch*, were excluded from examination due to various deficiencies in coverage. The *Jackson Advocate* failed to publish anything on Jordan, Ball, Fry, and Jenkins from 1968 through 1973, and both the *Delta Democrat-Times* and the *Commercial Dispatch* were sporadic in their coverage of the four athletes during their freshman and sophomore seasons, more often than not, utilizing wire-based content.

In total, the anger and debate that had saturated Mississippi's newspapers during the era of the unwritten law was gone and in its place was a Fourth Estate that attempted to find a journalistic balance that, at times, appeared neglectful and awkward. The emergence of Jordan, Ball, Jenkins, and Fry at USM, Ole Miss, and MSU was evidence of a bigger change in Mississippi's press that, slowly but surely, began to view race as a forgotten component of the state's news cycle, so much so that the typical characterization of blacks as "negroes" was no longer evident in Mississippi's newspapers by the appearance of Jenkins and Fry on the MSU roster in 1971. Because of the social change permeating the Magnolia State during the

late 1960s and early 1970s, the neglect related to the skin color of the aforementioned athletes became less of a means to protect the Closed Society and more of a demonstration of the progress made by Mississippi's journalistic community. Rather than being viewed strictly as blacks, the press came to treat these pioneering young men simply as members of their respective basketball teams.

#### Integrated Sports Comes to the Magnolia State

With James Meredith's integration of the University of Mississippi in 1962 and the elimination of the unwritten law in 1963 after Mississippi State played in the integrated NCAA tournament, it was only a matter of time before the colleges and universities in the Magnolia State encountered both integrated foes and added black athletes to their athletic ranks.

After the Bulldogs returned to Starkville from the NCAA tournament in 1963, rumblings of integration in the Southeastern Conference began to come out of Lexington, as the University of Kentucky inquired into where its conference brethren stood on the recruitment of blacks. At the time, no SEC roster had an athlete of color, but there was no rule in the conference prohibiting a school from making such an addition.<sup>5</sup> On April 13, 1963, the Associated Press reported that Kentucky sent questionnaires to the other schools in the conference and only two, Tulane University and Georgia Tech, indicated that they would play integrated teams both at home and on the road. Furthermore, officials for both the Green Wave and the Yellow Jackets claimed that they would keep the Wildcats on their schedules if the school were to add black athletes. Despite playing the integrated Ramblers from Loyola of Chicago less than a month earlier, Mississippi State indicated that the Bulldogs would only play integrated teams on the road. The school did not respond to the question pertaining to the possible integration of Kentucky's athletics.<sup>6</sup> How Ole Miss officials viewed the possible integration of Kentucky's teams was not referenced in any articles on the questionnaire, but

the omission of the Rebels indicated that either the university did not respond or they answered no to all three questions.

Dr. Frank Dickey, president of the University of Kentucky's Athletics Association, issued a formal statement on April 29, 1963, saying that they favored the integration of the university's athletic program but would abide by any ruling the SEC had on the matter. While the Wildcats may have been looking to integrate their sports, Dickey told the press that no timeframe had been established because all athletic scholarships at the school were already committed. Dickey said the school would not begin the possible recruitment of black athletes until the conclusion of 1964.<sup>7</sup>

In 1965, almost two years after MSU's famous trip to East Lansing, the SEC integrated as Tulane added Steve Martin to the Green Wave baseball team, making it inevitable that both Ole Miss and Mississippi State would compete against blacks in the Magnolia State.<sup>8</sup> Media coverage of Martin and the integration of the SEC was virtually nonexistent. His debut in the southern-based conference was met with a paragraph buried in the sports section of the New Orleans-based *Times-Picayune* and his race was not referenced. When Martin made his first trek through Mississippi later that year, none of the newspapers consulted in this chapter had a story on the historical occurrence.<sup>9</sup> The following baseball season, the black outfielder was promoted to the varsity team. His addition was reported in the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* in the form of a wire-based article.<sup>10</sup> The *Times-Picayune's* article previewing Tulane's baseball season only identified Martin as the school's "negro outfielder."<sup>11</sup> Only a week after Martin's addition to Tulane varsity squad was reported in the press, SEC commissioner Tonto Coleman told the AP that he did not think the integration of athletics was going to be a problem because most of the schools accepted it as an inevitable fact. "I don't know that a lot of people pay attention to it anymore," he said.<sup>12</sup> Newspaper accounts of Tulane's baseball matchup with Mississippi State on April 14 and 15, 1966, in New Orleans and April 29 and 30, 1966, in Starkville,

made no mention of black outfielder. By evidence of accompanying box scores, Martin played one game in each series, going a combined 1-for-7.<sup>13</sup> While his omission could have been justified based on his statistical output, Martin's skin tone, once a magnet for ire and ridicule in Mississippi, went unnoticed.

While Martin's efforts broke the colorline for SEC baseball, it was Vanderbilt University's Perry Wallace who braved the white-dominated hardwood in the conference as the first black athlete to receive a basketball scholarship on April 4, 1966. Much like Martin's historic rise, Wallace's signing was met with little fanfare in Mississippi. The *Jackson Daily News* was the only newspaper in the state to carry an article on Wallace's addition to the Commodores.<sup>14</sup> *Jackson Daily News* sports editor Lee Baker noted the signing of Wallace in his column on April 15, 1966, and described the heated competition between southern universities for the forward's services.<sup>15</sup> Wallace played at Nashville's Pearl High School in Tennessee, the same school as 1963 Loyola of Chicago stars Les Hunter and Vic Rouse. In a 2006 interview, Wallace said the duo often questioned his choice in schools. "As a black athlete in the mid 1960s, usually the goal was to go to a predominantly black college or go to a university in the North," Wallace said. "They told me not to do it. Their approach was 'to heck with that pioneering stuff.'"<sup>16</sup>

Wallace and walk-on forward Godfrey Dillard, also an African-American, were relegated to the freshmen team by NCAA rules during the 1966-67 season. The presence of Wallace and Dillard became a source of controversy in Mississippi well before the duo played their first contest in the Magnolia State. Ole Miss canceled its 1967 home game against Vanderbilt's freshman squad due to the presence of the two black Commodores. However, none of the newspapers examined in this chapter carried an article on the cancelation. Because of Ole Miss's decision, MSU assistant athletic director Ralph Brown wrote a letter to Dr. T. K. Martin, the executive vice-president to MSU president William Giles, asking that the school use the student newspaper to stress "the responsibilities of the

host school pertaining to student conduct and an appeal from the administration for courteous treatment of all visitors.”<sup>17</sup> On February 27, 1967, the Commodores’ duo made history, leading an integrated Vanderbilt freshman squad against the “Bullpups” in Starkville.<sup>18</sup> The game would be the first for any MSU basketball team against integrated competition since the 1963 NCAA tournament and the first in school history in Starkville as Wallace and Dillard were the first black basketball players to play on the MSU campus. Despite the historical aspects of the game, media accounts on the groundbreaking event were scarce. Only the *Jackson Daily News* carried a short article on the game, an 84-70 MSU victory. While both Wallace and Dillard were identified by name in the story, their race was omitted. Wallace finished with 13 points and 19 rebounds while Dillard had 16 points and 11 rebounds.<sup>19</sup> Baker briefly mentioned the game in his February 28, 1967, column and dismissed the overall significance of the event. “Integrated basketball came to Mississippi State Monday night, but the presence of two Negroes on the Vanderbilt freshman team created not a ripple,” he wrote. Baker then proceeded to belittle the historic occurrence, claiming that MSU’s victory would place the matter into the “so what category,” a surprising point by the Jackson-based sports editor considering his bold commentary on the 1963 MSU team and its entry into the NCAA tournament.<sup>20</sup> The reflective Wallace, now a law professor at America University in Washington, D.C., took umbrage with Baker’s incident-free account and described a scene of hate and intolerance in a 2006 interview.

“It was hell,” the SEC Hall of Famer explained. “The stands were right on top of the court, so we heard everything. It was like a chorus of hate and certain individuals had solo parts and their words would just pierce the air. It wasn’t just the ‘N’ word. I remember they kept yelling ‘shoe polish’ at Godfrey and me. It was outright bigotry.”<sup>21</sup>

Wallace also said was not surprised by the lack of media attention on the culturally relevant event. “It was the south and newspaper reporters knew that this wasn’t what white audiences wanted to read about,” he said. “They were in denial and I think they were

ashamed of their behavior. There was no way they were going to write about the racist behavior of their own home crowd.”<sup>22</sup>

Upon Wallace’s graduation, the college basketball pioneer told UPI’s Walt Smith that he had “made his last trip to places like Mississippi,” citing the University of Mississippi as the worst place to play basketball due to the raucous home crowd, who Wallace said once chanted “we’re going to lynch you,” at the future SEC Hall-of-Famer.<sup>23</sup>

While Wallace’s testimony failed to offer much comfort for the black basketball players of the late 1960s and early 1970s, integration would come to the hardwood in the Magnolia State almost two years later as a walk-on at The University of Southern Mississippi made history.

#### Jordan Walks On and Over Mississippi’s Color Line

While Meredith served as the catalyst for integration and the advancement of civil rights in Mississippi’s segregated colleges and universities, his athletic equivalent did not face the same pressure and degradation at the hands of the press. Wilbert Jordan, Jr., a native of Waynesboro, became the first black athlete to join one of the traditionally segregated college basketball teams of the Magnolia State when the former Riverside High School student walked on to the basketball court at The University of Southern Mississippi in 1968. A point guard from Wayne County, Jordan joined the Southerners after USM head coach Lee Floyd suggested to the freshman to try out for the first-year team after watching him play in a few pick-up games.<sup>24</sup> In a 2010 interview, Jordan said he never intended on being the first black athlete at one of Mississippi’s predominantly white schools. “I was there for an education, I wasn’t there to play basketball,” Jordan explained. “I would have been playing pick-up games regardless. I was an athlete more than anything, but to play college basketball, I had to have some skill. I’m sure, at one time or another, I played all five positions on the court. Heck, they even had me jump ball a few times.”<sup>25</sup>

Logically, while Jordan's presence on the USM roster was a legitimate news story, the majority of the press in the Magnolia State failed to report on the integration of one of the state's college basketball teams. The news of Jordan's addition to the Southerners was never the focus of an article in any of the newspapers consulted during his rookie season in Mississippi's Hub City.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the *Hattiesburg American* committed the most egregious oversight as USM's local news outlet and the only publication outside of Jackson owned by the segregationist Hederman family. While freshman basketball games may not have been of the highest priority on the sports desk at the *Hattiesburg American*, the presence of the Waynesboro native should have necessitated some sort of coverage during the 1968-69 season. The freshmen Southerners were either included in or the focus of fifteen articles in the *American* during the 1968-69 basketball season, thirteen of which referenced Jordan by name and none of them identified his race.<sup>27</sup> From a basketball standpoint, Jordan had some solid statistical performances as a freshman, including a 17-point game against the first-year Tigers of Louisiana State University on December 18, 1968; a 15-point game against Pensacola Junior College on January 20, 1969; a 20-point performance against Louisiana State University of New Orleans on January 30, 1969; a 21-point game against the freshmen of Nicholls State on February 4, 1969; a season high 26-points on February 6, 1969 against Coastal Mississippi-based Tripannis; and a season-ending 20-point game against Belhaven's junior varsity on February 10, 1969.

Sports editor Regiel Napier penned five of the articles, with staff writers Gene Wiggins and Robert "Ace" Cleveland, USM's assistant director of public relations and sports information, contributing one each. None of the *Hattiesburg American* sports staff felt Jordan's race was worth mentioning. As far as opinion-based material was concerned, Napier identified Jordan by name as one of the standouts on freshman coach Jeep Clark's 1968-69 squad in the January 30, 1969, edition of his column "Napier's Sports Nosings," yet he did not mention that Jordan was black.<sup>28</sup> Jordan, a successful attorney in Baton Rouge, Louisiana,



said in a 2010 interview that his absence from the press during his years at Southern Miss could have been because of Cleveland's concern for his wellbeing. "He made it very easy," Jordan said affectionately. "A lot of it probably had to do with 'Ace.' He sent out most of the news on Southern Miss sports and he probably had some influence with the local sports writers. Plus, most people at the *American* were Ole Miss people."<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the *Hattiesburg American's* local journalistic neglect, the *Student Printz*, Southern Mississippi's student newspaper, also failed to identify the trailblazing Jordan as the school's first black athlete. During his rookie campaign, Jordan was mentioned in six articles in the student newspaper depicting action from the freshman squad, none of which identified his skin color.<sup>30</sup>

Other newspapers in the Magnolia State followed the neglectful lead of the *Hattiesburg American* and failed to address the historical presence of the freshman point guard. The *Jackson Daily News* published a total of fourteen articles on the first-year Southerners, eleven of which mentioned Jordan either within the context of the article or in an accompanying box score, beginning with the USM's December 11, 1968, loss to Tulane. None of the articles referenced Jordan's status as the university's first black athlete.<sup>31</sup>

The articles in the *Jackson Daily News* were penned by some of the more respected sports journalists in Mississippi's history, including Lee Baker, the newspaper's longtime sports editor. While Baker was, more or less, covering USM's varsity contests, the Mississippi Sports Hall of Famer also provided a brief synopsis on the freshmen action in the final paragraph or two of each of his articles. In the four freshmen games Baker covered for the *Jackson Daily News*, Jordan was referenced by name in either the article or the box score on all four occasions, but the sports editor did not find Jordan's ethnicity worthy of a mention.<sup>32</sup> In his first and only article depicting the freshmen squad during the 1968-69 season, fellow *Jackson Daily News* sports writer David Davidson did not mention the point

guard by name much less his race despite Jordan's season-high 26 points against Delta State College.<sup>33</sup>

Baker also wrote about the Southern freshman squad in the January 30, 1969, version of his column, "Baker's Dozen," but addressed the team's thirst for revenge against the freshmen of LSU-New Orleans, who had defeated USM 87-78 earlier in the season.<sup>34</sup> Baker could have easily used his column to write about Jordan, whom he watched turn in a 19-point performance on January 27, 1969, against Northwestern Louisiana State's freshman squad and a four-point game against Tulane's freshmen on January 29, 1969. Although he was privy to Jordan's history-making presence on the Hattiesburg campus, Baker chose to ignore it. The day after Baker's column appeared in the *Jackson Daily News*, the veteran Mississippi sports writer covered the Southern Miss basketball team and Jordan's 20-point effort in the freshmen's 107-82 victory over LSU-New Orleans and failed to mention his ethnic background.<sup>35</sup> The other newspapers consulted in this chapter, including the *Daily Herald*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, and the *Starkville Daily News*, did not publish any content on the freshmen of Southern Miss nor on the history-making presence of Jordan.

#### Jordan Makes the Varsity

Jordan received a scholarship from Floyd and Southern Miss during the 1969 school year and, in December 1969, he became the first African-American in the state of Mississippi to play on a varsity team at one of the traditionally white-only, segregated colleges and universities. Despite the historical firsts for Jordan, his presence on the USM squad seemed to be overlooked by the majority of the newspapers in the Magnolia State. While the Southerners did not produce the same fandom and public interest statewide as Ole Miss or Mississippi State in the press, the first varsity season of the integrated Southerners, logically, should have garnered some interest, especially from the *Hattiesburg American*. However, in thirty-four articles covering the Southern Miss team in the newspaper during the 1969-70 season, only seventeen referenced USM's black point guard and did so through a statistical

box score.<sup>36</sup> Other articles on the Southerners failed to mention Jordan by name.<sup>37</sup> In two games that season, Southern Miss' January 13, 1970, loss to Centenary College and a February 6, 1970, loss to Louisiana Tech, Jordan's name did not appear in any box scores published, making it likely that the sophomore guard did not play in those games.<sup>38</sup> No justification was offered in those articles for Jordan's absence.

In a November 15, 1969, account from the *Hattiesburg American* previewing the 1969-70 campaign for the Southerners, Jordan was referred to as a sophomore backup who could play both the point and shoot guard positions for USM.<sup>39</sup> Like in his freshman season, the *Hattiesburg American* overlooked his race and his historical place on USM's varsity. Going into the team's season opener against the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, the *American* published two previews of the game against the Crimson Tide, yet neither one identified Jordan's race.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, a photo was published in the December 1, 1969, edition of the *Hattiesburg American* with the heading "New Southerners."<sup>41</sup> In the photograph, credited to The University of Southern Mississippi, junior college transfers Kent Palma, Tom Yachinich, Bobby Jones, and Ricky Ragland were identified as newcomers to the varsity squad, yet many of USM's sophomores, including Jordan, were also additions to the 1969-70 team as they were allocated to the freshman squad the previous season. In the *American's* article on Jordan's historical debut against the Crimson Tide, a 104-74 loss on December 1, 1969, the anonymous author failed to mention the backup point guard's name or race.<sup>42</sup> While the need for an individual article on Jordan's ethnicity could have been debated, failing to reference the first black athlete to participate in a contest usually reserved for whites exuded a degree of journalistic neglect on the part of the *Hattiesburg American*. No other newspaper consulted in this chapter addressed Jordan's historic debut for USM, as his name was only referenced in box scores.

For the most part, *Hattiesburg American* sports editor Gene Wiggins covered the Southerners on their home court during the course of the 1969-70 campaign and the

Hattiesburg native, who also worked for the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Meridian Star*, never identified Jordan's race. While Jordan's name appeared in articles throughout the USM campaign, none of the sports staff of the *Hattiesburg American* identified the guard's ethnicity. In separate articles found in the *Hattiesburg American* on December 4, 5, 19, and 20, 1969; January 12 and February 17, 1970, Jordan was identified by name and even noted for his play, but his race nor his status as the school's first black athlete was referenced.<sup>43</sup> For the most part, Jordan's on-court presence was mentioned in passing, as he was often cited for being a defensive replacement. Others, such as staff writer Mickey Edwards, discussed Jordan's play in detail. In his December 20, 1969, article on USM's 75-72 win over West Texas State, Edwards called the guard's performance outstanding and credited the six straight points Jordan scored as one of the highlights of the victory of the game.<sup>44</sup> However, his race was never a topic of conversation. Even after Floyd tabbed Jordan to start in the team's final game of the season against Delta State College as a means of slowing down Statemens' star Don Cooper, who averaged 27 points per game, Wiggins chose not to reference the race of the defense stalwart.<sup>45</sup>

As far as opinion-based articles from the Hub City's primary news source, Wiggins only mentioned Jordan in two of his columns during the course of the 1969-70 season.<sup>46</sup> In the December 19, 1969, edition of "My View," Wiggins wrote that Jordan's play contributed to USM's victory over Louisiana Tech as the guard's defense against George Corley, who had 27 points in the game, kept the Bulldogs' sharpshooter off balanced.<sup>47</sup> After Floyd announced that Jordan would move into the starting lineup against Delta State, Wiggins said that he approved of USM coach's decision, calling Jordan, "one of the quickest players on the team," and "a crowd pleasing performer all season with his quick reactions."<sup>48</sup> However, Jordan's race again went unnoticed. Wiggins also failed to discuss Jordan's race in any of his "My View" columns from the 1969-70 season.

Furthermore, only one photo of Jordan, by Dick Tarbutton, was published in the *American*.<sup>49</sup> Jordan was pictured in a photo trailing teammate Bobby Jones after the sophomore guard caused a loose ball. In the cutline, there was no reference to Jordan's race. The visual image of USM's first black athlete was the only acknowledgement of Jordan's history-making presence on the Southerners' roster.

In terms of the community found on the Hattiesburg campus, the *Student Printz* continued to overlook the historical presence of Jordan on the USM roster. Now a member of the varsity and on scholarship, Jordan was not mentioned by name in an article signifying the start of basketball workouts in the October 16, 1969, edition of the student-based paper.<sup>50</sup> Articles depicting the 1969-70 season of the Southerners appeared in the *Printz* twenty-one times, none of which identified the sophomore guard's skin color.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, *Student Printz* sports editors Biff Lampton and Steve Sparks addressed the Southerners in a total of eleven of their respective columns and never used the opportunity to write about Jordan and his status as USM's first black athlete.<sup>52</sup>

During his first two seasons as a member of the USM team, the only depiction of Jordan's race appeared in the January 13, 1970, edition of the *Student Printz* when the sophomore was pictured going for a rebound against the University of South Alabama in the Southerners 104-79 victory.<sup>53</sup> Even with the obvious image, the accompanying cutline did not identify Jordan as being black or his place in school history. The photo was also the first reference to Jordan during the 1969-70 campaign. The second would come on January 29, 1970, in an article on Old Dominion's 95-92 win over USM.<sup>54</sup> Jordan was noted for scoring on a three-point play to pull the Southerners to within a point of the Monarchs early in the second half but was not mentioned in the article again. Sparks identified Jordan as a returning member of the USM squad at the end of the season, but cited the guard's lack of height as a potential issue in Jordan's quest for playing time.<sup>55</sup>

Jordan said that his lack of local media based exposure, in a way, matched from a social perspective, his time on the Hattiesburg campus. “ I don’t have any horror stories,” he said. “It was USM’s culture. It was very low key. I’m not going to tell you it was utopia. Some of the people I played with had never even seen black people. I wasn’t recruited so no one had to justify me to anyone. I was already on campus. I was nothing more than a guy at Southern Miss and it was fine with me. I had no problem flying under the radar.”<sup>56</sup>

#### Jordan Goes Unnoticed Outside of Hattiesburg

The other newspapers in the Hederman empire also gave little credence to Jordan’s presence on the Southern Miss varsity. Like the *Hattiesburg American*, sports editor Lee Baker did not reference Jordan at all in his recap of Alabama’s 1969-70 season-opening win over the Southerners in the *Jackson Daily News*. The historic debut of the school’s first black athlete on a varsity team was only evident by an accompanying box score.<sup>57</sup>

This trend continued for the duration of Jordan’s sophomore campaign. In the pages of the *Jackson Daily News*, Jordan’s USM squad appeared in thirty-six articles from December 1, 1969, through February 25, 1970, and Jordan appeared by name in an article, accompanying box score, or statistical graphic on twenty-seven occasions.<sup>58</sup> However, that number was somewhat misleading. In terms of article-based content only, Jordan’s name only came up twice, the first in sports writer David Davidson’s December 19, 1969, account of USM’s 84-81 win over the University of Louisiana Tech, when Jordan was a defensive replacement with the team up 78-72 with 2:41 left in the contest.<sup>59</sup> Jordan did not score in the game.

The second, a February 20, 1970, article by Baker on the Southerners season-ending 77-69 victory over in-state rival Delta State, featured the only acknowledgement to Jordan’s race during his first two seasons at Southern Miss in the Jackson-based newspaper. Looking for a way to slow down Delta State standout Cooper, who had 15 points at halftime and 27 in the previous contest against the Southerners, Floyd opened the second frame with Jordan in

the game guarding the Delta State star. Per Baker's account, Floyd "made the key move — coming back in the second half with Wilbert Jordan, a quick 6-2 Negro sophomore from Waynesboro, who proceeded to dog Cooper's steps."<sup>60</sup> Jordan, who did not score in the game, eventually came off the court and was replaced by Bobby Jones when the team "needed some offensive punch."<sup>61</sup> Baker's reference was almost comical, as the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor had been aware of Jordan's presence at USM since December 1968, yet it took the majority of two full basketball campaigns to tell the *Jackson Daily News*' reading audience that Jordan was black. From a journalistic perspective, it was bewildering that Baker did not find Jordan's status as the first black athlete at USM newsworthy, but almost two full seasons later, his ethnicity was somehow relevant in the context of his ability to defend an opposing player at the conclusion of a 15-11 season. Baker's article also appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger* on February 20, 1970, and was that paper's only acknowledgement of Jordan's race during the guard's first two seasons in Hattiesburg.<sup>62</sup>

Other newspapers in the Magnolia State also failed to write about Jordan's presence on the Southern Mississippi basketball team. The *Clarion-Ledger* extensively covered the Southerners, yet Jordan's race was never a topic of conversation. The newspaper published twenty-seven articles on the "Golden Giants" and Jordan's name appeared in only one of the articles.<sup>63</sup> Jordan's varsity debut against the University of Alabama was also left out of the *Clarion-Ledger*'s account, which was written by an anonymous journalist, and was only identified by name in the article's accompanying box score.<sup>64</sup>

The *Meridian Star* of segregationist James Skewes published eleven articles on the Southern Miss team during Jordan's first two seasons at the university, with the guard's name appearing only once in a box score in the December 2, 1969, edition of the paper after USM's aforementioned loss to Alabama to start the 1969-70 campaign.<sup>65</sup> All of the articles in the *Meridian Star* that focused on USM were credited to United Press International, none of which identified the Wayne County native as black.<sup>66</sup>

The *Vicksburg Evening Post* sports editor Billy Ray, an outspoken critic of the unwritten law who favored competing against integrated teams, also neglected the historical significance of Jordan's ascension through USM's basketball ranks. The newspaper never referenced Jordan's race or groundbreaking addition to the Southern Miss roster. During Jordan's freshman season of 1968-69, the *Evening Post* did not publish any content dealing with the first-year guard or the team.<sup>67</sup> As for Jordan's first varsity campaign, the Vicksburg-based newspaper published five articles on the Southerners, all credited to the Associated Press. Jordan's name only appeared in a box score accompanying AP sports writer Ed Sheaver's wrap-up article on play in the Southeastern Conference on December 1, 1969, which included Alabama's win over USM.<sup>68</sup> None of the other four articles published during the Southerners' 1969-70 season referred to Jordan by name.<sup>69</sup>

Likewise, the *Daily Herald* sports editor Dick Lightsey failed to publish any material on Jordan or the freshman campaign of the 1968-69 Southerners in the Biloxi-based newspaper.<sup>70</sup> During Jordan's first season with the varsity, the plight of the Southerners was featured in the pages of the *Daily Herald* nine times with the sophomore's name appearing only once in a box score.<sup>71</sup> The *Daily Herald* omitted Jordan's name from the box scores of games in which he did not score, which gave the Biloxi-based Southern Miss fan base the incorrect perception that Jordan did not play.<sup>72</sup> The remainder of the articles during Jordan's first varsity season failed to reference the sophomore guard.<sup>73</sup> Like Ray, Lightsey also favored integrated competition during the various debates involving Mississippi State.

The *Starkville Daily News* publisher Henry Harris and editor Sherrill Nash only published three articles on the USM team in Jordan's first two years at the school, none of which referenced the Waynesboro native.<sup>74</sup> Other newspapers, including the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, and *Jackson Advocate*, simply failed to publish anything on Jordan during his first two seasons at Southern Miss.<sup>75</sup>



For Jordan, the lack of press outside of the Hub City served as an extension of the culture of the Hattiesburg campus and the Magnolia State's obsession with the Bulldogs and Rebels. "No one in the state really cared about Southern Miss," Jordan said. "It was under the radar compared to Ole Miss and Mississippi State. Plus, we had a lot of hippies on campus; it was just a very interesting time. We were the anti-Ole Miss."<sup>76</sup>

One could have argued that the lack of press on Jordan came from his pedestrian statistical performance during the course of his first year on USM's varsity. Jordan finished the season appearing in 24 games, averaging only 2.2 points and 2.0 rebounds per game and, during the course of the season, the second-year guard went scoreless in seven contests. From a team perspective, Jordan's harder years were yet to come. After the 1969-70 season, Jordan's subsequent USM teams would go 7-19 in 1970-71 and an abysmal 0-24 in 1971-72, Jordan's senior year.<sup>77</sup> However, Jordan's presence on the Southern Miss basketball team was about more than statistics and wins. While he was never a star in the annals of Mississippi college basketball, Jordan's trailblazing efforts set the stage for other blacks to venture into the previously segregated gymnasiums of the Magnolia State.

#### "Mr. Cool" Comes to Oxford

Although Jordan was the first black in Mississippi to play basketball at USM, Ole Miss, or Mississippi State, his average statistics with the Southerners were, arguably, the determining factor in the amount of coverage the Waynesboro native received from sports journalists during his first two seasons in the Hub City. That was not the case in Oxford, as an athlete the likes of which the Rebel nation had yet to see leapt on the Magnolia State sports scene in 1970. Coolidge Ball, a forward from Indianola, was a star at Gentry High School where he averaged 28 points and 20 rebounds per game.<sup>78</sup> The Mississippi native would initially choose to play his college basketball at the University of New Mexico but, after staying on the Albuquerque campus, Ball felt he was too far away from home and decided to sign a scholarship with the University of Mississippi. When asked why he chose Ole Miss in

December 1970, Ball said, “Not only the coaches and players were friendly, but the fans were so enthusiastic — it all just made up my mind,” a far cry from Wallace’s comments to UPI only eleven months earlier.<sup>79</sup>

In his first two years at Ole Miss, the journalistic community in Mississippi presented the SEC Hall of Famer in an inconsistent fashion. Some publications, like the *Oxford Eagle*, acknowledged Ball’s historical presence on the Ole Miss roster almost immediately. Others, such as the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, and the *Meridian Star*, referenced the power forward’s race at odd times during his first two seasons. Because of the changing social environment of Mississippi in the early 1970s and how the press in the Magnolia State handled issues of race, the almost flighty manner in which Ball’s ethnicity was mentioned was an illustration of how the print media in the state was in a transitional period where an individual’s color was slowly becoming less relevant.

Ball’s August 6, 1970, signing generated little buzz in the sporting press, as only the *Oxford Eagle* published an article on his addition to the Ole Miss basketball team and did so over a month after he signed his scholarship.<sup>80</sup> The unknown author wrote that Ball was the last player inked by the Rebels but failed to reference the forward as being black, a huge oversight considering the social impact Ball’s signing would have on the Ole Miss community. Three months later, on December 3, 1970, the *Oxford Eagle* made amends, publishing an article profiling Ball. In the article’s second paragraph, Ball was identified as the school’s first black scholarship athlete.<sup>81</sup> The article appeared in the *Oxford Eagle* with a photo of the college freshmen with head coach Robert “Cob” Jarvis and freshman coach Kenny Robbins. Ball’s name appeared on numerous occasions during the 1970-71 season in the *Oxford Eagle*, as the freshman dominated the bevy of first-year and junior college teams that opposed Ole Miss’ rookie squad. Ball averaged 22.7 points per game and 16.2 rebounds for Robbins’ team, which finished the season 20-3.<sup>82</sup> Ball and the “Baby Rebs” were the subjects of seven articles in the *Oxford Eagle* during the 1970-71 season. While Ball was

mentioned by name in all of the accounts, he was usually described as “a leaper” and noted for his statistical output in both points and rebounds. His race was not mentioned again after the publication of the *Oxford Eagle*’s December 3, 1970, profile.<sup>83</sup>

Both the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News* covered the feats of the freshmen Rebels, typically, with a paragraph or two within articles on the exploits of the varsity team. However, the success and excitement for Robbins’ freshman squad also generated coverage specifically for the “Baby Rebs,” which was the case in Ball’s first appearance in the *Clarion-Ledger*. On December 1, 1970, the *Clarion-Ledger* published an article on the progress of the Ole Miss’s freshman team and focused on Ball, center Fred Cox, and guard Tom Jordan. While the anonymous author credited the forward for his rebounding and ball handling, he did not identify Ball as being black. Rather, he referred to the freshman star as “a leaper.”<sup>84</sup>

Ball was first identified in pages of the *Jackson Daily News* in sports editor Lee Baker’s December 8, 1970, article depicting the varsity’s 89-85 win over the University of Texas to open the 1970-71 basketball season. The “Baby Rebs,” who defeated Northeast Junior College 85-75 in the preliminary contest, were only mentioned in a box score that accompanied the article. Ball scored 19 in the first game of his college career.<sup>85</sup> While Baker failed to identify Ball by name in his article, *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Larry Guest provided his audience with a brief summary of the freshmen Rebels’ win. Guest, however, incorrectly called Ball, “Bollidge” and did not reference the freshman’s ethnicity.<sup>86</sup>

Because of Ball’s dynamic play, the forward’s name appeared in virtually every article that dealt with the “Baby Rebs” during the 1970-71 season. In the December 13, 1970, issue of the *Jackson Daily News*, Baker mentioned Ball in his article on the Ole Miss varsity’s win over Auburn 108-96. The “Baby Rebs,” who defeated the freshmen from Auburn 103-85, were led by Ball’s 30 points and 16 rebounds and Cox’s 31 points and 20

rebounds, which led Baker to refer to the duo as stars.<sup>87</sup> Baker did not identify Ball as being black.

Much like Jordan, Ball suffered from a degree of journalistic neglect, as newspapers featured articles that would mention the trailblazing Rebel; however, almost all of them failed to reference his race. In the pages of the *Clarion-Ledger*, Ball's freshman team was the focus of thirteen articles during the season and, while the budding basketball star was mentioned by name in each one, he was never identified as being black.<sup>88</sup> Ball was described by a February 27, 1971, account in the *Clarion-Ledger* as "a leaping forward his teammates call 'Cool-Aid,'" but little else was written about the freshman star.<sup>89</sup> In the waning moments of the freshmen Rebels' February 27, 1971, win over their counterparts from LSU, Ball received a standing ovation from the Oxford faithful for his 22-point, 22-rebound effort.<sup>90</sup> Ball was matched-up against Collis Temple, Jr., the first black basketball player to suit up for the Bayou Bengals. The race of both athletes went unnoticed in the press.

The "Baby Rebs" were also featured in articles that reported on both the varsity and freshmen contests. In the *Clarion-Ledger*, nine such articles were published — four by Guest and two by Baker. Neither identified Ball's status as Ole Miss' first black athlete.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Ball was never prominently featured or discussed in any editorial content. Perhaps the most questionable journalistic decision came from Carl Walters of the *Clarion-Ledger*, who ignored the play of Ball and his fellow freshmen Rebels in his February 9, 1971, edition of "Shavin's." Walters, who wrote on the sad affairs of college basketball in the Magnolia State during the 1970-71 season, predicted more losses for both the Rebels and the Mississippi State Bulldogs. Walters referenced the performance of both schools' freshman squads from the previous season and claimed that neither had much of an impact on their varsity clubs. Walters then identified Hinds Junior College at 17-1, Jackson State College at 18-3, and Belhaven College at 18-1, as the best college basketball teams in Mississippi.<sup>92</sup> An oversight in his argument were the 14-1 freshmen Rebels and, while it may have been

considered illogical to consider a freshman team the best in the entire state, most of the “Baby Rebels” opponents were either other freshman teams or junior colleges. The argument would have differed little from his claim that Hinds Junior College was one of the best teams in the state. Due to Walters’ past views on issues of race, his omission could have been because of the integrated status of the freshmen Rebels.

Much like the *Clarion-Ledger* and the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Meridian Star* of James Skewes also featured brief accounts on the “Baby Rebs” in articles depicting the play of the varsity Rebels. However, the *Meridian Star* was the first paper outside of Oxford to publish a picture of Ball and identify the trailblazer as black. In Angus Lind’s December 8, 1970, article on Ole Miss’s aforementioned season-opening win over Texas, Lind identified Ball in the next to last paragraph as “the first Negro to wear the Ole Miss colors on the hardwood” before mentioning his 19 points and 17 rebounds in the win over Northeast Mississippi Junior College. A photo of Ball wearing number 44 and shooting a jump shot over a Northeast defender was prominently displayed on the right-hand side of the page.<sup>93</sup> Much like the *Oxford Eagle*, Lind wasted little time identifying Ball’s history-making presence on the Ole Miss roster, giving his audience a fair perception of the events in discussion. His identification of Ball’s race also allowed the *Meridian Star* to move forward with its coverage of Ole Miss basketball without having to constantly refer to Ball as black. Lind later wrote a feature on the Ole Miss Rebel basketball teams for the December 13, 1970, Sunday edition of the *Meridian Star* and referred to the future combination of Ole Miss freshmen stars Ball and Cox with the varsity’s Johnny Neumann as “NBC” — Neumann, Ball, and Cox. In Lind’s fourth paragraph, the sports writer identified Ball’s race, writing that the forward was “the first Negro to ever wear the red and blue of Ole Miss.”<sup>94</sup> Lind would repeat his contention, calling Ball “the first Negro ever to play for the Rebels”<sup>95</sup> a little more than halfway through the full-page feature. A photo of Ball was featured in the *Meridian Star* as the Indianola native was pictured shooting a free throw. Lind’s “NBC” triad

would never come to fruition. While Ball and Cox would spend the next three seasons on the varsity, Neumann, the nation's leading scorer in 1970-71, would leave Ole Miss to pursue a career in professional basketball. While the newspaper continued to publish articles that referenced the pioneering Ball and his freshman teammates, his race was not mentioned during the remainder of that season.<sup>96</sup>

The *Daily Mississippian*, the student newspaper of the University of Mississippi, featured seven articles on the "Baby Rebels," an editorial, and two photos of the freshman star during the 1970-71 season. While the *Daily Mississippian* featured a profile on Ball in the November 18, 1970, edition, the article and its corresponding photo were identical to the ones featured in the December 3, 1970, edition of the *Oxford Eagle*.<sup>97</sup> The account did note the historic presence of the freshman as the school's first athlete of color; however, there was no byline, making it impossible to determine if the article originated from the *Daily Mississippian*, the *Oxford Eagle*, or some sort of wire service. Regardless of its originality, the article identified Ball's race, a quality that was absent from a number of other accounts found in Mississippi's professional newspapers.

The next reference to the groundbreaking Ball came in the *Daily Mississippian*'s opinion section after the freshman Rebels' 103-85 victory over the Auburn Tigers on December 13, 1970. A letter to the editor, penned by "A pleased Rebel," claimed that they were a part of the standing ovation Ball received as he left the court after scoring 30 points and grabbing 16 rebounds against the first-year Tigers. The author called the ovation the school's "acceptance of a black man."<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, during the closing moments of the varsity game, a 108-96 win for the Rebels, the writer indicated that Auburn's Henry Harris, the first black athlete at the Alabama-based university, also received a standing ovation as he left the court, fouling out with 22 points. In total, the commentary about Ball and Harris indicated that some within the student body had openly accepted the presence of both men on campus and in the SEC.

During the remainder of Ball's rookie campaign, the budding star's race was not again referenced in the *Daily Mississippian*.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps the only example of journalistic neglect came in a profile of Ball written by Dudley Marble, who referred to the freshman forward as one of the more popular athletes on the Oxford campus because of his performance on the hardwood.<sup>100</sup> While much of the information on Ball was repeated from the feature that appeared in December 1970 issues of both the *Oxford Eagle* and the *Daily Mississippian*, Marble failed to address Ball's race. Considering that Ball was in the midst of his first season in Oxford, it would have been an ideal time to get an update on the Rebels' first black athlete's transition to college life. Ball was also featured in a photo with the article.

Other newspapers published little on the freshman exploits of Ball. The *Hattiesburg American* featured a single article that referenced the Ole Miss freshman, in Rick Cleveland's December 16, 1970, recap of Ole Miss's 109-100 win over Southern Miss. Ball, who had 14 points in the 78-71 win, was not mentioned by name.<sup>101</sup> Henry Harris' *Starkville Daily News*, home of the rival Mississippi State Bulldogs, only published two articles that mentioned Ball by name, but there was never any reference of his race.<sup>102</sup> The *Vicksburg Evening Post* published three articles on the "Baby Rebs," none of which discussed Ball's race.<sup>103</sup> Both the *Daily Herald* in Biloxi and the *Delta Democrat-Times* failed to publish any articles on Ball and the "Baby Rebs" during the 1970-71 season.<sup>104</sup>

#### Ball Adds Color to the Ole Miss Varsity

The 1971-72 season for the Ole Miss Rebels was one that began with optimism because of the play of Ball and Cox during their freshman campaign.<sup>105</sup> The early and unexpected migration of the nation's leading scorer, Neumann, from the Rebels squad dampened the spirits of some of the Rebel faithful, while others, as pointed out by sports editor Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News*, breathed a sigh of relief at the loss of the erratic, free-shooting Neumann.<sup>106</sup> While the press, other than the *Oxford Eagle* and the *Meridian Star*, had ignored Ball's skin color, the coverage of the 1971-72 season would be marred with

inconsistent references to Ball's race and questionable editorial decisions in terms of what constituted news.

Like his freshman season, the local *Oxford Eagle* would have a profound local interest in the exploits of Ball. However, unlike his rookie campaign, the Oxford-based newspaper did not identify Ball as being black or as Ole Miss's first black varsity athlete. In an article signifying the start of basketball practice, the *Oxford Eagle* called both Ball and Cox key additions to the 1971-72 Rebels. The anonymous author described Ball as "a 6-5 leaper" who led the freshman team in scoring.<sup>107</sup> Ball was again a primary figure in the *Oxford Eagle*'s November 30, 1971, article previewing the upcoming Rebel season, as the sophomore was identified as a new starter on the Rebels' squad.<sup>108</sup> Ball's varsity debut, a narrow 79-78 win over the University of Texas on December 1, 1971, was a statistical success as the forward scored 15 points and had a game-high 14 rebounds.<sup>109</sup> However, none of these articles identified Ball's race or his place in Ole Miss history.

During the course of the Rebels' season, Ball began to exude a degree of dominance over Ole Miss's opponents, scoring 21 points and grabbing 12 rebounds in a win over Northwest Louisiana; adding 22 points and 19 rebounds against The University of Southern Mississippi; scoring 27 points and 22 rebounds against the Christian-based Athletes In Action; and tallying 26 points and 12 rebounds against the University of Tennessee.<sup>110</sup> In the 73-70 loss to the Volunteers, Ball, again described in the account in the *Oxford Eagle* as a "leaper," earned high praise from his Volunteer counterpart Larry Robinson. "He's good no question," Robinson told the anonymous reporter. "He is one fine basketball player."<sup>111</sup>

Surprisingly, after his performance against Tennessee, it was Ball's teammate Cox who was the focus of a profile that was published in, among other newspapers, the January 13, 1972, edition of the *Oxford Eagle*. The article looked at the Indiana native's trek to Oxford and his play during the early part of the 1971-72 seasons. In terms of athletic merit, Cox led the Rebels in scoring at the time, with 17.1 points per game, but was coming off of a



four-point effort against the Volunteers.<sup>112</sup> Ball, on the other had, averaged 16.3 points per game after scoring 26 points against Tennessee. The choice of Cox for a profile was questionable considering the historical significance of Ball's presence on the Ole Miss varsity. While Cox was the tallest player in Rebel history, the novelty surrounding the Rebels' center hardly trumped Ball's status as the school's first black athlete.

After a 12-point performance in the Rebels' 68-66 win against in-state rival Mississippi State on January 16, 1972, Ball had the breakthrough performance of his sophomore campaign, scoring 30 points in the Rebels' dominating win over Vanderbilt 92-65 on January 26, 1972. In Harvey Faust's account for the *Oxford Eagle*, the sports editor called the win, interestingly enough, a "whitewash."<sup>113</sup> The *Oxford Eagle* also published a photo of Ball hitting a jump shot.

Ball, who became the team's leading scorer with 17.1 points per game, continued his statistical dominance of the SEC through his first varsity campaign. He ended the month of January by scoring 21 points against the University of Georgia in an 80-74 loss and matched that number against the University of Florida in an 86-72 victory.<sup>114</sup> Ball later tallied 18 points on February 13, 1972, in a loss to Kentucky and matched a season high with 30 points on March 5, 1972, in an Ole Miss victory over Louisiana State University.<sup>115</sup> "Cool-Aid" finished his season by averaging 16.8 points and 10.3 rebounds per game, both of which led the Rebels and earned the sophomore a place on the AP's ALL-SEC Sophomore Team and the All-SEC second team. Ole Miss finished the 1971-72 campaign with a record of 13-12, 8-10 in conference. It was the first winning season for Jarvis.

In total, the *Oxford Eagle* published twenty-six articles on the Rebels during the 1971-72 season, twenty-four of which referenced Ball by name and none of them identified the All-SEC performer as black.<sup>116</sup> Only two articles, a February 22, 1972, account of the Rebels' 65-64 win over Mississippi State and a February 29, 1972, article from UPI on Ole Miss's 87-74 win over Florida, did not mention the star forward.<sup>117</sup> The *Oxford Eagle*

published three photos of Ball, two of which featured game action and a third, published on February 16, 1972, showed the Rebels' forward buying a light bulb from local members of the Boy Scouts who were in the midst of a fundraising campaign.<sup>118</sup> None of the accompanying cutlines mentioned Ball's obvious skin tone or his status as Ole Miss's first black athlete.

In addition, *Oxford Eagle* sports editor Harvey Faust also failed to address Ball's ethnic status in any of his opinion-based musings despite writing about the Indianola native in five of his "Between the Foul Lines" columns.<sup>119</sup> Faust even featured a photo of Ball in the December 6, 1971 edition of the *Oxford Eagle*, yet never referenced the forward's status as the school's first black athlete.<sup>120</sup>

Because of the *Oxford Eagle*'s identification of Ball's history-making presence on the "Baby Rebs" during the 1970-71 season, it could have been logically argued that there was no need for the newspaper to continue to identify Ball as black, as it could have been interpreted as an insensitive remark towards the college sophomore. Furthermore, as the newspaper for a distinctly local community, Ball's place on the Ole Miss roster was likely well known within Oxford's city limits. Regardless, it was difficult to fathom that the *Oxford Eagle* never once alluded to Ball's status as the first African-American to play for the varsity Rebels.

While the Hederman-owned newspapers in Jackson ignored Ball's presence on the 1970-71 freshman Rebels squad, the *Jackson Daily News* and sports editor Lee Baker wasted little time identifying Ole Miss' first black athlete, beginning a trend of inconsistent and, at times, illogical reporting on Ball's race. Ball's first reference in the *Jackson Daily News* would come on November 28, 1971, in an article by an anonymous author with the Associated Press that previewed the start of the SEC basketball season and called the forward a "6-5 sophomore jumping jack."<sup>121</sup> The following day, the *Jackson Daily News* again published an article from the AP signifying the start of the basketball season. Ball, and

fellow sophomore Cox, were referenced in the article as “freshmen stars” and key additions to the Ole Miss squad.<sup>122</sup> In both accounts, Ball’s race was not mentioned.

Almost a year after Ball’s freshman debut, Baker finally acknowledged the forward’s place in Mississippi history. In the December 1, 1971, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*, Baker, while previewing the opening games for a number of the colleges in the Magnolia State, wrote of Ole Miss’ trip to Austin to play the University of Texas. Baker claimed that opinions in the Rebels’ fan base were mixed because of the loss of Neumann. The longtime sports editor tried to temper any discontent within the Ole Miss faithful by dismissing the professional exodus of Neumann and hailing the arrival of Ball, writing, “Now they have a basketball player in his place, Coolidge Ball, native Mississippian (Indianola) and the first black grant-in-aid recipient at the University.”<sup>123</sup> Baker’s identification of Ball was surprising considering that, like his fellow Mississippi sports writers, he usually buried or ignored issues involving race with the 1963 MSU-NCAA campaign serving as the lone exception. While overlooking both Ball and Jordan’s addition to the Mississippi sports scene was a case of journalistic neglect, Baker’s nod to history was a sign of social progress for the long-time *Jackson Daily News* sports editor and was in line with his work during the 1963 Mississippi State basketball season. Furthermore, Baker’s use of the phrase “black” rather than the derogatory “negro” was another sign that the longtime Jackson sports editor had become much more open and tolerant when it came to issues of race.

After Baker’s identification of the sophomore star’s race, the *Jackson Daily News* began a trend of illogical references to Ball’s ethnicity. After the team’s season-opening win over the University of Texas, a photo of Ball wrestling with Texas forward John Wilson over the basketball was published in the December 2, 1971, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. However, in an inexcusable error, the only black member of the Ole Miss squad was misidentified as “Chuck Hedde,” a name that was not present in the box score for either Ole Miss or the University of Texas.<sup>124</sup> Ball was featured in six photos in the *Jackson Daily News*

during his sophomore campaign, none of which addressed the forward's history-making presence on the Ole Miss roster.<sup>125</sup>

In his December 3, 1971, edition of "Baker's Dozen," the Jackson sports editor wrote of Ball's performance against the Longhorns that, "Coolidge had a poor night shooting, just four for 15, but hit seven of nine free throws and, despite being only 6-5, intimidated the 'Horns with his rebounds."<sup>126</sup> In the team's next game, a 107-60 win over Arkansas A&M, *Clarion-Ledger* sports editor Larry Guest described Ball, who had 14 points in the win, as "liquid-smooth."<sup>127</sup>

The next article in the *Jackson Daily News* to reference Ball's race was a January 5, 1972, account previewing the Rebels' January 8, 1972, match-up against perennial SEC power the University of Kentucky. The article, which had no byline or wire affiliation, referred to the star forward as "a 6-5 jumping jack, (the) first Negro athlete in Rebel livery."<sup>128</sup> The same article appeared the following day in the *Clarion-Ledger* and was that publication's first reference to Ball's skin color.<sup>129</sup>

Another questionable journalistic decision appeared in the pages of the *Jackson Daily News* on January 27, 1972, a day after Ball's breakout performance against Vanderbilt. Ball, who led the Rebels to victory with a dominating 30-point, 11-rebound effort, was not pictured with the story; rather his teammate Cox was prominently featured with an extended cutline that detailed the Indiana native's difficulties finding clothes that fit.<sup>130</sup> Much like the feature in the *Oxford Eagle*, the novelty of Cox's size could not, from a news standpoint, trump Ball's unique presence on the Ole Miss roster. While the center was worthy of such recognition, publishing his photo with an extended cutline rather than an image of the black forward made little sense.

A profile on Ball would finally make its way around the papers of the Magnolia State on January 28, 1972. Published without a byline or wire affiliation in the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, the article detailed Ball's statistical contributions to the Rebels.

When the anonymous author informed the sophomore that he was leading the team with 17.2 points per game, Ball modestly said, “What difference does it make who scores? Winning is what it’s all about, isn’t it?”<sup>131</sup> However, the profile fell short of a complete account. Ball was never identified in the article as being the school’s first black athlete and, in fact, the only reference to the forward’s race was in the lead. The article began with a ball bouncing off the rim before “a long black arm snapped it from the air and whipped it downcourt.”<sup>132</sup> While newspapers in the Magnolia State published articles on Cox’s inability to find suitable clothes, one would have thought that some sort of reference to Ball’s plight at Ole Miss would have been newsworthy, yet the social and historical significance of “Cool-Aid’s” place on the Rebels’ roster was never discussed or written about in any detail. Both the *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger* published a mug shot of Ball with the story.

While issues pertaining to race had often brought out the conservative side of Baker, the *Jackson Daily News* sports editor appeared to take a liking to Ole Miss’s first black athlete. In his February 7, 1972, edition of “Baker’s Dozen,” Baker attributed the 67-66 loss to the LSU Tigers to Ball’s lengthy in game absence due to foul trouble but placed the blame on the officials rather than the budding star, who was guilty of “some picky-picky officiating, which was at the same time letting some awfully fine NFL-type forearm shivers go by.”<sup>133</sup> Baker again showed some sort of fondness for the sophomore when, in his March 5, 1972, article on Ole Miss’s 101-78 win over LSU, he called Ball, who had 30 points and 14 rebounds in the Rebels’ win, “Mr. Cool,” an obvious play on the forward’s first name.<sup>134</sup> In the March 6, 1972, edition of “Baker’s Dozen,” Baker again referred to Ball as “Mr. Cool” while discussing his performance against the Bayou Bengals and again in his March 7, 1972, article on Ole Miss’ 75-66 loss to Alabama.<sup>135</sup> In regards to the loss to the Crimson Tide, Baker called the sophomore forward, “the Rebs’ last hope . . . with Mr. Cool, there is always a chance he’ll turn hot.”<sup>136</sup> Ball finished with 15 points, 9 rebounds, and five fouls.

In total, the *Jackson Daily News* published fifty-five articles on the Rebels during the 1971-72 basketball season and only two identified Ball's race or place in Ole Miss history.<sup>137</sup> Much like the *Oxford Eagle*, because of Ball's consistent contributions, his name was missing from only four articles.<sup>138</sup>

The *Clarion-Ledger* also covered the Rebels extensively, publishing forty-nine articles during the 1971-72 campaign, forty-seven of which featured Ball.<sup>139</sup> Only two articles did not reference the star forward by name.<sup>140</sup> Ball was first featured in the *Clarion-Ledger* during his sophomore season in sports writer Sue Dabbs' preview of the Rebels' latest campaign and season-opening contest with the Texas Longhorns. Dabbs used Jarvis' comments about the Indianola native, which referred to Ball as a "jumping jack."<sup>141</sup> While Dabbs referenced Ball's place in the Ole Miss starting lineup and his impressive statistics from his freshman season, she did not mention that he was black. After the Rebels' victory over the Longhorns, the *Clarion-Ledger's* article on the game omitted Ball, despite the sophomore's impressive statistical contribution in his first varsity contest.<sup>142</sup>

More than a year after Ball's December 1970 debut on the freshman team, the *Clarion-Ledger* finally identified the forward's ethnicity in a January 6, 1972, article previewing the Rebels' matchup with the University of Kentucky. The article, which had no byline and was placed on the bottom left hand corner of page 12, called Ball, "a 6-5 jumping jack, (the) first Negro athlete in Rebel livery," while discussing "Cool-Aid's" statistical contributions to the Rebels.<sup>143</sup> The same article appeared in the January 5, 1972, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>144</sup>

While the yearlong omission of Ball's ethnic background was negligent on behalf of the *Clarion-Ledger*, the future use of the forward's skin color was curious at best. Larry Guest, the *Clarion-Ledger's* sports editor, referenced Ball's ethnic status only days later, in the January 8, 1972, edition of his column, "In the Spotlight." Guest wrote that the Rebels had a bright future with sophomore standouts Ball, Cox, and Jordan. In describing the trio,

Guest identified each athlete by a characteristic of his on-court play, referring to Jordan as a “sharp shooting guard” and Cox as a “towering center.” Ball’s description, however, was both complimentary to his playing style yet potentially offensive as Guest called him a “liquid-smooth black forward.”<sup>145</sup> Guest’s comments demonstrated the degree of inconsistency that existed in the coverage of race relations in the state. The paper went roughly thirteen months without identifying Ball’s historic presence on the Rebel roster, yet in three days, the paper twice identified him as a “Negro” and “black.” The inclusion of Ball’s skin color also looked more damning considering that his teammates were not identified as white, thus creating an inequality in Guest’s views of the three athletes.

*Clarion-Ledger* sports columnist Carl Walters took a more neglectful path in covering the Rebels’ first black athlete that was reminiscent of his work during the era of the unwritten law. Walters, who often remained silent on issues of race, maintained his personal status quo as he never addressed Ball’s ethnicity despite writing about the Rebels and Ball six times during the 1971-72 season.<sup>146</sup>

In terms of photographs, the *Clarion-Ledger* published its first image of the pioneering basketball star in the January 15, 1972, edition adjacent to an article previewing the Rebels’ games against Mississippi State. Under the heading “Rebel Leaper,” Ball was described in the cutline by his statistical output, but his status as Ole Miss’ first black athlete was not referenced.<sup>147</sup> By comparison, the *Oxford Eagle* published their first photo of Ball on December 3, 1970, roughly thirteen months before the *Clarion-Ledger*. To further illustrate the inconsistent journalistic approach on news items that involved race, the January 25, 1972, issue of the *Clarion-Ledger* published a preview of the Rebels’ January 26, 1972, game against Vanderbilt University which featured two mug shots of Cox and Jordan with the cutline “Ole Miss Sophomore Stars.” Conspicuous by its absence was an image of Ball, the third sophomore who started for the Rebels and, by mere statistical merit, was having a better season than Jordan and an equally as effective campaign as Cox.<sup>148</sup>

Ball's race was again referenced in a descriptive manner in Dabbs' January 27, 1972, account of the Rebels' 92-65 victory over the Commodores of Vanderbilt. Dabbs described Ball, who led the team to victory with a game-high 30 points and 11 rebounds, as a "jumping jack" and a "sophomore sensation." Dabbs then called the budding star "the Black bomber," when discussing his statistical output.<sup>149</sup> Dabbs' use of race in her description of Ball could have been interpreted as insensitive, considering the paper had just revealed Ball's race to its audience early in the month. Furthermore, the use of his race was unnecessary and irrelevant in terms of his ability to play the game. Logically speaking, it was unlikely Dabbs would have described any of Ball's white teammates as "white bombers."

At the *Meridian Star*, the Rebels were prominently featured during the 1971-72 season under the guise of sports editor Robert "Steamboat" Fulton, formally of the *Clarion-Ledger*. In the thirty-eight articles the *Meridian Star* published on the Ole Miss basketball team, nineteen of which were credited to UPI, Ball's race was never mentioned.<sup>150</sup> Justification for such an omission could have come from Lind's December 8, 1970, article and December 13, 1970, feature on the Rebels, both of which identified Ball as black and published a photo of the freshman with each article.<sup>151</sup> Fulton, in fact, penned the first article in the *Meridian Star* on Ball during the 1971-72 season when he reported on Ole Miss' 107-93 win over Southern Miss.<sup>152</sup> Fulton wrote that the forward "cashed in on several easy shots" on his way to 24 points.<sup>153</sup> Fulton's article also featured a photo of Ball by staff photographer Bo King. Neither the article nor King's outline identified Ball as black. King wrote a column in the aftermath of Ole Miss's win over the Southerners and the photographer focused on Cox's 24 point-tally while never mentioning the pioneering forward's race.<sup>154</sup> Ball would appear in four more photos during the 1971-72 season, none of which featured cutlines addressing the sophomore's race.<sup>155</sup>

Fulton again wrote on the Rebels, this time in the wake of the team's 93-82 loss at the hands of Kentucky.<sup>156</sup> Fulton overlooked Ball's 15 points and focused the bulk of his



article on fellow sophomore star Cox, who had 19 points against the Wildcats. Fulton's column-based work for the *Meridian Star* also addressed the Rebels in the January 10 and January 12, 1972, editions of the paper. However, it was not until March 4, 1972, that "Steamboat" specifically focused on "Cool-Aid's" place in Ole Miss history.<sup>157</sup>

The *Meridian Star* never mentioned Ball's status as the first African-American on the Ole Miss varsity until Fulton took it upon himself to pen the only opinion-based article in the newspapers consulted in this chapter to deal with Ball and the integration of basketball at any of the three universities. In the March 4, 1972, edition of the *Meridian Star*, Fulton said that he had three observations about the sophomore superstar: "(1) He is an exceptionally gifted athlete; (2) He is black and, in fact, the first of his race to play basketball at Ole Miss, and; (3) He came to the Rebel campus not to crash barriers but to play basketball in his home state and, hopefully, contribute to the resurgence of the Ole Miss cage program," Fulton wrote.<sup>158</sup> After detailing the Mississippi native's winding trek to Oxford, including his brief summer stint with the University of New Mexico, Fulton explained that Ball "had no apprehension about becoming the Rebs' first black signee" and that he had not second-guessed his decision, citing the welcoming reception he received from the Ole Miss faithful.<sup>159</sup> "According to the blossoming young sophomore, there have been no regrets," Fulton wrote. "Fellow students, teammates and coaches alike have shown respect for Coolidge Ball as the fine athlete that he is and as a Rebel. There have been no problems."<sup>160</sup> Fulton closed his column by writing that Ball was "proud to be a Rebel and he likes the future ahead."<sup>161</sup>

The *Hattiesburg American* featured eight articles on the Rebels, including sports writer Rick Cleveland's account of Ole Miss's February 16, 1971, win over the Southerners by a 107-92 tally.<sup>162</sup> In his article, Cleveland noted the historic significance of Ball's presence on the Ole Miss roster, writing that the sophomore was "the first scholarship Negro to play at Ole Miss."<sup>163</sup> *Hattiesburg American* sports editor Mickey Edwards followed suit, writing in his column "They Say" that Ball was "the school's first black athlete . . . and a very

good one at that.”<sup>164</sup> Cleveland also covered Ball’s freshman contest against Southern Miss on December 16, 1970, a game in which Ole Miss won 78-71. However, the forward’s name was not referenced in the article.<sup>165</sup> Regardless, Cleveland and Edwards acknowledged Ball’s race in their first opportunity during the forward’s first varsity season, which was something that the *Oxford Eagle*, *Clarion-Ledger*, and *Starkville Daily News* could not claim. It was an interesting change for the Hederman-owned *Hattiesburg American*, which failed to acknowledge Jordan’s race in his first two seasons at USM from 1968 through 1970.

Other newspapers in the Magnolia State printed little on Ball’s 1971-72 Ole Miss Rebels, and what material was published usually came from wire reports. The *Starkville Daily News*, which had a local interest in the exploits of Mississippi State’s archrival, published seventeen articles on the Rebels, none of which had bylines and twelve were credited to the Associated Press.<sup>166</sup> Biloxi’s *Daily Herald* featured twenty-four articles on the Rebels, almost all of which were from the AP.<sup>167</sup> In the only article written by a *Daily Herald* sports writer, Ken Ernst, failed to mention Ball at all, despite scoring 22 points in the win over Southern Miss.<sup>168</sup> Ball appeared in two photos during the season in the *Daily Herald*, both of which were from the Associated Press and appeared in the *Clarion-Ledger*.<sup>169</sup> The *Vicksburg Evening Post* of sports editor Billy Ray took a similar route, using articles from the AP to cover the Rebels.<sup>170</sup> In total, none of the content on the Rebels or Ball from *Starkville Daily News*, the *Daily Herald*, and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* addressed the star forward’s ethnicity.

The coverage of Ball’s trailblazing efforts at Ole Miss, at times, was underwhelming. Nevertheless, the absence and inconsistent use of racial references, especially by the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger*, served as a sign that the racial turmoil that once haunted the Magnolia State was slowly being exorcised from sports sections across Mississippi. While many publications exercised a degree of journalistic neglect by never acknowledging Ball’s status as a black athlete, the lack of continuous “black” or “negro” references indicated that

many in the sporting press began to view color as secondary, a progressive thought to say the least. During his three years on the University of Mississippi varsity, Ball played in 74 games, scored 1,072 points, averaged 14.1 points per game, and led the Rebels to three straight winning seasons. For his career, he grabbed 754 rebounds, eighth all-time at Ole Miss. His career rebounding average of 9.9 per game is the second highest in school history. He would be on the Associated Press All-SEC second team in 1972 and 1973, United Press International's All-SEC team in 1972, 1973, and 1974, and the coaches' All-SEC squad in 1972 and 1973. He was voted the team's most valuable player in his senior year by his teammates — all of whom were white. Ball was inducted into the Ole Miss Athletics' Hall of Fame in 1991, the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 2008, and was named to the school's All-Century Team in 2009.<sup>171</sup>

#### Fry and Jenkins Follow Dowsing to Starkville

In 1971, Mississippi State University was the lone member of the SEC that had yet to field an integrated basketball team, a surprise considering it was the 1963 Bulldogs who essentially ended the era of segregated sports in the Magnolia State. That's not to say that other racial inroads were not made in Starkville before blacks were welcomed to the university's hardwood. While Jordan was the first black athlete at USM, Ole Miss, or MSU, there was another potential pioneer who attempted to integrate Mississippi State sports a year prior to Jordan's addition to the Southern Miss roster. Freshman George Pruitt, a native of Starkville and graduate of Harrison High School, joined the Bulldogs' football team in the spring of 1967. So convinced that Pruitt would secure a place on MSU's football team, *The Reflector* proclaimed Pruitt "the first Negro athlete in the history of Mississippi State University."<sup>172</sup> However, after missing three straight practices during the Spring, head coach Charles Shira dismissed Pruitt from the team. Pruitt later told *The Reflector* that the dismissal was a misunderstanding and his absences were excused as he was being treated by his family physician for an injured right calf rather than MSU's team doctor. Pruitt added that he

intended on returning to the team in August 1967, but he never made another appearance on the gridiron for the Bulldogs.<sup>173</sup>

While Pruitt may have failed in his attempts to join the Bulldogs on the gridiron, the athletic integration of MSU still occurred on the football field. Frank Dowsing, Jr., who joined the Bulldogs in December 1968, became the first black athlete to receive a scholarship at any of the three schools in discussion, signing a football scholarship on December 15, 1968, a mere five days after Jordan made his debut for the Southerners. Surprisingly, the *Starkville Daily News* published an article on all of State's signings that college football-recruiting season and failed to identify Dowsing as being black.<sup>174</sup> In the same edition of Sherill Nash's newspaper, a brief article announced the signing of tackle Robert Bell, "the second Negro athlete to sign with State."<sup>175</sup> A similar account appeared in the *Vicksburg Evening Post*.<sup>176</sup> Newspapers outside of MSU's Starkville home base published articles from the Associated Press or United Press International. The AP account, which appeared in the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, lumped Dowsing's signing with that of the acceptance of scholarships for fellow black athletes Willie Jackson of the University of Florida, Larry Howell of Georgia Tech, and James Owens of Auburn University.<sup>177</sup> The *Meridian Star* published UPI's article on Dowsing's signing, which focused on all of the college football scholarships at Mississippi State and Ole Miss. The account, which featured the headline, "State Shatters Tradition By Signing Tupelo Negro," began by calling Dowsing's signing "a tradition shattering move" and identified Dowsing as the first black to receive an athletic scholarship in Mississippi, a point of interest missing from the article in the *Jackson Daily News*.<sup>178</sup> Dowsing, a native of Tupelo, was a three-year starter at defensive back for the Bulldogs and was later inducted into the SEC Hall of Fame.

The recruitment of black athletes at Mississippi State garnered student-based support well before the signing of Dowsing. As early as September 1968, fans were calling for the addition of black athletes to the Starkville-based Bulldogs in the pages of *The Reflector*. In

the aftermath of State's football loss to Louisiana Tech in 1968, Gary Weatherly penned a letter to the editor pointing out that the school should recruit black athletes as, "Negroes enjoy the facilities of Mississippi State, however, they are not presently included in the scope of athletics . . . Why then should our school not concert an honest effort toward recruiting Negro athletes?"<sup>179</sup> In another sign of the changing mindset of Mississippians, Ester M. Thornton asked, in line with "the desire for making satisfactory social adjustment," that the student-based paper stop using the word "Negro" and went with either "Afro-American" or "Black," a request that, at least on the surface, was honored.<sup>180</sup>

In terms of the hardwood, the first black athletes to grace the courts at Mississippi State were Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins. Fry, a guard from Lexington, Tennessee, led the state in scoring during his senior year in high school, while Jenkins, a guard and forward from Gulfport had already become a star of sorts in the Magnolia State, having led Gulfport High School to two state tournaments and one state championship.<sup>181</sup> Like their trailblazing colleagues Jordan and Ball, Jenkins' and Fry's addition to the Bulldogs roster garnered little attention from Mississippi press.

MSU's hometown news source, the *Starkville Daily News* did not seem to find the historic presence of Jenkins and Fry newsworthy. During the high-scoring duo's freshman season, the ethnic status of Jenkins and Fry was never referenced in the Starkville newspaper. While the freshman games on a college campus were not necessarily the highest priority in newsrooms across the state, the *Starkville Daily News* published its fair share of material on the 1971-72 "Bullpup" squad, which finished the regular season an impressive 14-5 and was tagged by freshman head coach Jack Berkshire as "the best team I have had in my seven years of coaching the Bullpups."<sup>182</sup> The *Starkville Daily News* published sixteen articles on the "Bullpups" during the course of the 1971-72 basketball campaign, none of which identified Jenkins and Fry as being black.<sup>183</sup> Nash's December 2, 1971, account of MSU's season-opening victory over South Alabama included a brief two paragraph wrap-up of the

freshman Bulldogs' 71-66 victory over the first-year team from the University of South Alabama. The segregationist Nash cited Jenkins' 26 points and 23 rebounds as being a deciding factor in the game, an ideal place to introduce the two black ballplayers to the Starkville audience.<sup>184</sup> However, the Starkville editor failed to do so, undermining the social significance of Jenkins' and Fry's presence on the MSU freshman roster. Of the sixteen articles, Jenkins' name was referenced in all sixteen and Fry's name appeared in nine as Jenkins averaged 20.9 points per game to lead the freshman MSU squad while Fry finished third on the team with 16.8 points per game. While some of the articles appeared without bylines, Nash, *Starkville Daily News* sports writer Don Foster, and correspondent Larry Templeton all penned accounts on the first-year team meaning, at any time, one of them could have noted Jenkins' and Fry's history-making status as the school's first black basketball players. The only way the audience would have known Jenkins and Fry were black through the pages of the *Starkville Daily News* was in the March 8, 1972, edition of the paper. The final article to appear in the newspaper during the 1971-72 MSU freshman season featured a team picture with Jenkins and Fry prominently displayed on the front row.<sup>185</sup>

In Jackson, both the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Clarion-Ledger* took note of the duo, but like their work on Ball, the notion of race was inconsistently referenced. In the first article in the *Jackson Daily News* to detail the hardwood exploits of Jenkins and Fry, the unknown author called the Gulfport native "one of the first two blacks to play basketball at MSU." Fellow pioneer Fry added 12 points in the 76-53 win over the freshmen of South Alabama, but, despite appearing a mere two paragraphs after Jenkins, he was not identified as the other black athlete on the MSU squad.<sup>186</sup> The *Clarion-Ledger's* account of the duo's first game in maroon and white did not reference either as being black.<sup>187</sup>

During the 14-5 season, the duo would put up respectable scoring numbers throughout their freshman trek. Jenkins would score 29 points against Okaloosa-Walton Junior College, 25 points against Northeast Junior College, 37 points against Auburn, and 24

against Alabama while Fry would score 23 against Ole Miss, 28 against Okaloosa, and 25 against the Crimson Tide. Yet, in the duo's eleven appearances in the *Jackson Daily News*, the ethnic race of Fry was never referenced.<sup>188</sup> The same could be said for the ten articles referencing Jenkins and Fry in the *Clarion-Ledger*, which failed to disclose the race of either athlete.<sup>189</sup>

The *Meridian Star* and Fulton published six articles on the "Bullpups" with the first coming in the January 3, 1972, edition of the *Meridian Star*. The article, which was a wrap up of the team's season to that point, referenced Jenkins' 25 points against Northeast Junior College and Fry's 23 against the Ole Miss Rebels, but the race of both students was omitted.<sup>190</sup> In the January 10, 1972, edition of the *Meridian Star*, Fulton penned a column dealing with the controversial NCAA rule preventing freshmen from playing with varsity teams. MSU basketball coach Kermit Davis, who replaced Joe Dan Gold in 1971, told "Steamboat" that Jenkins could contribute to his 1971-72 varsity squad.<sup>191</sup> Despite the complimentary nod, Jenkins' status as one of the team's first black athletes was not referenced. In the four remaining articles in the *Meridian Star*, Jenkins and Fry were never identified in connection with their race.<sup>192</sup>

The *Daily Herald* in Biloxi, which still featured the talents of sports editor Dick Lightsey and was in close proximity of Jenkins' hometown of Gulfport, published five articles dealing with the freshman Bulldogs, however, none of them referenced Jenkins and Fry as black.<sup>193</sup> It was possible, due to the *Daily Herald's* proximity to Gulfport, that the Biloxi-based newspaper simply felt that their audience was well aware of Jenkins and his race. Other newspapers, such as the *Vicksburg Evening Post* and the *Hattiesburg American*, both failed to publish anything on the 1971-72 "Bullpups" or its two new black stars.<sup>194</sup>

The Reflector, Mississippi State's student newspaper, employed a similar approach. In the anticipation for the start of basketball practice, Nook Nicholson of *The Reflector* detailed the new additions to both the freshman and varsity teams, highlighted by the

recruitment of Fry and Jenkins. While Nicholson discussed the aforementioned high school credentials of the freshmen guard and forward, he failed to mention that both men were the first blacks to suit up for the Bulldogs in the school's history.<sup>195</sup> Later, going by Jim Nicholson, *The Reflector* sports writer covered the 1971-72 season opener for the Bulldogs but only referenced Jenkins' statistical output against South Alabama University.<sup>196</sup> In total, Jenkins, Fry, and their "Bullpup" teammates were featured in *The Reflector* seven times during their freshman season, and the duo's race nor historical status in Starkville was never mentioned.<sup>197</sup>

#### Jenkins and Fry Dominate the Bulldog Varsity

By the time the 1972-73 season started, the Magnolia State had made a complete transformation from the Closed Society that banned the play of integrated teams in 1955. Where as race was once a pertinent issue that was often egregiously ignored by the press or vigorously attacked, the presence of blacks on the state's college athletic teams barely garnered a mentioned, much less was of primary focus by any sports reporters in the Magnolia State. With both Southern Miss and Ole Miss years into their integration on the hardwood, Mississippi State welcomed Jenkins and Fry to the varsity ranks, the first blacks to occupy such positions in the school's history. Their presence on the Bulldogs roster did little to change the bottom line for Davis, as his team went 11-15 with a 4-14 conference record during the 1972-73 season. From a journalistic perspective, a degree of neglect could be inferred from the lack of any acknowledgement of the duo's place in school history. However, by 1972, MSU was the last of the Closed Society's educational stalwarts to integrate its basketball team and the last in the SEC, making it a somewhat expected and, perhaps, dated occurrence. For the first time in the history of the Magnolia State and integrated athletics, the press simply found little significance in the presence of blacks on one of their once sacred, all-white basketball courts.



One of the primary examples of this change was Nash's *Starkville Daily News*. The first material in the paper to deal with the 1972-73 campaign was published on December 1, 1972, and the article, which did not have a byline, identified both Jenkins and Fry as newcomers to the Bulldog varsity but neglected their history-making status as the school's first black varsity basketball players.<sup>198</sup> Nash's neglected was repeated in his account on Mississippi State's December 4, 1972, win against the University of Texas Longhorns, 80-69. The paper's editor identified both Jenkins and Fry as newcomers who contributed to the victory, as Fry led the team with 15 points and Jenkins added 13; however, Nash did not mention that the two men were black.<sup>199</sup> While Nash would continue to ignore the ethnicity of the Bulldogs' black stars, perhaps one of the more opportune times to reference the historical presence of Jenkins and Fry came in the February 6, 1973, edition of the *Starkville Daily News*. Nash's account on the team's 84-78 loss to the LSU Tigers featured a photo from the Associated Press depicting Fry, Jenkins, and LSU's first black athlete Collis Temple, Jr., all going after a rebound. However, despite the visual appearance of the trailblazing triad, the obvious skin tone of the three men was not referenced.<sup>200</sup>

Not only would the duo become starters, both Jenkins and Fry excelled from a statistical standpoint for the Bulldogs. Jenkins scored 22 points in a January 2, 1973, loss to Michigan State; 29 in a January 3, 1973, win over the University of Hawaii; 20 against proverbial SEC power the University of Kentucky on January 8, 1973; and 23 against the University of Georgia in January 29, 1973. Jenkins finished his sophomore campaign averaging 17.6 points per game and 7.1 rebounds.<sup>201</sup> Fry also put up solid numbers, scoring 30 points in a February 19, 1973, matchup with Auburn and 21 against Alabama on March 3, 1973. The Tennessee native finished his first varsity season with a 12.5 point per game average and a team-leading 7.7 rebounds per contest.<sup>202</sup> Yet, in the twenty-three articles published in the *Starkville Daily News* during the course of the season, neither sophomore was ever referenced or identified as being black.<sup>203</sup> The Starkville newspaper also published

photos of either Fry or Jenkins on five occasions during the 1972-73 season, including the aforementioned December 6, 1973, image against the LSU squad, serving as the publication's only nod to the race of the Bulldog standouts.<sup>204</sup>

The other notable Starkville-based news source, *The Reflector*, also identified both Jenkins and Fry as possible contributors to the Bulldogs' varsity, starting with the October 17, 1972, edition of the student-based newspaper. The article, penned by an anonymous reporter, was the first to reference the black duo during the 1972-73 season and indicated that the team would begin practice with all starting positions up for grabs. The writer described Jenkins and Fry as "promising newcomers" who had as good a chance as anyone to take one of the open spots.<sup>205</sup> Weeks later, Scoop Bass identified Jenkins and Fry as potential starters in his preview of the upcoming campaign but ignored the ethnic status of the duo.<sup>206</sup> The same could be said for Bass' December 5, 1972, article for *The Reflector*, which looked at the 2-0 Bulldogs and referenced the performance of both Jenkins and Fry on the young season, but again the student journalist did not include a reference to their race.<sup>207</sup> In total, the prolific pair were mentioned in twenty-three articles in the student newspaper during the 1972-73 campaign, none of which recognized their race.<sup>208</sup> Jenkins and Fry also appeared in three photos in *The Reflector* during the season and, like the *Starkville Daily News*, was the only evidence of the pair's ethnicity.<sup>209</sup>

While both news outlets in Starkville failed to reference the race of MSU's groundbreaking duo, the *Clarion-Ledger* took the initiative to note the historic presence of both Jenkins and Fry early in their first varsity campaign. While Jenkins and Fry were mentioned in the *Clarion-Ledger's* articles on the team's win against Samford and a preview of the December 4, 1972, contest against the University of Texas, neither article mentioned the race of the two sophomores.<sup>210</sup> That changed in the paper's coverage of MSU's 80-69 win over the Longhorns as sports writer Ponto Downing wrote of the duo, "Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins, Mississippi State's first ever black starters, were two of the new look Bulldogs who

helped send the Longhorns packing.”<sup>211</sup> Downing’s nod to the significance of the two varsity rookies was significant for the *Clarion-Ledger*, considering that, in the limited coverage of the 1971-72 MSU freshman team, neither Jenkins nor Fry were acknowledged as being black. Downing, who was the *Clarion-Ledger*’s assistant sports editor, even referenced the two in his column, “Wednesday’s Special” in the January 17, 1973, edition of the *Clarion-Ledger*, but his commentary remained of an athletic hue, focusing on the poor conference start of the Bulldogs.<sup>212</sup> Once Downing identified the race of Jenkins and Fry, the *Clarion-Ledger* kept to the silo-like confines of sports and, in the twenty-eight articles that referenced the two sophomores, only the December 5, 1972, article on the Texas game mentioned that they were black.<sup>213</sup>

The paper’s conservative approach to the issue was also evident in the column-based work of longtime *Clarion-Ledger* sports writer Carl Walters, who wrote about the MSU squad on January 31 and February 2, 1973. In both editions of his column “Shavin’s,” Walters identified Jenkins as the team’s statistical leader, however, he did not mention his race.<sup>214</sup>

Like the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Jackson Daily News* noted the significance of the sophomore standouts early in the Bulldogs’ 1972-73 campaign and, in fact, published Downing’s December 5, 1972, work on MSU’s game against the Longhorns in the *Jackson Daily News* the same day without a byline. As in Downing’s original article, both Jenkins and Fry were referenced as State’s “first black starters.”<sup>215</sup> While the *Jackson Daily News* did identify Jenkins’ as the school’s first black basketball player during his freshman season, Downing’s reference to the historic duo helped give the *Jackson Daily News* a degree of balance between identifying the news-based references of their presence and from potentially exploiting race, an unfamiliar degree of care to say the least from the traditionally segregationist newspaper. In the case of the *Jackson Daily News*, it could be argued that the better place to reference the race of Jenkins and Fry would have been in the December 1,

1972, issue when an anonymous author identified the two as new starters for Davis.<sup>216</sup> The *Jackson Daily News* kept any printed material on Jenkins and Fry to the confines of sports as the race of the pair was never referenced in any article for the duration of the 1972-73 season.<sup>217</sup> Pictures of the two appeared in the January 11, 1973, edition of the paper, accompanying an article on the Bulldogs' January 13, 1973, game against the University of Mississippi. The cutline, which only referenced the then-statistical averages of the budding SEC stars, began with the phrase "SOPHOMORE STANDOUTS."<sup>218</sup> Fry would later appear in a photo depicting action from the Bulldogs' victory over the University of Georgia 90-84 in the January 30, 1973, edition of the *Jackson Daily News*. In the photo, Fry was battling UGA's Tom Bassett and Steve Waxman for a rebound.<sup>219</sup>

Much like his fellow *Jackson Daily News* sports writers, longtime sports editor Lee Baker also stayed away from the issue of race when writing of the MSU team, as evidenced by his January 15, 1973, edition of "Baker's Dozen." In the aftermath of MSU's January 13, 1973, loss to the Ole Miss Rebels 74-61, a game in which Jenkins led MSU with 22 points and Fry added 15, Baker wrote that the young Bulldogs played well but failed to recognize any members of the team by name.<sup>220</sup>

Perhaps the one journalistic decision that could have been argued in the pages of the *Jackson Daily News* appeared in the March 7, 1973, edition of the paper. A feature on MSU freshman standout Rich Knarr appeared in the paper's sports section and, while Knarr's season of 18 points per game as a first-year Bulldog was noteworthy, it could have been debated that Jenkins' or Fry's first varsity season was an equally deserving story as the tale of Knarr.<sup>221</sup> Jenkins, who finished the season second to Knarr in scoring with 17.6 points per game, was by no means statistically inferior to the freshman and his status as one of MSU's first black basketball players would have his story more relevant on both a social and athletic front.

Other newspapers did little to identify the racial status of Jenkins and Fry. The sports section of the *Meridian Star*, which was under the editorial guidance of Orley Hood, published a number of articles on the MSU contingent during the 1972-73 season but never referenced their race.<sup>222</sup> The *Meridian Star* also featured photos of either Jenkins or Fry on two occasions during their first varsity campaign.<sup>223</sup> The *Vicksburg Evening Post* also failed to reference the history-making presence of Jenkins and Fry during the season, publishing primarily material from the Associated Press.<sup>224</sup> The only editorial reference made to the MSU season by Vicksburg sports editor Billy Ray, who lamented the team's disastrous 11-15 season, failed to reference any of the players by name.<sup>225</sup> The *Evening Post* published a photo from the AP of Fry in the January 9, 1973, edition of the paper, but it was the only item in the Vicksburg-based newspaper during Jenkins' and Fry's first two seasons in Starkville to acknowledge that a member of the Bulldogs' roster was black.<sup>226</sup> The *Daily Herald* in Biloxi took a similar approach to the 1972-73 MSU season, publishing only wire-based material and never referencing the ethnicity of Jenkins and Fry.<sup>227</sup> In one of his daily columns, sports editor Dick Lightsey wrote that the arrival of Jenkins was a welcomed addition to the Bulldogs' lineup, but his race was not mentioned.<sup>228</sup> The same could be said for the *Hattiesburg American*, which published seventeen articles during the season and never cited the duo's skin color.<sup>229</sup> Like the aforementioned publications, the *American* featured three photos depicting the pair, specifically Jenkins, during the season and served as the paper's only acknowledgements of the Gulfport native's race.<sup>230</sup>

Both Fry and Jenkins excelled on the hardwood in Starkville, littering their names throughout the school's basketball record book. In their sophomore seasons on the Bulldogs, despite winning only four conference games, Jenkins finished second on the team with 17.6 points and tallied 6.8 rebounds per contest while Fry finished with 12.5 points and first in rebounds with 7.7 per contest. In their junior season, the groundbreaking duo finished first and third on the Bulldogs in scoring, with Jenkins averaging 18.1 and Fry at 13.5 points per

game. Both chipped in 6.8 and 7.7 rebounds, respectively. Jenkins, the team's captain in his senior campaign of 1974-75, led the team in scoring at 22.1 points per game, the eighth highest single season average in school history, and averaged 6.9 rebounds per game. Fry was right behind Jenkins at 15.5 points and 8.8 rebounds per game.<sup>231</sup> Jenkins scored 1503 points in his MSU career, eighth all-time at the school, and his average of 19.3 points per game is fourth all-time. Fry scored 1,079 points during his MSU career with a 13.8 point per game average.

### Conclusion

From 1968 through 1973, the previously segregated basketball teams at Southern Miss, Ole Miss, and Mississippi State opened up their ranks to African-Americans, ushering in a new sense of equality in Magnolia State athletics. The 1965 integration of the Southeastern Conference and the impending presence of black opponents, not surprisingly, was ignored by Mississippi's newspapers, a typical journalistic tactic approved by the purveyors of the Closed Society. While Mississippi's journalistic community met the early efforts of Wilbert Jordan, Jr., at USM with a degree of neglect, the press was in the middle of an ideological change that justified the lack of coverage found years later in the additions of Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins to the Mississippi State roster. Jordan was, more or less, the James Meredith of Mississippi sports, serving as the first athlete of color to grace any of the state's previously segregated college rosters. His 1968 addition to the Hattiesburg-based Southerners should have been treated with a greater sense of journalistic importance, especially from the local *Hattiesburg American* and the campus-based *Student Printz*. The fact that these publications went two years without mentioning that the Waynesboro native was a member of the USM squad and the state's first black athlete at a formally segregated institution was an egregious journalistic violation that was rife with the racist tactics once employed by the Closed Society's media-based protectors.

However, as civil rights breached the ideological walls of the state, the press was in the middle of an evolutionary change. While integration on any level, much less in the valued athletic ranks of Ole Miss and Mississippi State, was once met with a degree of outrage, the press began to accept the presence of blacks in various social venues, including sports. By the time Coolidge Ball, Jenkins, and Fry make their way to Oxford and Starkville in the early 1970s, social equality had dissolved the once impenetrable ignorance demonstrated by Mississippi's journalists during the adoption of the unwritten law. When Ball made his first appearance with the Ole Miss freshmen in 1970, the reporters in the Magnolia State were in a transitional stage where the Fourth Estate was, more or less, learning how to balance news value with issues involving race. While the press was inconsistent in referencing the ethnic status of the aforementioned athletes, most of the newspapers consulted in this chapter, at one time or another, did identify their history-making presence, signifying the social significance of these athletic additions. By the time Jenkins and Fry joined the Bulldogs, not only did the press find ethnic status less relevant, but the same derogatory and racist terminology that was once a hallmark in Mississippi's journalistic ranks had disappeared. While on the surface, the failure to identify the race of these athletes may have been viewed as an inexcusable oversight, by 1973, it was a sign of social progress. Rather than fixating on the skin color of Ball, Jenkins, and Fry, the press treated the trio as mere basketball players, a refreshing and progressive change in Mississippi's journalistic community.

---

<sup>1</sup>Perry Wallace, Interview with author, 18 April 2006 and Walt Smith, "'I've Made My Last Trip To Places Like Mississippi' – Perry Wallace," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1970, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Wilbert Jordan, Jr., interview with author, 15 August 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Nossiter, *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002), 202; and James Dickerson, *Dixie's Dirty Little Secret: The True Story of How the Government, the Media, and the Mob Conspired to Combat Integration and the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 195. Nossiter wrote that the integration of the schools in Jackson had gone so smoothly that veteran broadcast journalist Walter Cronkite cited the city and the school system as the ideal model for implementing integration. Dickerson identified the "surprising" election of Waller

as having a social and political impact throughout the state and whose decisions in office helped lead to the end of the Sovereignty Commission in 1977.

<sup>4</sup> Alex A. Alston and James L. Dickerson, *Devil's Sanctuary: An Eyewitness Account of Mississippi Hate Crimes* (Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2009), 329. Dickerson, a former *Jackson Daily News* reporter during the 1970s, wrote that Ward was "a personable man with a good sense of humor who never made a racist comment in my presence," despite his sour reputation.

<sup>5</sup> Kelso Sturgeon, "Cats Want Negroes Recruited In SEC," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 March 1963, 13; "Will Negroes Enter S.E.C.?" *Jackson Daily News*, 26 March 1963, 13; and "Kentucky Board to Study Mixing," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 April 1963, 11.

<sup>6</sup> "Tucky Questions SEC On Integrated Athletics," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 April 1963, 8; "Not At Home Vow Maroons," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 April 1963, 2; "Tech, Tulane, Kentucky Will Break Color Barrier in Athletics," *Meridian Star*, 13 April 1963, 7; "Two SEC Teams Agree To Play Against Negroes," *Natchez Democrat*, 13 April 1963, 5; "State Replies 'No' To Mixed Sports Inquiry," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 April 1963, 3; "Three SEC Schools Okay Mixed Athletic Lineups," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 16 April 1963, 2; and "Tech And Tulane Okay Integration," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 April 1963, 3.

<sup>7</sup> "U.K. Athletic Directors Formally O.K. Mixing," *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 April 1963, 11; "Kentucky Says Negroes 'SI,'" *Commercial Dispatch*, 30 April 1963, 7; "Kentucky Formally Favors Sports-Mix," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 April 1963, 10; "Tucky Negroes Out This Season," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 April 1963, 16; "Tucky May Use Negro Athletes," *Meridian Star*, 30 April 1963, 9; "Kentucky Lowers Sports Race Bar," *Starkville Daily News*, 30 April 1963, 3; and "Kentucky Asks To Integrate Athletic Setup Inside Framework Of Circuit," *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 30 April 1963, 2.

<sup>8</sup> "Tulane Frosh Win Two Games," *Times-Picayune*, 14 March 1965, 7E.

<sup>9</sup> The *Jackson Daily News*, *Clarion-Ledger*, and *Starkville Daily News* were examined from March 1, 1965, through May 1, 1965. No articles on MSU's baseball games against Tulane were found.

<sup>10</sup> "1<sup>st</sup> SEC Negro Athlete Plays With Tulane," *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1966, 16; and "Negro Makes Debut With Tulane Nine," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 March 1966, 11.

<sup>11</sup> *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), 8 March 1966, 7B.

<sup>12</sup> "Coleman to Take SEC Office Today," *Times-Picayune*, 1 April 1966, 5C.

<sup>13</sup> The following newspapers were consulted for this information on April 15, April 16, April 30, and May 1, 1966, the dates in which MSU would have been playing Tulane's baseball team in New Orleans and Starkville. None of following newspapers made mention of Martin in their accounts: *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), *Clarion-Ledger*, *Commercial Dispatch*, *Delta Democrat-Times*, *Hattiesburg American*, *Jackson Daily News*, *Meridian Star*, *Natchez Democrat*, *Starkville Daily News*, *Daily Journal* (Tupelo), and *Vicksburg Evening Post*.



---

<sup>14</sup> “Wallace First Negro To Get SEC Grant,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 April 1966, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 April 1966, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Perry Wallace, interview with author, 18 April 2006

<sup>17</sup> William Giles Papers, A81-25, Box 5, Athletic Department, 1966-67. Correspondence via letter to Ralph Brown from T. K. Martin, January 4, 1967. University Archives, Special Collections, Mississippi State University.

<sup>18</sup> While freshmen games generally didn’t draw a lot of media attention, when they were covered, the freshman teams of Mississippi State University, the University of Mississippi, and the University of Southern Mississippi were often bestowed with a nickname of sorts by the press in order to distinguish the rookie team from their varsity counterparts. At Mississippi State, the freshman squad was often referred to as the “Bullpups” rather than the Bulldogs; at Ole Miss, it was the “Baby Rebs” as opposed to the Rebels and, at USM, and it was the “Baby Southerners” or the “Baby Giants” rather than the Southerners or the “Golden Giants.”

<sup>19</sup> “Bullpups Hammer Vanderbilt Frosh,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1967, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Lee Baker, “Baker’s Dozen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1967, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Perry Wallace, interview with author, 18 April 2006.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Walt Smith, “‘I’ve Made My Last Trip To Places Like Mississippi’ — Perry Wallace,” *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1970, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Wilbert Jordan, Jr., interview with author, 15 August 2010.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> The newspapers examined included the *Jackson Daily News*, the *Clarion-Ledger*, the *Meridian Star*, the *Delta Democrat-Times*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, the *Jackson Advocate*, and the student-based *Student Printz*.

<sup>27</sup> “Southern Frosh Wind Up With Two Men On Floor,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 December 1968, 3; “Southern Freshmen Lose To Tulane JV,” *Hattiesburg American*, 12 December 1968, 3; “Southern Freshman Clobbered By LSU,” *Hattiesburg American*, 19 December 1968, 3; “Southern Frosh Score First Win,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 December 1968, 19; “USM Frosh Lose To Pensacola Navy,” *Hattiesburg American*, 21 December 1968, 9; Gene Wiggins, “USM Bombed On Home Court By West Florida,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 January 1969, 12; “USM Frosh Win 88-81 over Belhaven,” *Hattiesburg American*, 14 January 1969, 9; “Southern Frosh Lose To Strong South Alabama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 17 January 1969, 13; Regiel Napier, “Southerners Sharp In Trampling Tech,” *Hattiesburg American*, 21 January 1969, 6; Regiel Napier, “Southerners Beat Gents, Face Morehead Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 30 January 1969, 18; Robert Cleveland, “Southerners Outscore High-Scoring Morehead,” *Hattiesburg American*, 31 January 1969, 12; Regiel

---

Napier, "Southerners Romp, Host Samford Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 February 1969, 4; "USM Annihilates Cold Samford Team, 100-79," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 February 1969, 12; Regiel Napier, "Fantastic Shot Sinks Southern," *Hattiesburg American*, 7 February 1969, 10; and Regiel Napier, "Southerners Breeze In Final Home Game," *Hattiesburg American*, 11 February 1969, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Regiel Napier, "Napier's Sports Nosings," *Hattiesburg American*, 30 January 1969, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Wilbert Jordan, Jr., interview with author, 15 August 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Joe Fannin, "USM Loses," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 9 January 1969, 4; "Fresh 5 Win," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 16 January 1969, 4; "USM Frosh Defeated 89-83 By Pensacola Junior College," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 23 January 1969, 3; Joe Fannin, "USM Frosh Win Fifth Game," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 6 February 1969, 3; "Frosh Win," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 11 February 1969, 2; and "Frosh Win Seventh," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 13 February 1969, 4.

<sup>31</sup> "Fall To Tulane JV," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1968, 10B; "LSU Hands USM Frosh 5<sup>th</sup> Defeat," *Jackson Daily News*, 19 December 1968, 11B; "USM Frosh Win First Cage Game," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 December 1968, 4B; "Nicholls St. Tops Southern Frosh In 81-78 Contest," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 January 1969, 2C; "South Alabama Grabs Victory Over USM Frosh," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 January 1969, 12; "Florence Hosts Frosh Game," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1969, 6B; "U.S.M. Frosh Out Of Game," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 January 1969, 4C, 8C.

<sup>32</sup> Lee Baker, "Southerners Flop, 90-69," *Jackson Daily News* 8 January 1969, 12, 15; Lee Baker, "Southerners Hop Griddle To Fire," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 January 1969, 2; and Lee Baker, "Southern Bumps Morehead Eagles," *Jackson Daily News*, 31 January 1969, 16.

<sup>33</sup> David Davidson, "Delta State Tips Past Southerners," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1969, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 January 1969, 2.

<sup>35</sup> Lee Baker, "Southern Bumps Morehead Eagles," *Jackson Daily News*, 31 January 1969, 16.

<sup>36</sup> Gene Wiggins, "Southerners Come Alive Late to Win," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 December 1969, 13; "Cold Southerners Mauled by Morehead," *Hattiesburg American*, 8 December 1969, 22; Rick Cleveland, "Southerners Get Fast Break Working to Whip SF State," *Hattiesburg American*, 11 December 1969, 19; Gene Wiggins, "Southerners Show Class in Blitzing SF State," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 December 1969, 18; Gene Wiggins, "Southerners Stave Off Lamar Tech Rally to Win," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1969, 8; Mickey Edwards, "Southerners Complete Sweep of Home Stand," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 December 1969, 12; "Southerners Crush Northwestern La.," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 January 1970, 6; Mickey Edwards, "Stunned Southerners Host S. Alabama Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 8 January 1970, 14; Rick Cleveland, "Southerners Romp, Play Roanoke Here Saturday," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 January 1970, 10; "West Florida Plays Southern Here Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 January 1970, 15; Gene Wiggins,

---

“Southerners Barely Win Error-Filled Game,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 January 1970, 7; Gene Wiggins, “Last Minute Shots Miss and Southerners Lose,” *Hattiesburg American*, 28 January 1970, 12; “West Florida Pounds Southerners, 98-81,” *Hattiesburg American*, 31 January 1970, 6; Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Outclass Pan American, 103-78,” *Hattiesburg American*, 10 February 1970, 7; “Southerners Stumble Before Delta, 78-72,” *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1970, 10; Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Stumble to Another Defeat,” *Hattiesburg American*, 18 February 1970, 10; and Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Finish Strong to Beat Delta,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1970, 12.

<sup>37</sup> “Home Opener Tonight At USM,” *Hattiesburg American*, 3 December 1969, 15; “S.F. Bringing Strong Team to USM,” *Hattiesburg American*, 9 December 1969, 6; “Southerners Face Three Toughies Here Next Week,” *Hattiesburg American*, 13 December 1969, 6; “Tall Techman Invade the Coliseum Thursday,” *Hattiesburg American*, 17 December 1969, 19; “Southerners Resume Action Tonight at Arkansas State,” *Hattiesburg American*, 3 January 1970, 8; “Southern Crush Northwestern La.,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 January 1970, 6; “Southerner Open Home Stand Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 January 1970, 15; “South Alabama Determined to Knock Off USM Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 January 1970, 14; “Southerners Play Centenary Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 13 January 1970, 9; “Southerners invade Spring Hill Saturday,” *Hattiesburg American*, 14 January 1970, 11; “Southerners Host a Toughy Tuesday,” *Hattiesburg American*, 22 January 1970, 14; “High-Scoring Game Expected Here Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 27 January 1970, 8; “USM Players Pass Milestones in Thriller,” *Hattiesburg American*, 29 January 1970, 9; “Southerners end Season With Three Home Games Next Week,” *Hattiesburg American*, 14 February 1970, 6; and “Southerners Host ‘Nooga Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1970, 14.

<sup>38</sup> “Southerners Upset by Gents in Overtime,” *Hattiesburg American*, 14 January 1970, 13; and Gene Wiggins, “Foul Trouble Leads to Defeat for USM,” *Hattiesburg American*, 7 February 1970, 10.

<sup>39</sup> “Southern Basketballers Reported Shaping Up Well,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 November 1969, 7.

<sup>40</sup> “USM Cagers Open Season Monday Night at ‘Bama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 28 November 1969, 8; and “USM Cagers Open Tonight at Alabama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 1 December 1969, 14.

<sup>41</sup> “New Southerners,” *Hattiesburg American*, 1 December 1969, 14.

<sup>42</sup> “Southerners Bombed By Bama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 2 December 1969, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Come Alive Late To Win,” *Hattiesburg American*, 4 December 1969, 13; “Southerners Stagger Past South Alabama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 5 December 1969, 15; Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Topple La. Tech, Play West Texas State Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 19 December 1969, 14; Mickey Edwards, “Southerners Complete Sweep of Home Stand,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 December 1969, 12; Gene Wiggins, “Southerners Shoot Down Roanoke, 99-85,” *Hattiesburg American*, 12 January 1970, 15; Gene Wiggins, “Sloppy Southerners Lose to Chattanooga,” *Hattiesburg American*, 17 February 1970, 6.

---

<sup>44</sup> Mickey Edwards, "Southerners Complete Sweep of Home Stand," *Hattiesburg American*, 20 December 1969, 12.

<sup>45</sup> "Southern Hosts Delta Tonight," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 February 1970, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 1 December 1969, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 4 December 1969, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 December 1969, 13; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 8 December 1969, 20; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 December 1969, 6; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 10 December 1969, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 11 December 1969, 20; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 December 1969, 19; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1969, 9; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 18 December 1969, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 January 1970, 11; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 January 1970, 6; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 7 January 1970, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 January 1970, 16; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 January 1970, 10; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 14 January 1970, 13; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 January 1970, 18; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 January 1970, 7; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 22 January 1970, 13; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 27 January 1970, 4; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 28 January 1970, 10; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 February 1970, 18; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 February 1970, 10; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 February 1970, 15; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 10 February 1970, 14; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1970, 11; Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 February 1970, 15; and Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 18 February 1970, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 December 1969, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Gene Wiggins, "My View," *Hattiesburg American*, 19 February 1970, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Dick Tarbutton, "On His Way," *Hattiesburg American*, 17 February 1970, 6.

<sup>50</sup> "Practice Opens for Basketball," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 16 October 1969, 4.

<sup>51</sup> "Basketball Opener Set for Dec. 1," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 18 November 1969, 4; "Tide Trounce Giants," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 4 December 1969, 4; "Southerners Meet Gators In Next Home Cage Tilt," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 9 December 1969, 6; Barry Camp, "Giants Trample Gators Twice," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 16 December 1969, 7; "Southern Edges Lamar 89-84," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 18 December 1969, 4; "Giants Win Four Games," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 6 January 1970, 5; "Giants Crush Demons 109-83 Monday Night," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 8 January 1970, 3; "Southerners Win Two; Lose One To LSUNO," *Student Printz* (The

University of Southern Mississippi), 13 January 1970, 5; "Southerners Top Maroons 99-85 in Afternoon Tilt," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 13 January 1970, 5; "Southerners Lose To Gents 76-72 In Overtime Play," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 15 January 1970, 3; "Steve Sparks, "Giants Down Badgers 84-77 Last Weekend," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 20 January 1970, 5; Steve Sparks, "Giants Add Argonauts To Season Victory List," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 22 January 1970, 3; Monarchs Grasp Half Time Lead To Edge Giants," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 29 January 1970, 3; "Revengeful Argonauts Control Giants 98-81," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 3 February 1970, 5; "Giants Suffer Setback," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 5 February 1970, 3; "Giants Muffled 95-87," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 10 February 1970, 4; "Giants Demolish Broncos," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 12 February 1970, 3; "Giants Toppled By Delta State," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 17 February 1970, 3; Steve Sparks, "Giants, Delta State Clash Tonight," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 19 February 1970, 3; and Steve Sparks, "Giants Wreck Delta State To Cap Season," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 24 February 1970, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 18 December 1969, 4; Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 6 January 1970, 5; Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 13 January 1970, 5; Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 15 January 1970, 3; Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 20 January 1970, 5; Biff Lampton, "Lampton's Lampoons," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 20 January 1970, 5; Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 5 February 1970, 3; Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 10 February 1970, 4; Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 12 February 1970, 3; Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 17 February 1970, 3; and Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 24 February 1970, 4.

<sup>53</sup> "Rebound Anyone," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 13 January 1970, 5.

<sup>54</sup> "Monarchs Grasp Half Time Lead To Edge Giants," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 29 January 1970, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Steve Sparks, "Sparks Barks," *Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 24 February 1970, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Wilbert Jordan, Jr., interview with author, 15 August 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Lee Baker, "Tall Tide Sophomores Massacre Southerners," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 December 1969, 13A.

<sup>58</sup> “State College Basketball Begins To Roll,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 December 1969, 17; “Tall Tide Sophomores Massacre Southerners,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 December 1969, 13A; “Southerners Try Another ’Bama Brand,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 December 1969, 1B; “Southern Bounds Into Victory Lane,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 December 1969, 1C; “Southern Wins 2<sup>nd</sup> Cage Test,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 December 1969, 19; Lee Baker, “State Cage Picture Dim,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1969, 1B; Lee Baker, “Frisco State Visits USM,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 December 1969, 1B; David Davidson, “USM Steams Past SF State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 December 1969, 14B; David Davidson, “Wendell Paces USM Victory Over SF State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1969, 1B; David Davidson, “USM’s First-Half Lead Withstands Tech Siege,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 December 1969, 5B; David Davidson, “USM Wins 4<sup>th</sup> Straight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 19 December 1969, 1B, 4B; Davis Smith, “5<sup>th</sup> Straight To Southern,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 December 1969, 2A; David Davidson, “USM Takes 6<sup>th</sup> Straight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 January 1970, 16, 17; “Southern Demolishes Northwest,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 January 1970, 9A; “Southern Gets Beat By LSUNO,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 January 1970, 2B; “Southern Wins 10<sup>th</sup> Of Season,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 January 1970, 14A; “USM Southerners Edge Out Big Roanoke College, 99-85,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 11 January 1970, 3C; “Southern Bounces Roanoke College,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 January 1970, 20; Lee Baker, “USM Going Back On Lonely Road,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 January 1970, 11; “Southerners Dump Spring Hill 84-77,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 18 January 1970, 5B; Lee Baker, “USM Skins UWF In Last Minute,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 January 1970, 10A; Lee Baker, “Old Dominion Holds Off Late Southern Uprising,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1970, 13; “Southern Fouls Costly In Loss To W. Florida,” *Jackson Daily News*, 31 January 1970, 2A; “S’eastern Upsets Southern Cagers,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 February 1970, 10; “Southern Travels Again,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 February 1970, 16; “Ladner Breaks Another USM Rebound Mark,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 February 1970, 9; “USM Visits DSC Tonight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1970, 16A; Lee Baker, “Don Cooper Leads Delta,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1970, 12A; “USM Turnovers Mean 11<sup>th</sup> Loss,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1970, 12; Lee Baker, “Disaster Strikes Southern Again,” *Jackson Daily News*, 18 February 1970, 13; and “Careers End For USM Greats Ladner, Vitrano,” *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1970, 5B. Jordan’s name was missing from the box scores accompanying articles on the January 13, 1970 contest against Centenary and the February 6, 1970 matchup with Louisiana Tech, indicating that the sophomore guard did not play, “Southern Falls At Centenary In Overtime,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 January 1970, 16A and “Louisiana Tech Real Poor Hosts To Southern,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1970, 2.

<sup>59</sup> David Davidson, “USM Wins 4<sup>th</sup> Straight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 19 December 1969, 1B, 4B.

<sup>60</sup> Lee Baker, “Southern Putters Past Delta State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1970, 11A.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Lee Baker, “Southern Wraps Up With a Victory,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1970, 2C.

<sup>63</sup> “USM Evens Mark Via 95-85 Triumph,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 January 1969, 14; Wayne Thompson, “Delta St. Topples Southerners, 84-82,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1969, 23-24; “Alabama Thrashes Southern Cagers,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1969, 5B; “USM

Southerners Begin Home Basketball Season,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 December 1969, 1B; “Southerners Top St. Bernard Crew,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 December 1969, 6E; “USM Downs Frisco 5 In 81-72 Tilt,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 December 1969, 7D; “USM Clobbers Frisco State,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 December 1969, 2C; “USM Tops Tech,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 December 1969, 18; “Southerners Down La. Tech by 84-81,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 December 1969, 4C; “Southerners Down West Texas 75-72,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 December 1969, 10; “USM Routs N’Western By 109-83,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 January 1970, 22; “USM Skein Halted By LSUNO,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 January 1970, 2B; “USM Cagers Win 10<sup>th</sup> BY 104-79 Rout,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 January 1970, 14A; “USM Loses In Overtime to Centenary Club 76-72,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 January 1970, 14; “Southerners Overcome West Florida By 67-63,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 January 1970, 12; “Southerners Beaten Despite Fast Finish,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 January 1970, 12; “S’East La. Upsets USM By 97-83,” 3 February 1970, 12; “USM Losing Streak Now At Four,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 February 1970, 22; “Ladner Leads Southern To Win Over Pan-Am 5,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1970, 15; “Delta State, Southern Square Off Tonight,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1970, 3B; “Delta State Defeats USM In 78-72 Upset,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1970, 2C; “USM Heads Into Final Week of Cage Season,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 February 1970, 15; “Chattanooga Clips USM 77-72 In Ragged Battle,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1970, 13; “Biscayne Downs USM Club, 86-83,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 18 February 1970, 14; “Southern Wraps Up With A Victory,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1970, 2C; and “Ladner, Vitrano Terminate Successful Careers At USM,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 February 1970, 5B.

<sup>64</sup> “Alabama Thrashes Southern Cagers,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1969, 5B.

<sup>65</sup> “Box Scores,” *Meridian Star*, 2 December 1969, 8.

<sup>66</sup> “Southern Frosh Fall To LSUNO,” *Meridian Star*, 10 December 1968, 8; “USM Whips SFS, 81-72,” *Meridian Star*, 11 December 1969, 8; “USM Stops SFS Again, 100-74,” *Meridian Star*, 12 December 1969, 8; “USM Staves Off Lamar, 87-83,” 16 December 1969, 8; “LSUNO Whips Southern, 91-84,” *Meridian Star*, 8 January 1970, 10; “Southerners Show, 11-4 Record With 11 To Go,” *Meridian Star*, 17 January 1970, 2B; “S’Eastern La. Drops Southern,” *Meridian Star*, 3 February 1970, 9; “Southern Falls To La. Tech,” *Meridian Star*, 7 February 1970, 11; “Delta St. Dumps Southern, 78-72,” *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1970, 10; and “Southern Wins Finale, 77-69,” *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1970, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Issues of the *Vicksburg Evening Post* were examined from December 1, 1968, through February 11, 1969, as the freshman team concluded its season on February 10, 1969, with a 86-80 victory over Belhaven University’s freshman team. No content dealing with the freshmen Southerners was published.

<sup>68</sup> Ed Sheaver, “State Wins But Ole Miss Loses,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 2 December 1969, 15.

<sup>69</sup> “Southern Nips West Texas State 75-73,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 December 1969, 7; “Southern Tops Roanoke, 99-85,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 January 1970, 12; “Southern Drops Overtime Decision,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 January 1970, 8; and “Southern Cagers Lose To La. Tech,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 7 February 1970, 6.

<sup>70</sup> Issues of the *Daily Herald* (Biloxi) were examined from December 1, 1968, through February 11, 1969, as the freshman team concluded its season on February 10, 1969, with a

---

86-80 victory over Belhaven University's freshman team. No content dealing with the freshmen Southerners was published.

<sup>71</sup> "Top Cage Powers Win Season Openers," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 December 1969, 22; and "Southern Knocks Off Roanoke," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 12 January 1970, 37.

<sup>72</sup> "Southerners Down San Francisco," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 December 1969, 42; and "Southern Loses To SE Louisiana," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 3 February 1970, 14.

<sup>73</sup> "Morehead State Stops Southern," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 December 1969, 35; "Southerners Hand Tech First Loss," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 19 December 1969, 34; "Centenary Gives Southern Defeat," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 January 1970, 37; "Southerners Fall To Old Dominion," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 28 January 1970, 17; and "Southern Closes With Delta Win," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1970, 24.

<sup>74</sup> "Southern Tops SFS 81-72," *Starkville Daily News*, 11 December 1969, 4; "College Roundup," *Starkville Daily News*, 16 December 1969, 3; and "U.S.M. Tops Tech 84-81," *Starkville Daily News*, 19 December 1969, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Issues of the *Delta Democrat Times*, the *Commercial Dispatch*, and *Jackson Advocate* were examined from December 1, 1968, through February 11, 1969, as the freshman team concluded its season on February 10, 1969, with a 86-80 victory over Belhaven University's freshman team and December 1, 1969, through February 25, 1970, five days after Southern Miss's season-ending win over Delta State 77-69. Nothing on Jordan or USM basketball was published during the examined dates.

<sup>76</sup> Wilbert Jordan, Jr., interview with author, 15 August 2010.

<sup>77</sup> *2009-2010 University of Southern Mississippi Men's Basketball Media Guide* (Hattiesburg, MS: University of Southern Mississippi Athletic Department, 2009), 134.

<sup>78</sup> Email correspondence with Kyle Campbell, associated director of athletics media relations, University of Mississippi, 21 September 2006.

<sup>79</sup> "'Cool-Aid' Takes Word To The Wise," *Oxford Eagle*, 3 December 1970, 9B.

<sup>80</sup> "Ole Miss Make Final Frosh Player Signups," *Oxford Eagle*, 10 September 1970, 4C.

<sup>81</sup> "'Cool-Aid' Takes Word To The Wise," *Oxford Eagle*, 3 December 1970, 9B.

<sup>82</sup> "Robbins Rookies Show Off Tallies," *Oxford Eagle*, 18 March 1971, 8B.

<sup>83</sup> "Ole Miss Make Final Frosh Player Signups," *Oxford Eagle*, 10 September 1970, 4C; "Robbins Says His Rebels Are Fast Becoming Team," *Oxford Eagle*, 3 December 1970, 6C; "Baby Rebs Have Three in 'Doubles,'" *Oxford Eagle*, 7 January 1971, 12A; "'Baby' Rebs Resume Working," *Oxford Eagle*, 21 January 1971, 7B; "Baby Rebs Travel to Wesson Tonight," *Oxford Eagle*, 4 February 1971, 1A; and "Robbins Rookies Show Off Tallies," *Oxford Eagle*, 18 March 1971, 8B.

<sup>84</sup> "Ole Miss Frosh Team Doing Well," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 December 1970, 3B.



- 
- <sup>85</sup> Lee Baker, "Rebels Rock Past Towering Horns," *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1970, 12.
- <sup>86</sup> Larry Guest, "Hot-handed Johnny Neumann Guides Ole Miss Rebels Over Texas, 89-85," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 December 1970, 32.
- <sup>87</sup> Lee Baker, "Rebs Win SEC First, Stop Auburn, 108-96," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 13 December 1970, 3B.
- <sup>88</sup> "Ole Miss Frosh Team Doing Well," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 December 1970, 3B; "Rebel Freshmen In Tourney Play," *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 December 1970, 3E; "Reb Frosh Cop Title In Tourney," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 December 1970, 22; "Baby Rebs Rip Bulldogs By 73-59," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 January 1971, 20; "OM Frosh, Varsity Part Ways," *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 January 1971, 5D; "Reb Frosh Turns Back Northeast," *Clarion-Ledger*, 22 January 1971, 2C; "13-1 Rebel Frosh Face Co-Lin Next," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1971, 7B; "Bullpups Host Rebel Frosh," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1971, 24; "State Frosh Trip Baby Rebs 62-60," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 February 1971, 3B; "Rebel Frosh Savor Play at Oxford," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1971, 6C; "17-3 Ole Miss Freshmen Seeking Sixth SEC Win," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1971, 22; "Ole Miss Frosh Roll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1971, 2C; and "Rebel Frosh Close Play at Auburn," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1971, 2B.
- <sup>89</sup> "17-3 Ole Miss Freshmen Seeking Sixth SEC Win," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1971, 22.
- <sup>90</sup> "Ole Miss Frosh Roll," *Clarion-Ledger*, 28 February 1971, 2C.
- <sup>91</sup> Larry Guest, "Hot-handed Johnny Neumann Guides Ole Miss Rebels Over Texas, 89-85," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 December 1970, 32; Lee Baker, "Rebels Rock Past Towering Horns," *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1970, 12; Lee Baker, "Rebs Win SEC First, Stop Auburn, 108-96," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 13 December 1970, 3B; "Ole Miss Outscores Southern, 109-100," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 December 1970, 7C; Larry Guest, "Tennessee Silences Reb Gunner in 98-85 Victory," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 January 1971, 13; Larry Guest, "Johnny Hits 63 in Rebs Win," *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 January 1971, 1C, 3C; Larry Guest, "Johnny Leads Rebs to Upset of Vandy," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 February 1971, 9F; "Gators Chew Up Rebs, 85-68," *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1971, 12; and "Rebs Reach End of Line," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1971, 3B.
- <sup>92</sup> Carl Walters, "Shavin's," *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 February 1971, 26.
- <sup>93</sup> Angus Lind, "'Unhealthy' Neumann Sparks Rebels To 89-84 Victory Over Texas Steers," *Meridian Star*, 8 December 1970, 10.
- <sup>94</sup> Angus Lind, "Johnny Rebs Moving Into 'Prime Time,'" *Meridian Star*, 13 December 1970, 1D.
- <sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>96</sup> Buddy Bynum, "Red Hot Rebels Upset Auburn," *Meridian Star*, 13 December 1970, 1C; "Rebels Sting Vandy Commodores," *Meridian Star*, 11 February 1971, 9; "Baby Rebels Risk

---

Nine-Game Streak,” *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1971, 3B; “Bulldogs Turn Back Ole Miss Rebels,” *Meridian Star*, 14 February 1971, 1C; “Baby Rebels Play Host To Ark. State Frosh,” *Meridian Star*, 19 February 1971, 6C; Buddy Bynum, “Florida’s Gators Maul Unarmed Rebels,” *Meridian Star*, 23 February 1971, 8; and Buddy Bynum, “Ole Miss Whips LSU Bengals, 62-54,” *Meridian Star*, 28 February 1971, 1C.

<sup>97</sup> “Ball Begins Tenure with Rebel Cagers,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 18 November 1970, 7.

<sup>98</sup> “Basketball Teams Acclaimed,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), exact date illegible.

<sup>99</sup> Dudley Marble, “Cob Jarvis Thinks Season Progressing as Expected,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 29 January 1971, 7; “Up For Two,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 3 February 1971, 7; Buddy Bynum, “Reb Freshman Get Revenge; Look Forward to Bullpups,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 12 February 1971, 2; “Frosh Meet Bullpups,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), exact date illegible; and “Freshmen Upset by Bullpups,” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), exact date illegible.

<sup>100</sup> Dudley Marble, “Frosh Cage Star Keeping ‘Cool,’” *Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 5 February 1971, 7.

<sup>101</sup> Rick Cleveland, “Fired-Up Southerners Fall Short to Rebs and Newmann,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1970, 15.

<sup>102</sup> “Ole Miss Freshman are 8-1,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 January 1971, 3; and Don Foster, “Pups Hand Baby Rebels Second Defeat 62-60,” *Starkville Daily News*, 16 February 1971, 2.

<sup>103</sup> “Rebel Frosh Coasting With Fine 13-1 Record,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 February 1971, 11; “Reb Frosh, with 15 -1 Record, Call on Pups Tonight,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1971, 7; and “Ole Miss Cage Frosh Have 20-Win Streak,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 19 February 1971, 10.

<sup>104</sup> The *Daily Herald* (Biloxi) was examined from August 1 through September 30, 1970, and December 1, 1970, through February 28, 1971. Nothing on Ball or the freshman Ole Miss basketball team was published.

<sup>105</sup> Harvey Faust, “Between The Foul Lines,” *Oxford Eagle*, 10 November 1971, 8A.

<sup>106</sup> Lee Baker, “Magnolia State Cagers Go On Display Tonight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 December 1971, 1E.

<sup>107</sup> “Rebels Launch Cage Practice,” *Oxford Eagle*, 15 October 1971, 5A.

<sup>108</sup> “Rebels Open Cage Season in Texas,” *Oxford Eagle*, 30 November 1971, 5A.

<sup>109</sup> “Rebs Begin 14-tilt Home Cage Slate,” *Oxford Eagle*, 3 December 1971, 8A.

<sup>110</sup> Harvey Faust, "Ole Miss Takes Squeaker Over Northwest Louisiana," *Oxford Eagle*, 7 December 1971, 5A; "Memphis State, tourney scheduled next for Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 8 December 1971, 15A; "Rebels Tackle Athletes in Action on Hardcourt," *Oxford Eagle*, 17 December 1971, 5A; Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 20 December 1971, 5A; and "Kats, Vols Defeat Rebs in Road Tilt," *Oxford Eagle*, 12 January 1972, 11A.

<sup>111</sup> "Kats, Vols Defeat Rebs in Road Tilt," *Oxford Eagle*, 12 January 1972, 11A.

<sup>112</sup> "Cox Stands Tall for Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 13 January 1972, 5A.

<sup>113</sup> Harvey Faust, "Rebels 'Whitewash' Vandy in Heated Game Wednesday," *Oxford Eagle*, 27 January 1972, 5A.

<sup>114</sup> Rebs Make Poor Showing in Bowling to Ga., 80-74," *Oxford Eagle*, 31 January 1972, 5A; and Harvey Faust, "Rebs Stop Gator Attack," *Oxford Eagle*, 1 February 1972, 5A.

<sup>115</sup> "Hard-Shootin' Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 14 February 1972, 5A; Harvey Faust, "Ole Miss Rebels Slap LSU Tigers," *Oxford Eagle*, 6 March 1972, 3A; and Harvey Faust, "Beats Rebs on Homecourt," *Oxford Eagle*, 7 March 1972, 9A.

<sup>116</sup> "Rebels Launch Cage Practice," *Oxford Eagle*, 15 October 1971, 5A; "Rebels Open Cage Season in Texas," *Oxford Eagle*, 30 November 1971, 5A; "Rebs Begin 14-tilt Home Cage Slate," *Oxford Eagle*, 3 December 1971, 8A; Harvey Faust, "Ole Miss Takes Squeaker Over Northwest Louisiana," *Oxford Eagle*, 7 December 1971, 5A; "Memphis State, tourney scheduled next for Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 8 December 1971, 15A; "Rebels Tackle Athletes in Action on Hardcourt," *Oxford Eagle*, 17 December 1971, 5A; Big Test for Rebs Waits at Kentucky," *Oxford Eagle*, 6 January 1972, 5A; "Kats, Vols Defeat Rebs in Road Tilt," *Oxford Eagle*, 12 January 1972, 11A; "Cox Stands Tall for Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 13 January 1972, 5A; "Ole Miss Upends Bulldogs," *Oxford Eagle*, 17 January 1972, 8A; "Gunn, Rhodes Pace Rebs Past Tough State Bulldogs," *Oxford Eagle*, 18 January 1972, 5A; "Rebs Rebound to 'Empty Gym,'" *Oxford Eagle*, 24 January 1972, 5A; "Fred, Ball, Jordan Get Nods on Wed.," *Oxford Eagle*, 25 January 1972, 5A; Harvey Faust, "Rebels 'Whitewash' Vandy in Heated Game Wednesday," *Oxford Eagle*, 27 January 1972, 5A. "Ole Miss Meets Georgia in TV Battle on Saturday," *Oxford Eagle*, 28 January 1972, 5A; Rebs Make Poor Showing in Bowling to Ga., 80-74," *Oxford Eagle*, 31 January 1972, 5A; Harvey Faust, "Rebs Stop Gator Attack," *Oxford Eagle*, 1 February 1972, 5A; B. Rupp Invades O.M. for Finale," *Oxford Eagle*, 11 February 1972, 7A; "Hard-Shootin' Rebels," *Oxford Eagle*, 14 February 1972, 5A; "Poor Shooting Hurts Rebs," *Oxford Eagle*, 17 February 1972, 5A; "Rebels Face State Dogs Saturday in SEC Tilt," *Oxford Eagle*, 18 February 1972, 10A; "Was Must Win," *Oxford Eagle*, 22 February 1972, 8A; "Rebs Win 87-74 Over Fla.," *Oxford Eagle*, 29 February 1972, 7A; Harvey Faust, "Ole Miss Rebels Slap LSU Tigers," *Oxford Eagle*, 6 March 1972, 3A.; Harvey Faust, "Beats Rebs on Homecourt," *Oxford Eagle*, 7 March 1972, 9A; and "Ole Miss, Auburn to Clash Thursday in Season Finale," *Oxford Eagle*, 8 March 1972, 10A.

<sup>117</sup> "Was Must Win," *Oxford Eagle*, 22 February 1972, 8A; and "Rebs Win 87-74 Over Fla.," *Oxford Eagle*, 29 February 1972, 7A.

<sup>118</sup> Staff Photo, *Oxford Eagle*, 16 February 1972, 10A.

---

<sup>119</sup> Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 10 November 1971, 8A; Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 6 December 1971, 7A; Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 10 December 1971, 7A; Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 13 December 1971, 6A; and Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 9 February 1972, 10A.

<sup>120</sup> Harvey Faust, "Between The Foul Lines," *Oxford Eagle*, 6 December 1971, 7A.

<sup>121</sup> "Vols, Georgia, Could Press Kentucky," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 28 November 1971, 4C.

<sup>122</sup> "Many SEC Cagers Tip Off Wednesday," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 November 1971, 13A.

<sup>123</sup> Lee Baker, "Magnolia State Cagers Go On Display Tonight," *Jackson Daily News*, 1 December 1971, 1E.

<sup>124</sup> "Jump Ball," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 December 1971, 13B.

<sup>125</sup> "Tennessee's Late Comeback Barely Nudges Out Ole Miss," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 January 1972, 9; "Nabs Rebound," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1972, 9B; "Vanderbilt 5 Hammers By Ole Miss," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1972, 9B; "Coolidge Keying Ole Miss Drive," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1972, 14A; "Out Of Coolidge Ball's Reach," *Jackson Daily News*, 29 February 1972, 10A; "Interception By Rebs' Coolidge Ball," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1972, 11A.

<sup>126</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 December 1971, 10C.

<sup>127</sup> Larry Guest, "Rebels Enjoy 107-60 Romp," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 5 December 1971, 3D.

<sup>128</sup> "Rough Road Awaits OM," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 January 1972, 18.

<sup>129</sup> "'Cob' Jarvis' Ole Miss Team Tangles With 'Cats Saturday,'" *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 January 1972, 12.

<sup>130</sup> "Ole Miss Vaults Over Vanderbilt," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 January 1972, 6A; and "Ho, Ho, Ho," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 January 1972, 6A.

<sup>131</sup> "Coolidge Keying Ole Miss Drive," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1972, 14A; and "Scoring Soph Leads Rebels," *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 January 1972, 24.

<sup>132</sup> "Coolidge Keying Ole Miss Drive," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1972, 14A.

<sup>133</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1972, 18A.

<sup>134</sup> Lee Baker, "Rebels Rap Tigers 101-78; Bulldogs Startle Tide 97-91," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1972, 1B, 9B.

<sup>135</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 March 1972, 14A.

<sup>136</sup> Lee Baker, “Bama Stumbles Past Ole Miss 5,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1972, 11A.

<sup>137</sup> Larry Guest, “Rebels Enjoy 107-60 Romp,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 5 December 1971, 3D; “Road Again Beckoning High-Riding Ole Miss,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1971, 1C; Mac Gordon, “Ole Miss Now Must Try To Earn Vandy Tourney Consolation Honor,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 December 1971, 2; Mac Gordon, “Bradley Nips Rebs 72-71,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 12 December 1971, 3F; “USM Must Find End To Its Woes,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 December 1971, 8D; Lee Baker, “Well-Balanced Rebels Cruise Past Southern,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 December 1971, 1G; “Ole Miss Will Close Out Pre-Xmas Action Saturday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 December 1971, 22; “Ball Paces Rebels Past Athletes In Action 81-72,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 19 December 1971, 1D; “Ole Miss Returns From Vacation,” *Jackson Daily News*, 29 December 1971, 22A; “Ole Miss Gets Cage Victory Over McAlester,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 January 1972, 4A; “Ole Miss, Auburn Open SEC Warfare,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 January 1972, 19; “Last Second Freebies Put Rebs Over Auburn,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 January 1972, 10; “Rough Road Awaits OM,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 January 1972, 18; “Rebels Will Learn Realities Of SEC,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 January 1972, 2B; “U-Kats Dump Rebels 93-82,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 9 January 1972, 2B; “Tennessee’s Late Comeback Barely Nudges Out Ole Miss,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 January 1972, 9; “State, Ole Miss Encounter Carded For Regional T.V.,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 January 1972, 3B; “Ole Miss Battles Bulldogs On Road,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 January 1972, 3B; “Rebs Whack Bullies 68-66,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 16 January 1972, 1B; “Rest Awhile Awaits Rebel Basketeers,” *Jackson Daily News*, 18 January 1972, 8A, 9A; “Reb Cagers Face Vandy,” *Jackson Daily News*, 25 January 1972, 1A; “Rebs Open Home Stand,” *Jackson Daily News*, 26 January 1972, 11A; “Ole Miss Vaults Over Vanderbilt,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 January 1972, 6A; “Coolidge Keying Ole Miss Drive,” *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1972, 14A; “Ole Miss Rebs Go On TV Against Rugged Georgia,” *Jackson Daily News*, 29 January 1972, 2A; “Georgia Invaders Put Down Ole Miss 80-74,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 30 January 1972, 1B; Kenny King, “Cox, Ball Propel Rebs By Florida,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 February 1972, 8; “Road Awaits Reb Cagers,” *Jackson Daily News*, 3 February 1972, 1C; “Ole Miss Rebs Hitting Road For Pair Of Crucial Games,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 February 1972, 2; Lee Baker, “Bengals Clip Rebels 67-66,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 February 1972, 1B; “Free Throws Put ‘Bama Over Rebs,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 February 1972, 9; “Things Might Get Worse For Rebs This Weekend,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 February 1972, 11C; “Baron Rupp Might Make Final Trip To Rebelhome,” *Jackson Daily News*, 11 February 1972, 20; Lee Baker, “Kentucky Sticks Ole Miss, 90-82,” *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1972, 1C; “Rallying Vols Trim Rebels,” *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1972, 11A; “Moan, Groan In Rebeltown,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 February 1972, 2B; “Breaking Slumps Aim Both Ways,” *Jackson Daily News*, 18 February 1972, 14A; “Ole Miss Stumbles At Georgia, 79-69,” *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1972, 2B; “Ole Miss Victory Sweet in Florida,” *Jackson Daily News*, 29 February 1972, 10A; “Reb Cagers Take On LSU,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1972, 14A; “Hot N’ Cold Rebs, LSU Battle Tonight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1972, 2A; Lee Baker, “Rebels Rap Tigers 101-78; Bulldogs Startle Tide 97-91,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1972, 1B, 9B; Lee Baker, “Bama Stumbles Past Ole Miss 5,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1972, 11A; “Rebels Close Long Season,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 March 1972, 1B; and “Rebs Finish With Flurry,” *Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1972, 1B.

<sup>138</sup> Mac Gordon, “Vandy Trip Keys Rebels,” *Jackson Daily News*, 13 December 1971, 6; “Vanderbilt 5 Hammers By Ole Miss,” *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1972, 9B; Larry

Guest, "Ole Miss Edges State In SEC Affair, 65-64," *Jackson Daily News* and *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1972, 1, 3G; and "Reb Cagers Travel For Weekend Play," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1972, 2, 3C.

<sup>139</sup> "Rebs Entertain Boll Weevils," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 December 1971, 2B; Larry Guest, "Rebels Enjoy 107-60 Romp," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 5 December 1971, 3D; "Rebs Host Northeast Mon.," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 December 1971, 18; "Memphis St. Tigers Nip Ole Miss 74-71," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 December 1971, 15; Mac Gordon, "Bradley Nips Rebs 72-71," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1971, 3F; Larry Guest, "Rebels Sock USM 107-92," *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 December 1971, 1G, 6G; "Ball Paces Rebels Past Athletes In Action 81-72," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 19 December 1972, 1D; "Rebels Resume Court Action At Home Against MacAlester," *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 December 1971, 3E; "OM Meets SEC Foes," *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 January 1972, 14; "Rebels Edge Auburn In SEC Play, 69-65," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 January 1972, 16; "'Cob' Jarvis' Ole Miss Team Tangles With 'Cats Saturday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 January 1972, 12; "Next Hurdle For Ole Miss Biggest of the Season: Kentucky," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 January 1972, 23, 28; "Rested 'Cats Entertain OM," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 January 1972, 11; "U-Kats Dump Rebels 93-82," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 9 January 1972, 2B; "Ole Miss Downed By Tennessee, 73-70," *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 January 1972, 16; "Jarvis' Young Rebs Gain Respect Of Two Maters – Rupp and Mears," *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 January 1972, 3G; "Bullies Await Weary Rebs," *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 January 1972, 25; "Rebs-Bullies Tilt On Tube," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 January 1972, 13; "Rebs Whack Bullies 68-66," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 16 January 1972, 1B; "Ole Miss, Vandy Do Battle All Alone Wednesday Night," *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 January 1972, 24; "Rebels-Vandy Tangle In Crucial SEC Tilt," *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 January 1972, 14; Sue Dabbs, "Ole Miss Bombs Vanderbilt 92-65," *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 January 1972, 1D, 5D; "Surging Rebs Battle 'Dogs In TV Contest," *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 January 1972, 12; "Soaring Soph Leads Rebels," *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 January 1972, 24; "Georgia Invaders Put Down Ole Miss 80-74," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 30 January 1972, 1B; "Ole Miss In Must Game With Florida," *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 January 1972, 5B; "Rebel Five Rips Gators," *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 February 1972, 13, 16; "Ole Miss Cagers On Rugged Road Trek To LSU, Alabama," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1972, 4 February 1972, 21; Orley Hood, "College Cage Menu Loaded With Goodies For Saturday," *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1972, 11; Lee Baker, "Bengals Clip Rebels 67-66," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 6 February 1972, 1B; "Bama Downs Rebs, 93-88," *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 February 1972, 14; "Rebs Hosting Top SEC Pair," *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1972, 4F; "UK Wildcats In Rebeldome," *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1972, 12; Lee Baker, "Kentucky Sticks Ole Miss, 90-82," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1972, 1C; "Vols Defeat Rebs, 68-58," *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1972, 14; "Lid On Goal Stymies OM," *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1972, 5D; "Rebs-Bulldogs Tilt Winner Will Leave Loser With Woe," *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 February 1972, 15; Larry Guest, "Ole Miss Edges State In SEC Affair, 65-64," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1972, 1G, 3G; "Ole Miss Stumbles At Georgia, 79-69," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1972, 2B; "Rebels Rip Gators; State Beaten," *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 February 1972, 19; "Rebels Finish Basketball Season At Home," *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 March 1972, 4E; "Rebs Try To Strike Back At LSU Tigers," *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1972, 11; Lee Baker, "Rebels Rap Tigers 101-78; Bulldogs Startle Tide 97-91," *Clarion-Ledger* and *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1972, 1B, 9B; Ed Shearer, "Wildcats, Vols Riding SEC Collision Course," *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1972, 1B; Sue Dabbs, "Bama Downs Rebs, 75-68," *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 March 1972, 18; Sue Dabbs, "Rebels

---

Edge Tigers, 89-83,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 March 1972, 1C; and “Ole Miss Needs Win To Finish Over .500,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 March 1972, 3G.

<sup>140</sup> “Rebs Drop 89-83 Tilt To Vandy,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1972, 1D; and “Reb Cagers Approach Final Road Junket,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1972, 18.

<sup>141</sup> Sue Dabbs, “Hopes High At Ole Miss,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 December 1971, 1B, 4B.

<sup>142</sup> “Rebels Edge Texas 79-78,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1971, 2F.

<sup>143</sup> “‘Cob’ Jarvis’ Ole Miss Team Tangles With ‘Cats Saturday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 January 1972, 12.

<sup>144</sup> “Rough Road Awaits OM,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 January 1972, 18.

<sup>145</sup> Larry Guest, “In the Spotlight,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 January 1972, 11.

<sup>146</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 1 December 1971, 3B; Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 January 1972, 16; Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 February 1972, 22; Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 10 February 1972, 5F; Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 March 1972, 2B; and Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 March 1972, 17.

<sup>147</sup> “Rebel Leaper,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 January 1972, 13.

<sup>148</sup> “Ole Miss, Vandy Do Battle All Alone Wednesday Night,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 25 January 1972, 24. Ball was averaging 15.9 points per game and 10.7 rebounds per game. In comparison, Cox was slightly better in scoring, averaging 16.5 points per game with 10.6 rebounds. On the other hand, Jordan’s statistical output was not referenced in the corresponding article. On January 29, 1972, after his 22-point performance against the Commodores, Jordan was averaging 13.7 points per game with 3.2 rebounds, numbers well below Ball.

<sup>149</sup> Sue Dabbs, “Ole Miss Bombs Vanderbilt 92-65,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 January 1972, 1D, 5D.

<sup>150</sup> “Rebels Starting A Young Group,” *Meridian Star*, 30 November 1971, 11; “State and Ole Miss Open With Victories,” *Meridian Star*, 2 December 1971, 3B; “Rebels, State Crush Outmanned Opponents,” *Meridian Star*, 5 December 5, 1971, 1C; “Rebels Drop Vandy Opener,” *Meridian Star*, 11 December 1971, 1B; Robert Fulton, “Rebels ‘Out-Personnel’ USM In Hanging Up a 15-point Win,” *Meridian Star*, 16 December 1971, 1B; “Danny Gunn Comes Thru in Rebel Win,” *Meridian Star*, 4 January 1972, 8; “Rebs Point To Annual Tennessee-‘Tucky Tour,” *Meridian Star*, 6 January 1972, 13; Robert Fulton, “Kentucky Roars Back To Smother Ole Miss,” *Meridian Star*, 9 January 1972, 1C; “Vols Execute Tight Press To Nip Rebs,” *Meridian Star*, 11 January 1972, 8; “Rebs Gain Respect Despite 2 Defeats,” *Meridian Star*, 12 January 1972, 3C; “State, Ole Miss Vie Saturday in TV Tiff,” *Meridian Star*, 13 January 1972, 10; “Road-Weary Rebels Call On Bulldogs Saturday,” *Meridian Star*, 14 January 1972, 1B; “Big Things A Way of Life For Rebel Center,” *Meridian Star*, 14 January 1972, 2B; “Rebels-State Clash Today,” *Meridian Star*, 15 January 1972, 1B; Bo King, “Rebels Come Back to Clip Bulldogs,” *Meridian Star*, 16 January 1972,

1C; "Sophs In Spotlight As Rebs Host Vandy," *Meridian Star*, 26 January 1972, 3C; "Rebs Have a Ball," *Meridian Star*, 27 January 1972, 9; "Rebels, Georgia Vie In Today's TV Tussle," *Meridian Star*, 29 January 1972, 12; "Georgia Rallies Past Ole Miss," *Meridian Star*, 30 January 1972, 3C; "Miss. State, Rebels Swap Foes Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 31 January 1972, 9; Bo King, "The Rebs by 14: Shackling of Tony Miller Highlights Welcome-Home Party," *Meridian Star*, 1 February 1972, 9; "State, Ole Miss In Crucial Road Tests," *Meridian Star*, 5 February 1972, 2B; "Rebs Lose By One On Late Freebies," *Meridian Star*, 6 February 1972, 3C; "Rebels, State, USM All Lose," *Meridian Star*, 7 February 1972, 8; Bo King, "Rebs Foul Out of SEC Race," *Meridian Star*, 8 February 1972, 8; "Rupp Visits Oxford Tonight Perhaps For the Last Time," *Meridian Star*, 12 February 1972, 3B; Buddy Bynum, "Rupp's Domination Over Rebs Goes On," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1972, 1C; "Tide Remain In Contention," *Meridian Star*, 15 February 1972, 9; "Vandy Escapes Ole Miss Rally," 17 February 1972, 1B; "State Out To Halt Skid Against Rebs," *Meridian Star*, 17 February 1972, 2B; "Losing Streak At Stake Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 19 February 1972, 3B; "Rebels Claim a One-Point Verdict From the Bullies," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1972, 1C; "1-Point Edging Of State Gives Rebs Big Lift For Last Junket," *Meridian Star*, 22 February 1972, 9; "Georgia Surge Sinks Rebels," *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1972, 1C; "Bama, Refusing To Die, Stuns Kentucky," *Meridian Star*, 29 February 1972, 9; "Rebs, LSU Near Trail's End In Tomorrow Night's Tangle," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1972, 1B; "Tennessee's Mike Edwards Voted SEC Player of the Year," *Meridian Star*, 3 March 1972, 2B; "Rebels Romp Past Tigers," *Meridian Star*, 5 March 1972, 4C; "Tennessee Clinches Tie For SEC Crown," *Meridian Star*, 7 March 1972, 8A; and Joe Carnicelli, "Kentucky Looking To An NCAA Journey," *Meridian Star*, 10 March 1972, 7.

<sup>151</sup> Angus Lind, "'Unhealthy' Neumann Sparks Rebels To 89-84 Victory Over Texas Steers," *Meridian Star*, 8 December 1970, 10; and Angus Lind, "Johnny Rebs Moving Into 'Prime Time,'" *Meridian Star*, 13 December 1970, 1D.

<sup>152</sup> Robert Fulton, "Rebels 'Out-Personnel' USM In Hanging Up a 15-point Win," *Meridian Star*, 16 December 1971, 1B.

<sup>153</sup> Fulton incorrectly wrote that Ball scored 24 when, in fact, he scored 22.

<sup>154</sup> Bo King, "King's Corner," *Meridian Star*, 16 December 1971, 1B.

<sup>155</sup> Robert Fulton, "Kentucky Roars Back To Smother Ole Miss," *Meridian Star*, 9 January 1972, 1C; "Rebs Have a Ball," *Meridian Star*, 27 January 1972, 9; Bo King, "Rebs Foul Out of SEC Race," *Meridian Star*, 8 February 1972, 8; and Robert Fulton, "Coolidge Ball Came To Play, Not To Crash Barriers," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1972, 3B.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Fulton, "Kentucky Roars Back To Smother Ole Miss," *Meridian Star*, 9 January 1972, 1C.

<sup>157</sup> Robert Fulton, "Ole Miss, State Trade Opponents for Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 10 January 1972, 9; and Robert Fulton, "U-Kats Strong Again, Especially In the Bluegrass," *Meridian Star*, 12 January 1972, 3C.

<sup>158</sup> Robert Fulton, "Coolidge Ball Came To Play, Not To Crash Barriers," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1972, 3B.



---

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> “USM Goes For Revenge Tonight Against Rebels,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 December 1971, 14; Rick Cleveland, “USM Sophs Shine But Rebs Prevail,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1971, 11; “Rebs Face Kentucky Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 8 January 1972, 6; “Rebels Pound Vandy 92-65,” *Hattiesburg American*, 27 January 1972, 12; “Rebs’ Fred Cox Can’t Wear Just Any Clothes,” *Hattiesburg American*, 28 January 1972, 11; “State Beats Gators; Rebs Fall to Georgia,” *Hattiesburg American*, 31 January 1972, 13; Ed Shearer, “LSU Stuns Vols; ‘Cats Edge Bama,” *Hattiesburg American*, 1 February 1972, 6; and “Tide Rips Georgia; Rebels, State Lose,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 February 1972, 9.

<sup>163</sup> Rick Cleveland, “USM Sophs Shine But Rebs Prevail,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1971, 11.

<sup>164</sup> Mickey Edwards, “They Say,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1971, 11.

<sup>165</sup> Rick Cleveland, “Fired-up Southerners Fall Short to Rebs and Neumann, 109-100,” *Hattiesburg American*, 16 December 1970, 15.

<sup>166</sup> “Cats Expected to Take Crown Again,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 December 1971, 3; “Ole Miss Nips Texas 79-78,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 December 1971, 3; “Memphis State Tops Ole Miss,” *Starkville Daily News*, 11 December 1971, 3; “Rebels Carry Vols Down To Wire Before Losing,” 11 January 1972, 3; “Ole Miss Showed Shooting Power,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 January 1972, 3; “Ole Miss, State To Clash Here Before Regional TV Audience,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 January 1972, 1; “Ball Leads Rebs Over Vandy 92-65,” *Starkville Daily News*, 27 January 1972, 3; “Ole Miss Tops Gators,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 February 1972, 3; “Rebs, Bullies To Discover How Life Exists In ‘Tigers Den,’” *Starkville Daily News*, 5 February 1972, 3; “Ole Miss Falls To ‘Bama, 93-88,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 February 1972, 3; “Vols Dump Rebs By Ten, 68-58,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 February 1972, 3; “Vandy Hands Ole Miss Fifth Consecutive Loss,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1972, 2; “Bullies Faced With Tough Task of Playing in Oxford,” *Starkville Daily News*, 19 February 1972, 2; “Cox Leads Rebs Over Florida,” *Starkville Daily News*, 29 February 1972, 3; “‘Bama Guns Down Ole Miss, 75-68,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 March 1972, 3; “Rebs Close Cage Season With Tigs,” *Starkville Daily News*, 9 March 1972, 2; and “Rebs Top Auburn,” *Starkville Daily News*, 10 March 1972, 3.

<sup>167</sup> “Rebels Beat Arkansas,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 December 1971, 1B; “Ole Miss, Tigers To Clash Friday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 December 1971, 44; “Memphis Gets Victory In Vanderbilt Tourney,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 December 1971, 11B; “Bradley Sinks Rebs In Tourney,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 12 December 1971, 3B; Ken Ernst, “Rebels Hand Southerners Seventh Straight Loss,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 December 1971, 44; Bob Looper, “Kentucky Prevails Over Rebs,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 January 1972, 2B; Ed Shearer, “Bulldogs Beaten 104-76 By Rupp’s Wildcats,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 January 1972, 6; “State, Ole Miss Tilt Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 January 1972, 17; “Ole Miss Downs Bulldogs 68-66,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 January 1972, 4B; “Rebels Defeat

Vandy,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 January 1972, 28; Ed Shearer, “Bulldogs, Rebels Post SEC Basketball Victories,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 February 1972, 6; “Rebels, Tide To Tangle After Bayou Bengal Tilt,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 February 1972, 12; “LSU Slips By Ole Miss 67-66,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1972, 1B; “Rebels To Host Southeast Conference Cage Leaders,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 February 1972, 28; “Wildcats Outscore Ole Miss,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 February 1972, 1B; “Ole Miss Edges State By One, 65-64 Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1972, 1B; “Ole Miss Rebs Bow To Georgia,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1972, 1B; “Rebs Take Tigers,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 March 1972, 1B; and “Ole Miss Kicks Auburn,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 March 1972, 18.

<sup>168</sup> Ken Ernst, “Rebels Hand Southerners Seventh Straight Loss,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 16 December 1971, 44.

<sup>169</sup> “Possession Battle,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 December 1971, 32; and “Out of Reach,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 29 February 1972, 15.

<sup>170</sup> “Ole Miss Wins Over Ark. A&M,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 December 1971, 17; “Memphis State Nips Rebs 74-71,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 December 1971; “After Two Close Loses, Rebs Visit USM Tonight,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 December 1971, 11; “Florida Edges Alabama; Rebs Topple Auburn,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 January 1972, 13; Bob Cooper, “Kentucky Wins Over Mississippi,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 January 1972, 13; “Ole Miss Edges Miss. State 68-66,” *Vicksburg Evening Post* 16 January 1972, 11; “Jacksonville Nips Fla. State; Ole Miss Shatters Vandy 92-65,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 January 1972, 11; “Georgia U. Tops Ole Miss 80-74,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 30 January 1972, 9; Ed Shearer, “Wildcats Reclaim SEC Lead with LSU Assist,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 February 1972, 10; “Louisiana Edges Ole Miss Rebels,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 6 February 1972, 6; Ed Shearer, “Rupp’s Cats Keep Slim Led in SEC Race,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 8 February 1972, 11; “Kentucky Defeats Ole Miss by 12 In Saturday Game,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1972, 15; Ed Shearer, “Two Teams Still Challenge Cats,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 15 February 1972, 11; “O.M. Cage Shooting Was Good, Then Poor And Now It’s Worse,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 February 1972, 11; “Ole Miss Edges Mississippi St.,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1972, 15; “Ole Miss Loses To Georgia, 79-69,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1972, 10; and “Kentucky NCAA Bound As Vols Nipped 67-66,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 10 March 1972, 9.

<sup>171</sup> *2009-2010 University of Mississippi Men’s Basketball Media Guide* (Oxford, Ms: University of Mississippi Athletic Department, 2009), 112-117, 131-132, 135-139, 142.

<sup>172</sup> Curt Guenther, “Local Grid Star Shines,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 25 April 1967, 10.

<sup>173</sup> George Farr, “Prewitt To Return,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 5 May 1967, 8.

<sup>174</sup> “Bulldogs Ink Top Football Prospects,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 December 1968, 4.

<sup>175</sup> “Second Negro Signs With State,” *Starkville Daily News*, 17 December 1968, 4.

<sup>176</sup> “State Signs Meridian’s Robert Bell,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 17 December 1968, 18.

---

<sup>177</sup> “4 SEC Schools Sign Negroes To Grants,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 December 1968, 4B; and “4 Negroes Sign SEC Football Scholarships,” *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 16 December 1968, 9.

<sup>178</sup> “State Shatters Tradition By Signing Tupelo Negro,” *Meridian Star*, 16 December 1968, 9.

<sup>179</sup> Gary Weatherly, “Negro Athletes May Bring Victory,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 24 September 1968, 5.

<sup>180</sup> Esther M. Thornton, “Black Not Negro,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 4 October 1968, 5.

<sup>181</sup> Nook Nicholson, “Courtmen Open Practice Soon,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 12 October 1971, 15.

<sup>182</sup> “Bullpup Coach Jack Berkshire Tags Team His Best At Mississippi State,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1972, 3.

<sup>183</sup> Sherrill Nash, “Bullies Top South Alabama In Season Opener, 71-66,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 December 1971, 3; Larry Templeton, “Bullies Watch 16-point Lead Fizzle At Auburn,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 December 1971, 3; “Bullpups Eyeing Busy Pre-Christmas Slate,” *Starkville Daily News*, 16 December 1971, 2; “Bullpups Returning To Action Against Northeast,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 January 1972, 2; Sherrill Nash, “Bulldogs Shade Porkers 79-75 in Close Contest,” *Starkville Daily News*, 5 January 1972, 3; “Bullpups Seeking 7<sup>th</sup> Win Against Baby Tigs,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 January 1972, 3; “Memphis State Frosh Top Pups at Free Throw Line,” *Starkville Daily News*, 11 January 1972, 4; “Baby Rebs, Bullpups To Meet In Preliminary Tilt,” *Starkville Daily News*, 14 January 1972, 3; Don Foster, “State Freshman Turn Back Southern 115-78,” *Starkville Daily News*, 1 February 1972, 3; “MSU Frosh Set Sights On Alabama,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 February 1972, 3; “MSU Freshmen Eager For Another Crack At Tulane, Memphis State,” *Starkville Daily News*, 11 February 1972, 2; “Fry, Jenkins Pace Frosh Over Memphis State 92-64,” *Starkville Daily News*, 15 February 1972, 3; “Bullpups Seeking Third Win Over Ole Miss Frosh,” *Starkville Daily News*, 19 February 1972, 2; “Jenkins Leads Bullpups Over Auburn Frosh 101-72,” *Starkville Daily News*, 22 February 1972, 3; Don Foster, “Bullpups Nail ‘Bama Frosh for Second Time,” *Starkville Daily News*, 7 March 1972, 2; and “Bullpup Coach Jack Berkshire Tags Team His Best At Mississippi State,” *Starkville Daily News*, 8 March 1972, 3.

<sup>184</sup> Sherrill Nash, “Bullies Top South Alabama In Season Opener, 71-66,” *Starkville Daily News*, 2 December 1971, 3.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> “Bullpups Trample South ‘Bama Frosh,” *Jackson Daily News*, 2 December 1971, 10B.

<sup>187</sup> “State Nabs Opening Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1971, 2.

<sup>188</sup> “Miss. State Treks To Auburn Monday,” *Jackson Daily News*, 12 December 1971, 10F; “MSU Frosh Lose to Auburn Tigers,” *Jackson Daily News*, 14 December 1972, 17A; “State Frosh Go On Road Again,” *Jackson Daily News*, 16 December 1972, 3G; “State Freshmen Lose on Last-Second Shot,” 20 December 1972, 4B; “Bullpups Win Over Baby Rebs,” *Jackson Daily News*, 21 December 1971, 15; “Bullpups Get Title in NEJC Tourney,” *Jackson Daily News*, 22 December 1971, 6C; “MSU Frosh Seek Seventh Win At Memphis State,” 7 January 1972, 9A; “State Frosh Win In Final,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1972, 9B; and “‘Best Team I’ve Ever Had,’ Says Jack of His MSU Freshmen,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 March 1972, 15B.

<sup>189</sup> “Miss State Treks To Auburn Monday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 December 1971, 10F; “State Drops SEC Opener to Auburn,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 14 December 1971, 2B; “Bulldog Freshmen Make Florida Jaunt,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 December 1971, 5C; “MSU Frosh To Play Host to Northeast Tuesday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 January 1972, 18; Larry Guest, “Bouldin Guides MSU By Arkansas,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 January 1972, 16; “Bullpups Invade Memphis,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 January 1972, 13; “State, Ole Miss Frosh Meet for Second Time,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 January 1972, 13; “Reb Frosh Beat State,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 21 February 1972, 17; and “State Frosh Win In Final,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 March 1972, 9B.

<sup>190</sup> “State Frosh Carry 5-3 Mark into N’east Game,” *Meridian Star*, 3 January 1972, 10.

<sup>191</sup> Robert Fulton, “Ole Miss, State Trade Opponents for Tonight,” *Meridian Star*, 10 January 1972, 8B.

<sup>192</sup> Thomas Howell, “Mears’ 300<sup>th</sup> Win is an MSU Defeat,” *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1972, 1C, 2C; “State Frosh Romp Past Memphis St.,” *Meridian Star*, 15 February 1972, 9; “Bullpups Carry Streak Into Freshman Contest,” *Meridian Star*, 19 February 1972, 3B; and “Berkshire Calls State’s Frosh ‘5’ His ‘Best Ever,’” *Meridian Star*, 9 March 1972, 6G.

<sup>193</sup> “Jenkins Leads Bullpups Win,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 December 1971, 33; “Bullpups Take To Cage Road Tonight,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 17 December 1971, 25; “Jenkins To Lead Pups In Tilt with Memphis,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 January 1972, 13; “Bulldogs’ Frosh Takes On Alabama Saturday,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi); and “Gulfport’s Jerry Jenkins Tops Bullpups Scoring,” *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 March 1972, 9.

<sup>194</sup> The *Hattiesburg American* and the *Vicksburg Evening Post* were both examined from December 1, 1971, through March 8, 1972. Neither publication published anything pertaining to Fry, Jenkins, or the freshman Mississippi State basketball team.

<sup>195</sup> Nook Nicholson, “Courtmen Open Practice Soon,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 12 October 1971, 15.

<sup>196</sup> Jim Nicholson, “Bulldogs Open Cage Season With 71-66 Drubbing of South Alabama,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 3 December 1971, 9. While *The Reflector* didn’t identify Jim Nicholson as “Nook” Nicholson, it is assumed that because both were identified as sports writers during the same semester that they are one and the same.

<sup>197</sup> Scoop Bass, “Bulldogs Open SEC Warfare With Loss To Auburn,” *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 14 December 1971, 14; Scoop Bass, “Bulldogs Up Record to 8-2 with Showing in Marshall U. Tourney, Two Recent Home Wins,” *The Reflector*

(Mississippi State University), 7 January 1972, 8, 9; Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Excel in Close Wins," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 4 February 1972, 16, 19; Scoop Bass, "Tennessee Volunteers Triumph Over Fighting Bulldogs," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 15 February 1972, 7; and "State Shatters Crimson Tide's SEC Title Aspirations," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 7 March 1972, 11.

<sup>198</sup> "Bulldogs Open 1972-73 Cage Season In MSU Gym Tonight," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 December 1972, 3.

<sup>199</sup> Sherrill Nash, "Bulldogs Down Texas For Second Win, 80-69," *Starkville Daily News*, 5 December 1972, 3.

<sup>200</sup> Sherrill Nash, "Miss State Rally Falls Short in Loss To Tigers," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 February 1973, 2.

<sup>201</sup> Larry Templeton, "Michigan State Hands Miss. State First Loss," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 January 1973, 3; Larry Templeton, "Jenkins, Knarr Pace MSU Win Over Hawaii," *Starkville Daily News*, 4 January 1973, 3; Sherrill Nash, "Bullies Fight UK All Way; See Change To Triumph Slip," *Starkville Daily News*, 9 January 1973, 2; and Larry Templeton "State Upsets Georgia On Cold Road, 90-84," *Starkville Daily News*, 30 January 1973, 4.

<sup>202</sup> Sherrill Nash, "Fry, Knarr Pour in 30 Apiece As MSU Downs Auburn 94-87," *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1973, 4; and Lee Baker, "Bulldogs Bother Tide Before Bowing 92-87," *Jackson Daily News and Clarion-Ledger*, 4 March 1973, 1D.

<sup>203</sup> "State Topples Samford In Season Opener 86-61," *Starkville Daily News*, 2 December 1972, 3; Sherrill Nash, "Bulldogs Down Texas For Second Win, 80-69," *Starkville Daily News*, 5 December 1972, 3; "Bulldogs Hit the Road for Date with South Alabama," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 December 1972, 4; Larry Templeton, "Bulldogs Comes Back Strong in Overtime to Down USA," *Starkville Daily News*, 7 December 1972, 2; "Bulldogs Host Sewanee In Final Pre-Holiday Clash," *Starkville Daily News*, 8 December 1972, 3; "State Vaults to '4-0' Topping Sewanee 83-65," *Starkville Daily News*, 9 December 1972, 2; "Bulldogs Will Take Break Before Tourney Date," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 December 1972, 3; Larry Templeton, "Koroneos Buckets Free Throws to Give MSU Win," *Starkville Daily News*, 29 December 1972, 2; Larry Templeton, "Bulldogs Capture Peacemaker Classic," *Starkville Daily News*, 30 December 1972, 3; Larry Templeton, "Michigan State Hands Miss. State First Loss," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 January 1973, 3; Larry Templeton, "Jenkins, Knarr Pace MSU Win Over Hawaii," *Starkville Daily News*, 4 January 1973, 3; "Bullies Open SEC Slate on Campus Against Vols," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 January 1973, 2; Sherrill Nash, "Bullies Fight UK All the Way, See Change to Triumph Slip," *Starkville Daily News*, 9 January 1973, 2; "Giants-Killing UM Moves into Town," *Starkville Daily News*, 10 January 1973, 4; "Rebels Bring Back-to-Back Wins Over UK, UT to State," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 January 1973, 3; "Bulldogs Continue Road Trek Against Vanderbilt," *Starkville Daily News*, 19 January 1973, 2; "After Close Vandy Match, Bulldogs Prep for Gators," *Starkville Daily News*, 23 January 1973, 2; "Florida, Georgia Against MSU Saturday, Sunday," *Starkville Daily News*, 26 January 1973, 3; Larry Templeton, "State Upsets Georgia on Cold Road, 90-84," *Starkville Daily News*, 30 January 1973, 4; "Miss. State Prepares for Saturday Date with 'Bama," *Starkville Daily News*, 1 February 1973, 5; "Bullies Challenge SEC Leaders Tonight on Road," *Starkville Daily News*, 3 February 1973, 3; Sherrill Nash, "Miss. State Rally Falls Short in Loss to Tigers," *Starkville Daily News*, 6

---

February 1973, 2; Larry Templeton, "MSU Pushes UK Cats into Overtime Tilt," *Starkville Daily News*, 13 February 1973, 2; "State to Meet Rebs on Road," *Starkville Daily News*, 14 February 1973, 4; "State, Ole Miss Both Looking for Win After Pair of Losses on Road," *Starkville Daily News*, 17 February 1973, 3; Sherrill Nash, "Fry, Knarr Pour in 30 Apiece As MSU Downs Auburn 94-87," *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1973, 4; "Snappy Gators Present Problem," *Starkville Daily News*, 22 February 1973, 2; "Gator-Bulldog Match to Feature Some of Leagues Top Shooters," *Starkville Daily News*, 23 February 1973, 4; Sherrill Nash, "Miss. State Registers Third SEC Win in Row Topping Georgia," *Starkville Daily News*, 27 February 1973, 2; "Bullies Go Up Against Surprising Tigs After 3<sup>rd</sup> Straight Loop Win," *Starkville Daily News*, 2 March 1973, 2; "LSU Tigs Sink 38 Free Throws To Drop Bullies," *Starkville Daily News*, 2 March 1973, 2; and "Miss. State In Season's Final Against Vandy Today," *Starkville Daily News*, 10 March 1973, 1.

<sup>204</sup> "Bulldogs Hit the Road for Date with South Alabama," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 December 1972, 4; Sherrill Nash, "Miss. State Rally Falls Short in Loss To Tigers," *Starkville Daily News*, 6 February 1973, 2; Sherrill Nash, "Fry, Knarr Pour in 30 Apiece As MSU Downs Auburn 94-87," *Starkville Daily News*, 20 February 1973, 4; and "Miss. State In Season's Final Against Vandy Today," *Starkville Daily News*, 10 March 1973, 1.

<sup>205</sup> "All Positions 'Wide Open' as Basketball Teams Report," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 17 October 1972, 9.

<sup>206</sup> "Varsity Basketball Squad Returns Six Letterman," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 27 October 1972, 5.

<sup>207</sup> Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Post Second Consecutive Hardcourt Victory," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 5 December 1972, 10.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid; "Dogs Drops SEC Openers," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 12 January 1973, 13; "Bulldogs Drop 2," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 16 January 1973, 9; Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Drop Fifth Straight Conference Game," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 23 January 1973, 11; "Bulldogs Travel to Florida for SEC Match," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 26 January 1973, 8; Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Fall to Florida Gators," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 30 January 1973, 9; "Bulldogs Tackle Crimson Tide," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 2 February 1973, 11; "State Takes on Vols Next," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 9 February 1973, 8; Scoop Bass, "Dogs Crushed by First Place Vols," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 13 February 1973, 11; "Bulldogs Fall to Kentucky," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 13 February 1973, 11; "Bulldogs Travel to Ole Miss Tomorrow," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 16 February 1973, 11; Scoop Bass, "Dogs Win," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 20 February 1973, 9; "Florida Gators Invade Bulldogs Gym Tomorrow," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 23 February 1973, 10; Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Edge Past Georgia," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 27 February 1973, 7; and Scoop Bass, "Vanderbilt Claims Win Over Bullies," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 13 March 1973, 9.

<sup>209</sup> Scoop Bass, "Bulldogs Fall to Florida Gators," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 30 January 1973, 9; "State Takes on Vols Next," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 9 February 1973, 8; and Scoop Bass, "Dogs Win," *The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 20 February 1973, 9.

---

<sup>210</sup> “State Nabs 1<sup>st</sup> Win, 86-61,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1972, 2C; and “MSU Bulldogs Host Texas Longhorns,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 December 1972, 3C.

<sup>211</sup> Ponto Downing, “Bulldogs Down Texas In True Test, 80-69,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 December 1972, 5B.

<sup>212</sup> Ponto Downing, “Wednesday’s Special,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 January 1973, 17.

<sup>213</sup> “State Nabs 1<sup>st</sup> Win, 86-61,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 December 1972, 2C; “MSU Bulldogs Host Texas Longhorns,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 December 1972, 3C; “Unbeaten Mississippi State Meets South Alabama Tonight,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 December 1972, 2D; “Bulldogs Need OT To Get by Jaguars,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 7 December 1972, 2E; “State Meets Sewanee Friday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 December 1972, 18C; “Bulldogs Take 83-65 Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 December 1972, 2A; “State Edges NTS 66-65,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 29 December 1972, 25; “Undefeated Bulldogs In Pacemaker Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 December 1972, 15; “Bulldogs Throttle Rainbows,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 4 January 1973, 1E; “State Hosts Vols Saturday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 January 1973, 14; “Kentucky Drops State In Thriller,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 9 January 1973, 16; “Miss. State Battles Ole Miss Saturday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 11 January 1973, 12; “State, Ole Miss Cagers Continue Knocking,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 January 1973, 14; Ponto Downing, “Ole Miss Cagers Continue Mastery Over Miss. State,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 January 1973, 16; “State Drops 82-77 Decision to Auburn,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 16 January 1973, 14; “State Plays Vandy In Nashville Saturday,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 19 January 1973, 10B; “Bullies to Hit That Ol’ Lonesome Road,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 24 January 1973, 3B; “Bulldogs Snap Loss Skein,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 30 January 1973, 14; “Ole Miss Hosts Bayou Five; Miss State Visits Alabama,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 3 February 1973, 15; Larry Guest, “High Tide Rolls Into Oxford,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 5 February 1973, 17; “Bengals Trip State,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 6 February 1973, 11; “Bullies Hitting Rough Road,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 8 February 1973, 4D; Bruce Garrison, “MSU Finds Starter; Rebels To Use Ace,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 12 February 1973, 17; “Bulldogs Bow to Kentucky 100-87,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 13 February 1973, 15; “State Travels to OM Next,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 15 February 1973, 4E; “Rebels, Bulldogs Take Out Frustration on Each Other,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 17 February 1973, 15; “State Defeats Auburn In SEC Thriller,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 20 February 1973, 13; “State Braces for Florida,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 23 February 1973, 5C; “Bulldogs Seeking 3<sup>rd</sup> Straight Win,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 26 February 1973, 18; and “State Edges ‘Dogs 72-68,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 27 February 1973, 13. The remainder of the issues used in this examination of the *Clarion-Ledger* was damaged and missing from the archives and special collections division at Mississippi State University.

<sup>214</sup> Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 31 January 1973, 21; and Carl Walters, “Shavin’s,” *Clarion-Ledger*, 2 February 1973, 3C.

<sup>215</sup> “State Downs UT Horns For 2<sup>nd</sup> Season Win,” *Jackson Daily News*, 5 December 1972, 7C.

<sup>216</sup> “State Open Campaigning,” *Jackson Daily News*, 1 December 1972, 4B.

<sup>217</sup> “South ‘Bama Hosts State,” *Jackson Daily News*, 6 December 1972, 9B; “State Pounds South ‘Bama,” *Jackson Daily News*, 7 December 1972, 9B; “Unbeaten MSU Eyes Sewanee,” *Jackson Daily News*, 8 December 1972, 4B; “State Slugs 4<sup>th</sup> Straight,” *Jackson Daily News*, 9 December 1972, 2; “State Cage Team Back on Hardwood,” *Jackson Daily News*, 24

December 1972, 6C; "SEC Cagers Fare Well," *Jackson Daily News*, 29 December 1972, 18A; "Unbeaten Bulldogs Capture Pacemaker Classic Tourney," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 December 1972, 2A; "MSU 'Dogs Snare Consolation Prize," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 January 1973, 1C; "MSU Tries To Open SEC Season Right," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 January 1973, 2A; "Vols Crush MSU, 86-67," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 January 1973, 2B; "Kentucky Trips MSU," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 January 1973, 11A; "Ole Miss, State Playing Saturday," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 January 1973, 4F; "Reluctant Rebels Get Back to Earth," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 January 1973, 7B; "Rebs, 'Dogs Collide Again," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 January 1973, 19A; "Rebs Invade Dog Country," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 January 1973, 2; Ponto Downing, "Rebels Ease By Bulldogs, 74-61," *Jackson Daily News*, 14 January 1973, 1B; "MSU Trying to Break Losing Streak at Vandy," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 January 1973, 10B; "Vandy Battles Back to Nip State 75-69," *Jackson Daily News*, 21 January 1973, 1D; "State Must Not Make Mistakes To Win on Road," *Jackson Daily News*, 24 January 1973, 1D; "Gators Nudge Bullies 66-64," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 January 1973, 1B; "MSU Finally Get Initial SEC Win," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 January 1973, 12; "State Faces Rough Test," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 February 1973, 5B; "Rebels Rip LSU 84-59; Bulldogs Bow to Tide," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 February 1973, 1B; "LSU Tigers Can't Miss," *Jackson Daily News*, 6 February 1973, 10; "State Plays 3 on Road," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 February 1973, 1D; Bruce Garrison, "Vols Rap Bulldogs; Capture SEC Lead," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 February 1973, 1B, 2B; David Boone, "Rebels, Bulldogs Exchange Foes After Double Setbacks Saturday," *Jackson Daily News*, 12 February 1973, 10A; "Extra Time MSU's Doom," *Jackson Daily News*, 13 February 1973, 12A; "State Visits OM Saturday," *Jackson Daily News*, 15 February 1973, 13A; "Ole Miss, MSU Battle Tonight in Rebel Dome," *Jackson Daily News*, 17 February 1973, 2A; Lee Baker, "Ole Miss Clubs Miss. St. 83-64," *Jackson Daily News*, 18 February 1973, 1B; Lee Baker, "Incredible Rich Knarr Pops 18 MSU Free Throws in a Row," *Jackson Daily News*, 20 February 1973, 10A; "Top SEC Scorers Will Visit State," *Jackson Daily News*, 23 February 1973, 7B; "Bulldogs Thwart Gators," *Jackson Daily News*, 25 February 1973, 1C; Lee Baker, "Swapout Looking Like Pretty Good Deal Today," *Jackson Daily News*, 26 February 1973, 9A; "State's Dogs Bite Georgia," *Jackson Daily News*, 27 February 1973, 10; "State Visits LSU Tigers," *Jackson Daily News*, 28 February 1973, 2B; "LSU Tigers Edge State," *Jackson Daily News*, 2 March 1973, 3B; "MSU Hosts Hungry Tide," *Jackson Daily News*, 3 March 1973, 2; Lee Baker, "Bulldogs Bother Tide Before Bowing 92-87," *Jackson Daily News*, 4 March 1973, 1D; Lee Baker, "Basketball Year Almost Over For Magnolia State Teams," *Jackson Daily News*, 5 March 1973, 4B; "Bulldogs On Tube For Cage Finale," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1973, 1B; "Memorable 1<sup>st</sup> Season for Knarr," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1973, 3B; "State Hosts Vandy In SEC TV Game of Week Saturday," *Jackson Daily News*, 9 March 1973, 19; "State Plays Out String," *Jackson Daily News*, 10 March 1973, 2; "Bulldogs Stumble 74-70 in Finale," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 March 1973, 1D; and "Poor Year for State," *Jackson Daily News*, 15 March 1973, 14B.

<sup>218</sup> "Reluctant Rebels Get Back to Earth," *Jackson Daily News*, 11 January 1973, 7B.

<sup>219</sup> "MSU Finally Get Initial SEC Win," *Jackson Daily News*, 30 January 1973, 12.

<sup>220</sup> Lee Baker, "Baker's Dozen," *Jackson Daily News*, 15 January 1973, 1B.

<sup>221</sup> "Memorable 1<sup>st</sup> Season for Knarr," *Jackson Daily News*, 7 March 1973, 3B.



<sup>222</sup> Herb Harwell, "Miss. State Opens Season Romping Samford, 86-61," *Meridian Star*, 2 December 1972, 1B; Herb Harwell, "Bulldogs Catch Longhorns On the Rebound," *Meridian Star*, 4 December 1972, 3B; "Rebels, Bulldogs Fly High," *Meridian Star*, 5 December 1972, 1B; "Miss. State Nips USA in Overtime," *Meridian Star*, 7 December 1972, 2B; "Bulldogs Rap Sewanee For Fourth Straight," *Meridian Star*, 9 December 1972, 1B; "Bullies Bite NTS in Pacemaker," *Meridian Star*, 29 December 1972, 10; "Rebs, State Face Best," *Meridian Star*, 31 December 1972, 1B; "Rebs, State Downed, Vandy Sears LSU," *Meridian Star*, 3 January 1973, 3C; "State Upsets Hawaii," *Meridian Star*, 4 January 1973, 2B; Herb Harwell, "Vols Slam Cold Bullies," *Meridian Star*, 7 January 1973, 1C; "Kentucky Fights Off State," *Meridian Star*, 11 January 1973, 2B; "Bullies, Rebs Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 13 January 1973, 2B; Herb Harwell, "Rebels Dampen Bulldogs' Fire," *Meridian Star*, 14 January 1973, 3C; "Tigers Rough up Bulldogs," *Meridian Star*, 16 January 1973, 2B; "Dogs Fall Again, Wildcats Lose," *Meridian Star*, 21 January 1973, 1C; "Miss. State Faces Florida," *Meridian Star*, 24 January 1973, 5C; "Wildcats Crack Tide To Stay in SEC Race," *Meridian Star*, 30 January 1973, 1B; "Brave Bulldogs To Battle 'Bama," *Meridian Star*, 2 February 1973, 2B; "Rebs Slam LSU, Bullies Bounced," *Meridian Star*, 4 February 1973, 1C; Herb Harwell, "Tigers Cement 'Dogs to SEC Cellar, 84-78," *Meridian Star*, 6 February 1973, 1B; "Miss. St. To Knoxville Saturday Night," *Meridian Star*, 7 February 1973, 2B; "Rebs, Bulldogs Fall Easy; Vols New SEC Leader," *Meridian Star*, 11 February 1973, 1C; "Only Tide Has it Easy," *Meridian Star*, 13 February 1973, 1B; "Rebs, Bullies Top Local Interests," *Meridian Star*, 15 February 1973, 5B; "Rebs, State Meet Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 17 February 1973, 3B; "Ole Miss Bites Bulldogs, 83-64," *Meridian Star*, 18 February 1973, 1C; Herb Harwell, "Bulldogs Take Second SEC Win Over Auburn," *Meridian Star*, 20 February 1973, 7; Herb Harwell, "Miss. State Raps Gators," *Meridian Star*, 25 February 1973, 7C; Herb Harwell, "State Tops 'Dogs, 72-68," *Meridian Star*, 27 February 1973, 1B; "Miss. State Rides Streak Into Pete's House Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 1 March 1973, 3B; Herb Harwell, "State Sees Crimson: Tide Rebounds, 92-87," *Meridian Star*, 4 March 1973, 1C; "Bulldogs Close Out Against Vandy," *Meridian Star*, 7 March 1973, 7C; and Herb Harwell, "Bulldogs End Trail With Defeat," *Meridian Star*, 11 March 1973, 2C.

<sup>223</sup> "Bullies, Rebs Tonight," *Meridian Star*, 13 January 1973, 2B; and "Brave Bulldogs To Battle 'Bama," *Meridian Star*, 2 February 1973, 2B.

<sup>224</sup> "State Cagers Play Samford In Lid-Lifter," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 December 1973, 12; Associated Press, "Vandy Continues To Roll; State and Ole Miss Win," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 5 December 1972, 21; "State Trips N. Texas After Game Over, 66-65," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 29 December 1972, 7; Associated Press, "Ole Miss, Florida Spoil Records For Vols, Vandy," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 January 1973, 18; "Bulldogs Hosting Giant Killer Ole Miss Rebs Saturday Night," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 January 1973, 14; "Ole Miss and State Set For 159<sup>th</sup> Cage Classic," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 January 1973, 6; "Ole Miss Wins," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 14 January 1973, 12; "Vandy Tops MSU in Final Seconds With Free Throws," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 21 January 1973, 13; "Florida Edges Miss. State," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 28 January 1973, 11; Ed Shearer, "'Bama is Dealt First SEC Loss," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 30 January 1973, 11; "State Falls to Alabama," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 February 1973, 13; "State Missed Win By An Inch Then Got Beat by 13," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1973, 14; "Ole Miss Won Easily Over Dogs," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 18 February 1973, 11; Ed Shearer, "Alabama Now Setting Sights On Tennessee and Kentucky," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 20 February 1973, 14; "Miss. State Gets by Florida 81-75 For 3<sup>rd</sup> SEC Win," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 25 February 1973, 11; Ed Shearer, "Tennessee Rocked by LSU, 'Bama Dumped By Kentucky,"

---

*Vicksburg Evening Post*, 27 February 1973, 10; "State Visits LSU For Game Tonight," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1 March 1973, 12; "Bama Edges State 92-87," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 4 March 1973, 14; and "Vandy Wins 74-70," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 11 March 1973, 11.

<sup>225</sup> Billy Ray, "Press Box Views," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 13 February 1973, 14.

<sup>226</sup> AP Wirephoto, "Grevey Lets One Fly," *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 9 January 1973, 18.

<sup>227</sup> "Miss. State Opens With Win," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 December 1972, 13; "Bulldogs Wins Second Cage Contest 80-69," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 5 December 1972, 24; "Bulldogs Post 83-65 Cage Victory," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 December 1972, 13; "Jenkins, Koroneos Duo Keep State Undefeated," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 29 December 1972, 21; "Michigan St. Takes Senior Bowl 86-68," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 January 1973, 28; "Vols Beat State," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 7 January 1973, 2D; "State Falls to Wildcats," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 9 January 1973, 14; "Jenkins Leads State Scorers," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 January 1973, 24; "Ole Miss, State Collide in Cage Play Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 13 January 1973, 15; "Rebs Overpower State 84-61," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 14 January 1973, 2C; "Jenkins Should Play for Maroons Saturday," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 26 January 1973, 38; "State Breaks Streak With 90-84 SEC Victory," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 30 January 1973, 20; "Bulldogs Fall 96-86 in SEC Cage Action," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 February 1973, 1B; "Bulldogs Fall to LSU 84-78," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 6 February 1973, 15; "Bulldogs Will Hit Road on Saturday," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 February 1973, 29; "Vols Handle State 93-76," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 February 1973, 1B; "Ole Miss Overwhelms State," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 18 February 1973, 1B; "State Snaps Streak," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 20 February 1973, 14; "State Downs Florida 81-75," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 25 February 1973, 1B; "State Whips Bulldogs 72-68," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 27 February 1973, 16; "Mississippi State, LSU Collide Tonight," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1 March 1973, 16; "LSU Whips State in Play 94-82," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 2 March 1973, 19; "Bama Rallies to Drop State," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 4 March 1973, 1C; "Vandy, State End Cage Season Today," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 10 March 1973, 19; and "State Closes with 74-70 Loss," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 11 March 1973, 2B.

<sup>228</sup> Dick Lightsey, "Dick Lightsey," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 8 December 1972, 31.

<sup>229</sup> "MSU Bulldogs Whip Sewanne Behind Knarr," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 December 1972, 11; Associated Press, "SEC Teams Defeated in Tournament Play," *Hattiesburg American*, 28 December 1972, 8; Associated Press, "Unbeaten MSU 'Dogs Win Again," *Hattiesburg American*, 29 December 1972, 8; Tom Saladino, "Rebs Top Kentucky for 1<sup>st</sup> Time Since '28," *Hattiesburg American*, 8 January 1973, 21; Associated Press, "Tennessee Falls 60-58 to Giant-Killing Ole Miss Rebs," *Hattiesburg American*, 9 January 1973, 4; Tom Saladino, "Wendell Hudson Paces Bama 83-77 Victory Over Vanderbilt," *Hattiesburg American*, 15 January 1973, 27; Associated Press, "'Cats get 400<sup>th</sup> SEC Win 89-68 Over Georgia 'Dogs," *Hattiesburg American*, 16 January 1973, 10; Ed Shearer, "Wildcats Stun Crimson Tide 95-93 at Bama; State Wins," *Hattiesburg American*, 30 January 1973, 9; Ed Shearer, "Vandy Ruins Kentucky's Championship Hopes," *Hattiesburg American*, 5 February 1973, 21; Ed Shearer, "Rebels Stun Crimson Tide; Conference Race in Scramble," *Hattiesburg American*, 6 February 1973, 8; Associated Press, "1<sup>st</sup> Place Vols Host Rebs, Bama Plays Georgia," *Hattiesburg American*, 12 February 1973, 21; Associated Press, "Vols Nip Rebs; State Defeated in Overtime," *Hattiesburg American*, 13 February 1973, Associated Press,

---

“Vanderbilt Meets Alabama in Top Contest Set for Tonight,” *Hattiesburg American*, 19 February 1973, 23; “Ed Shearer, “Alabama Beats Vandy, Vols Nip Florida 87-83,” *Hattiesburg American*, 20 February 1973, 8; Ed Shearer, “LSU Upsets Volunteers 78-74, Kentucky Given Another Chance,” *Hattiesburg American*, 27 February 1973, 19; and Ed Shearer, “Kentucky-Tennessee Match Will Decide SEC Champion,” *Hattiesburg American*, 5 March 1973, 21.

<sup>230</sup> AP Wirephoto, “Big Obstacle,” *Hattiesburg American*, 15 January 1973, 27; AP Wirephoto, “Jumper Over Jenkins,” *Hattiesburg American*, 6 February 1973, 8; and AP Wirephoto, “Putting One Up,” *Hattiesburg American*, 27 February 1973, 19.

<sup>231</sup> *2009-2010 Mississippi State University Men’s Basketball Media Guide* (Starkville, MS: Mississippi State University Athletic Department, 2009), 102-108, 125, 130-133.

## CHAPTER IX

## CONCLUSION

The civil rights era served as one of the more turbulent and tumultuous times in our country's history, and, without a doubt, a microcosm of that chaos could be found in the Magnolia State. As the south's most strident and forthright defender of states' rights and segregation, the people of the Closed Society dominated life in Mississippi from a political and social standpoint and, until the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, were rarely challenged on their ideology. With that landmark decision, the fundamental mindset of the Closed Society came under fire and, in turn, went on the defensive. Case in point: the *Brown* decision led to the formation of the Citizens' Council, the watchdogs of Mississippi's political elite. The organization fought tooth and nail for the right to keep Mississippi's social staples segregated and college athletics were no different. That defensive mechanism and mindset was more often than not expressed in the pages of Mississippi's newspapers. With the Closed Society on high alert, the 1955 Junior Rose Bowl appearance of Jones County Junior College and that school's venture into integrated athletics was a natural target of ridicule and scorn. For the most part, the press, both news and sports-based, either united in their opposition of any nod to racial equality or remained silent and ignored the issue, a common and frequently utilized technique when it came to items of race from Mississippi's press. In what would become a seemingly common motive for action in Mississippi, the fear that integration was at its proverbial doorstep led the political elite in the Magnolia State to attempt to make it illegal for their segregated college and university teams to participate in integrated competition. When such efforts were met with a degree of failure, as was often the case in the Closed Society, an undocumented and private meeting between politicians and university and college officials led to the birth of the unwritten law, an agreement that would keep segregation alive and well in athletic avenues, and any potential violators would be subjected to the threat of financial sanctions by the state and would become the subject of

public degradation and ridicule in the press. Sports in Mississippi did not exist with a degree of autonomy from the other aspects of life in the Magnolia State. While the harbingers of segregation worked at keeping all aspects of life in Mississippi white-dominated, their efforts were just as prevalent in college sports, particularly basketball.

The united journalistic front that was formed in opposition of Jones County Junior College stayed in place, for the most part, during individual instances involving Mississippi State and the University of Mississippi in 1956 and Jackson State College for Negroes in 1957. Rarely, if ever, did members of the press support any notion of integrated competition as editors such as Frederick Sullens and Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News* and Hodding Carter of the *Delta Democrat-Times*, whose views on issues of race in Mississippi were, more or less, at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum, united in their criticisms of the State College Board and college and university officials for allowing such egregious violations of the unwritten law to occur. While exceptions did exist in Mississippi, for the most part, journalists and editors who policed the news desk enforced and maintained the standards of segregation while sports reporters and editors stayed on the ideological sidelines. Like everything else in Mississippi during the mid- to late 1950s, the Closed Society ruled all aspects of life with an iron fist that was rarely opposed by anyone, especially those in the sporting world.

In 1959, things began to change as the 1958-59 basketball Maroons of Mississippi State University set forth a metamorphosis of sorts in the sporting press that would culminate in 1963. The first Southeastern Conference basketball championship for the Starkville-based team of head coach James “Babe” McCarthy and star Bailey Howell yielded an invitation to the integrated NCAA national championship tournament. The press in the Magnolia State, regardless of beats, universally lived up to past precedent, either choosing to ignore the chances of integrated competition for the MSU contingent or would openly campaign against McCarthy’s team because of the possible violation of the unwritten law and the fear that such

a venture would welcome integration into Mississippi. The mere thought that an all-white team of Mississippi's finest sons would consider undertaking such a social taboo was both insulting and threatening to the Closed Society.

During the implementation of the unwritten law through Mississippi State's first SEC championship and subsequent invitation to the NCAA National Championship Tournament, the Closed Society and the various mechanisms of white discourse were at optimum power, as demonstrated in the press during the athletic-based events examined in this dissertation in 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1959. Outside athletic avenues, Mississippi's white way of life was rarely, if ever, challenged and when such a challenge occurred, the Closed Society did everything in its power to fight for its racial dominance so much so that the potential integration of Mississippi Southern College by Hattiesburg native Clyde Kennard in 1958 and 1959 and by Clennon King, Jr., in 1958 at the University of Mississippi ended in the legal imprisonment of both, verifying the strength of the state's cultural boundaries. While these two pioneers, both outsiders to the Closed Society, met their demise of sorts, the challenges posed by Jones County Junior College, Mississippi State College, and the University of Mississippi were at the hands of their own white athletes, serving as an internal revolt from the state's closed ranks. While the consequences of their various challenges to segregation and the unwritten law were minimal in comparison to that of Kennard and King, these schools and their athletes questioned the status quo through their performance and, within the confines of Mississippi's press, a select few helped champion their cause and that of racial athletic equality in the Magnolia State.

One journalist in particular paved the way for a possible ideological change in the sports press. The fiery and charismatic Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times* advocated Mississippi State's appearance in the integrated postseason during the 1959 and 1961 seasons. Motive and social beliefs aside, such a suggestion was not only uncommon in the Closed Society, but it was intolerable. It was that bravery and bravado that made

“Mississippi Red” the catalyst for future debates involving the merits of integrated competition and the validity of the unwritten law and opened the door for peers such as Billy Ray of the *Vicksburg Evening Post*, Dick Lightsey of the Biloxi-based *Daily Herald*, Bill Ross of the *Daily Journal*, and the Hederman’s own Lee Baker of the *Jackson Daily News* to argue for MSU’s place in the integrated postseason in 1962 and 1963.

Less than two years later, the same debate revolving around Mississippi State’s Maroons would reemerge with the school’s second conference championship at the conclusion of the 1960-61 campaign and, for the most part, some of Mississippi’s historically well known journalists and editors had little to say about the potential violation of the unwritten law. Others expressed a belief and confidence in the ultimate enforcement of the gentleman's agreement, essentially minimizing any pro-tournament sentiment. McDowell, who carved a long and storied media-based career both in Mississippi and nationally, continued to emerge as a progressive voice of support even though he never openly advocated integration. While others in Mississippi’s sports press came to share the same views and beliefs as McDowell on MSU, such as Lightsey and Ray, both men continued to harbor a belief in segregation and said as much in their columns. The same could be said for the 1961-62 campaign, which ended with the 24-1 Bulldogs staying in Starkville due to the unwritten law. While McDowell abruptly left Mississippi for Trenton, New Jersey, others such as Lightsey, Ray, and Jimmie Robertson of the *Daily Mississippian* at Ole Miss took up his fight and continued to support integrated athletics for State’s basketball team. Despite such support, the majority of the press condemned or ignored MSU’s chances at the integrated postseason. However, a decision by the federal government soon intervened in any and all racially-based debates in Mississippi, rocking the Closed Society to its core and setting in motion a change in Mississippi’s journalists.

While the 1961-62 season ended and yielded a similar debate involving the unwritten law, something happened that shook the foundation of the Closed Society. After roughly a

year of federal litigation, James Meredith was allowed to enter the University of Mississippi in September 1962. The journalists of Mississippi, seemingly with varying beliefs in human and civil rights, threw their support behind Governor Ross Barnett and his belief in states' rights in opposition of the federally forced integration of Mississippi's crown educational jewel. However, that united front began to wane until it was apparent that Meredith would remain a student at Ole Miss and integration had finally arrived in the Closed Society. From there, the Closed Society's foundation of degradation and hate seemed to crack and slowly separate. This separation was evident in the press and, a mere six months later, the Mississippi State Bulldogs would demonstrate how those cracks were signs of an ideological change in Mississippi's press. In February 1963, McCarthy's squad won its fourth conference championship in five years and, unlike the previous seasons of subsequent debate and disappointment, there was no enforcement of the unwritten law despite the few loyal purveyors of the Closed Society and their attempted legal injunction. In a show of support that had not been seen in the pages of Mississippi's newspapers, journalists from both the news and sports desks supported and advocated State's participation in the integrated NCAA tournament with the only real opposition coming from Hederman loyalist Ward and the *Meridian Star's* James Skewes. The general consensus from members of the press was a myriad of well wishes for the Bulldogs and a nod of social progress to the state of Mississippi. A changing of the guard began to appear in Mississippi's culturally limited borders. Meredith's enrollment at the Oxford-based university in 1962 ushered in the start of a new era of equality in the Magnolia State. Along those lines, the appeals of both Mississippi State in 1961, 1962, and 1963 and Mississippi Southern in 1961 to participate against integrated foes began to generate support from members of Mississippi's press. The addition of Meredith to Ole Miss and the Closed Society opened the door for a new line of thinking in Mississippi that made inroads, albeit small, to social and racial equality. The introduction of blacks into the Magnolia State's traditionally segregated universities and colleges changed



the social landscape in the state and that change, albeit a slow one, also evolved in the press and its coverage of the various challenges to the unwritten law. The Closed Society had lost some of its luster and power and, while events like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1968, Freedom Summer, and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., would test those efforts, evidence of a change in beliefs and values was there in 1963 because of, in part, MSU's basketball team.

When integrated basketball finally made its initial trek through Mississippi in 1966 with Vanderbilt's Perry Wallace, only one journalist acknowledged the history-making presence of the SEC's first black athlete and identified the lack of attention paid by both the press and the public to his presence. So conflicted by Wallace's presence, Ole Miss even cancelled his first game in Oxford. A mere two years later, Wilbert Jordan, Jr., was the first black athlete in one of the state's previously segregated educational institutions as he joined The University of Southern Mississippi basketball team. Jordan's integration of the Southerners and state athletics came in what has been called the most volatile year in this country's history. While the battle for racial equality had yet to be won, as evident in the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the black power protest at the 1968 Olympic Games, and the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, Jordan's history-making addition to the Southerner's roster was nevertheless a bold statement for blacks in the tumultuous atmosphere of the latter part of the decade. However, the old habits and customs of the press during the height of the Closed Society were still, to some extent, in place. Jordan's history-making presence went completely unnoticed by the local *Hattiesburg American* and was not acknowledged by the *Jackson Daily News* until the last game of his second season, an inexcusable journalistic decision to say the least. However, in the aftermath of the aforementioned social events, Mississippi's editors and reporters were in a state of flux that was hesitant to reference matters of race as integration was in full swing in the Magnolia State. That notion of equality was a part of the new cultural atmosphere in the state, whether

individual journalists liked it or not. The historical significance of Jordan's addition to the USM team was lost on the press because they were still coming to grips with the social changes around them.

Ole Miss' successful recruitment of Coolidge Ball gained more attention from the press, but few articles even identified the star forward's race or history-making presence as Ole Miss' first black athlete. With Ball's addition to the Ole Miss Rebels in 1970, the integration of blacks into the structure of Mississippi's previously segregated social outlets had been accepted, begrudgingly or otherwise. Still, the white journalists who covered topics that had a racial connotation were still evolving, hence the confusing and conflicting manner in which Ball's race was referenced. It was now significant from a news perspective, but reporters battled with the extent to which acknowledge Ball's place in Ole Miss' sports history. While some publications, such as the *Oxford Eagle* and the *Meridian Star* identified his ethnic background early in his tenure on the Rebels' basketball team, others such as the *Jackson Daily News*, still under the guise of the segregationist Ward, treated his race inconsistently, referencing the star forward's skintone without any sort of news-based logic or reason. However, the past expressions of outrage were noticeably absent from the Hederman newspapers and the press in general.

Mississippi State's addition of black athletes Jerry Jenkins and Larry Fry to its ranks in 1971 came after the school integrated its athletic program with the 1968 signing of Frank Downsing, Jr., which generated little coverage in the Magnolia State and yielded some outrage, specifically in the pages of the *Meridian Star*. Subsequently, Larry Fry and Jerry Jenkins' first two years on the Bulldogs' roster was covered in a similar fashion to Ball's initial plight at Ole Miss. Both athletes went through their freshman and sophomore seasons with little to no acknowledgment of their race. However, of greater significance, was that when they were identified for their ethnicity, the *Jackson Daily News* was the only newspaper to do so and utilized the phrase "black" rather than "negro," the preferred description of

individuals of color during the height of the era of the Closed Society. Rather than a sign of neglect, the omission of race had become a demonstration of equality. By the time these schools began adding black athletes, the reign of the Closed Society was at a virtual end. The various challenges to the unwritten law, the subsequent elimination of the state's segregational athletic standard, and the eventual integration of college basketball in the Magnolia State was evidence of the social and ideological evolution in Mississippi's press. While the athletic accomplishments of these colleges and universities may not have served as a direct catalyst for change, there was no doubt that the differences of opinions expressed in the pages of Mississippi's newspapers was evidence of a society in transition from the iron grip of the Closed Society to the eventual acceptance of human and civil rights.

## REFERENCES

**Primary Sources****Newspapers**

*Blue and White Flash* (Jackson State College), 1957.

*Clarion-Ledger*, 1955-1973.

*Commercial Dispatch*, 1955-1963.

*Daily Herald* (Biloxi), 1955-1973.

*Daily Journal* (Tupelo), 1961-1963.

*Daily Mississippian* (The University of Mississippi), 1962, 1970-1972.

*Daily Times Leader*, 1955.

*Delta Democrat-Times*, 1955-1963.

*Enterprise-Journal*, 1955-1963.

*Greenwood Commonwealth*, 1955-1963.

*Hattiesburg American*, 1955-1973.

*Jackson Advocate*, 1955-1963.

*Jackson Daily News*, 1955-1973.

*Jackson State Times*, 1955-1961.

*Laurel Leader-Call*, 1955-1957.

*Los Angeles Times*, 1955.

*Meridian Star*, 1955-1973.

*Mississippi Free Press*, 1962-1963.

*Natchez Democrat*, 1955-1963.

*New York Times*, 1957.

*Oxford Eagle*, 1968-1973.

*The Reflector* (Mississippi State University), 1955-1973.

*Starkville Daily News*, 1960-1973.

*Starkville News*, 1955-1960.

*Student Printz* (Mississippi Southern College), 1961-1962.

*Student Printz* (The University of Southern Mississippi), 1968-1969.

*Vicksburg Evening Post*, 1955-1973.

### **Interviews**

Gold, Joe Dan. Interview with author. 23 July 2009.

Jordan, Jr., Wilbert. Interview with author. 15 August 2010.

McDowell, Jimmie. Interview with author. 12 August 2010.

Mosby, Joe. Email interview with author. 23 July 2009.

Starr, Douglas. Interview with author. 30 July 2009.

Wallace, Perry. Interview with author. 18 April 2006.

### **Special Collections**

Colvard, D.W. Presidential Papers. Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Giles, William Presidential Papers. Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Greene, Percy. Oral History with Neil R. McMillen, 14 December 1972, Mississippi Oral History Program, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Hilbun, Ben Presidential Papers. Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission Records. Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS.

Simmons, William J. Oral History with Orley B. Caudill, 26 June 1979, Mississippi Oral History Program, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Walters, Carl. Oral History with Orley B. Caudill, 14 April 1984, Mississippi Oral History Program, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Wilson, Harrison B. Oral History with Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., 6 October 1978, Special Collections, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA.

## Books

- Andrews, Kenneth. *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and Its Legacy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Atkins, Joseph B. *The Mission Journalism: Ethics and the World*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 2000.
- Ballard, Michael B. *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003*. Oxford, MS.: University of Mississippi Press, 2008.
- Bolton, Charles. *The Hardest Deal of All: The Battle Over School Integration in Mississippi, 1870-1980*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2005.
- Brooks, Dana and Ronald Althouse. *Racism in College Athletics: The African American Athlete's Experience*. Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc., 1993.
- Cobb, James C. *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*. New York: Oxford Press, 1994.
- Crespino, Joseph *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Davies, David R. *The Press and Race: Mississippi Journalists Confront the Movement*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2001.
- Dickerson, James. *Dixie's Dirty Little Secret: The True Story of How the Government, the Media, and the Mob Conspired to Combat Integration and the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Dittmer, John. *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994.
- Eagles, Charles W. *The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 2009.
- Evers, Charles and Andrew Szanton. *Have No Fear: The Charles Evers Story*. New York, NY: J. Wiley & Sons, 1996.
- Fitzpatrick, Frank. *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game that Changed American Sports*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999.
- Jacobs, Barry. *Across the Line: Profiles in Basketball Courage: Tales of the First Black Players in the ACC and SEC*. Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2008.
- Jay, Kathryn. *More Than Just a Game: Sports in American Life Since 1945*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Johnston, Erle. *Mississippi's Defiant Years, 1953-1973*. Forest, MS.: Lake Harbor Publishers, 1990.

- Katagiri, Yasuhiro. *The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission: Civil Rights and States' Rights*. Oxford, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.
- Lamb, Chris. *Blackout: The Untold Story of Jackie Robinson's First Spring Training*. Omaha, NE: Bison Books, 2006.
- Levy, Peter B. *The Civil Rights Movement: Greenwood Press Guides to Historic Events of the Twentieth Century*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998.
- McMillen, Neil R. *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1971.
- Miller, Patrick B. and David Kenneth Wiggins. *Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth-Century America*. New York, NY: Rutledge, 2004.
- Mississippi State University Athletic Media Relations. *2007 Mississippi State Baseball Media Guide*. Starkville, MS: University Publishing, 2007.
- Mississippi State University Athletic Media Relations. *2009-2010 Mississippi State University Men's Basketball Media Guide*. Starkville, MS: Mississippi State University Athletic Department, 2009.
- Morgan, Chester. *Dearly Bought, Deeply Treasured: The University of Southern Mississippi, 1912-1987*. Jackson, MS: The University of Mississippi Press, 1987.
- Musgrove, Ronnie. *The Mississippi Public Community and Junior College Story: 1972-2002*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.
- Nossiter, Adam. *Of Long Memory: Mississippi and the Murder of Medgar Evers*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002.
- Parker, Frank R. and Eddie N. Williams. *Black Votes Count: Political Empowerment in Mississippi After 1965*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996.
- Reddix, Jacob L. *A Voice Crying in the Wilderness: The Memoirs of Jacob L. Reddix*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1974.
- Roberts, Gene and Hank Klibanoff. *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*. New York, NY: Knopf, 2006.
- Roberts, Randy and James Stuart Olson. *Winning is the Only Thing: Sports in America since 1945*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Sansing, David. *Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.
- Silver, James. *Mississippi: The Closed Society*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1964.

- Thompson, Julius Eric. *The Black Press in Mississippi, 1865-1985*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993.
- University of Southern Mississippi Athletic Media Relations. *2009-2010 University of Southern Mississippi Men's Basketball Media Guide*. Hattiesburg, MS: University of Southern Mississippi Athletic Department, 2009.
- University of Mississippi Athletic Media Relations. *2009-2010 University of Mississippi Men's Basketball Media Guide*. Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Athletic Department, 2009.
- Vollers, Maryanne. *Ghosts of Mississippi*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1995.
- Weill, Susan. *In a Madhouse's Din: Civil Rights Coverage by Mississippi's Daily Press, 1948-1968*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002.
- Wiggins, David K. *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- Wigginton, Russell Thomas. *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete: African Americans and Sports*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006.
- Wilkie, Curtis. *Dixie: A Personal Odyssey Through Events That Shaped the Modern South*. New York, NY: Touchstone, 2001.
- Zirin, Dave. *What's my Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2005.

### **Theses/Student Papers**

- Sellers, James T. *A History of the Jackson State Times: An Agent of Change in a Closed Society*. Thesis (Ph. D.), University of Southern Mississippi, 1992.

### **Magazines**

- Cave, Ray. "The Old Master Has A New Kind Of Winner," *Sports Illustrated*, 19 February 1962, 52-53.
- "Dixie Flamethrowers." *Time Magazine*, 4 March 1966, 1.
- Doust, Dudley. "Bouquets for Babe and His Bailey," *Sports Illustrated*, 23 February 1959, 50-52.
- "For the Record." *Sports Illustrated*, 17 September 1973, 147.
- "For the Record." *Sports Illustrated*, 31 March 1975, 85.
- Medina, David. "Opening Doors." *Sallyport: The Magazine of Rice University* 61, no. 1, (Fall 2004).



Poinsett, Alex. "President's Action Chokes Off." *Jet*, 26 October 1961, 24-27.

"Scoreboard." *Sports Illustrated*, 20 December 1954, 57.

### Research Articles

Henderson, Russell J. "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: 'Something more than the game will be lost.'" *The Journal of Southern History* 63, no. 4 (1997): 827-854.

Lamb, Chris and Glen Bleske. "Covering the Integration of Baseball — A Look Back." *Editor & Publisher* 130, no. 4 (27 January 1996): 48-50.

Paul, Jan, Richard McGee, and Helen Fant. "The Arrival and Ascendance of the Black Athlete in the Southeastern Conference, 1966-1980." *Phylon* 45, no. 4 (December 1984): 284-297.

Reese, Renford. "The Socio-Political Context of the Integration of Sport in America." *Journal of African American Men* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 5-22.

Simmons, William. "Jackie Robinson and the American Mind: Journalistic Perceptions of the Reintegration of Baseball." *Journal of Sport History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 39-64.

### Secondary Sources

#### Books

Alston, Alex A. and James L. Dickerson. *Devil's Sanctuary: An Eyewitness Account of Mississippi Hate Crimes*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press, 2009.

Arsenault, Raymond. *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Atkins, Joseph B. and Stanley Aronowitz, *Covering for the Bosses: Labor and the Southern Press*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008.

Beito, Linda Royster. *Black Maverick: T. R. M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Campbell, Will D. *Robert G. Clark's Journey to the House: A Black Politician's Story*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003.

Carroll, John. *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998.

Crosby, Emilye. *A Little Taste of Freedom: The Black Freedom Struggle in Claiborne County, Mississippi*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Dunnavant, Keith. *The Missing Ring: How Bear Bryant and the 1966 Alabama Crimson Tide Were Denied College Football's Most Elusive Prize*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2007.

- Evers-Williams, Myrlie and Manning Marable. *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters and Speeches*. New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books, 2005.
- Frederickson, Kari A. *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Howard, John. *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Leverett, Rudy H. *Legend of the Free State of Jones*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1984.
- Pluto, Terry. *Loose Balls: The Short, Wild Life of the American Basketball Association*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1991.
- Rosa, Greg. *Football in the SEC: Southeastern Conference*. New York, NY: Rosen Publishing Group, 2007.
- Rosen, Charley. *The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2001.
- Ross, Charles K. *Outside the Lines: African Americans and the Integration of the National Football League*. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2001.
- Simmons, Charles A. *The African American Press: A History of News Coverage during National Crises, 1827-1965*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1998.
- Terry, Wallace. *Missing Pages: Black Journalists of Modern America: An Oral History*. New York, NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007.
- Weiss, Don and Chuck Day. *The Making of the Super Bowl*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Professional, 2003.

### **Research Articles**

- Walton, Laura Richardson. "In Their Own Backyard: Local Press Coverage of the Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner Murders." *American Journalism* 23, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 29-51.

### **Web sites**

[http://encyclopedia.gwu.edu/gwencyclopedia/index.php?title=Basketball\\_%28Men%29](http://encyclopedia.gwu.edu/gwencyclopedia/index.php?title=Basketball_%28Men%29)

[www.hattiesburgamerican.com](http://www.hattiesburgamerican.com)

<http://www.mstateathletics.com>

[http://www.msstate.edu/web/gen\\_info.htm](http://www.msstate.edu/web/gen_info.htm)

<http://www.nsu.edu/inauguration/NSUPresidents.html>

<http://www.soconsports.com/>