

By: Senator(s) Barrett, Barnett, Butler
(38th)

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 59

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE BROOKHAVEN
2 ACADEMY "LADY COUGARS" GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM AND COACH RON KESSLER
3 FOR WINNING THE 2023 MAIS 5A GIRLS BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.

4 WHEREAS, Brookhaven Academy "Lady Cougars" Basketball Team
5 posed with the 2023 MAIS 5A Girls Basketball Championship Banner
6 after defeating Leake Academy. They are now going for the MAIS
7 Overall Tournament Championship; and

8 WHEREAS, as the season progressed, and the wins piled up, and
9 the losses became few and far between, there was a feeling among
10 the parents, fans and supporters of the Brookhaven Academy Girls
11 Basketball Team that the squad they were watching was the best in
12 MAIS 5A Basketball; and

13 WHEREAS, on February 18, 2023, in Greenwood, Brookhaven
14 Academy (39-3) showed that belief was well-founded by beating
15 Leake Academy 42-36 in the MAIS 5A State Tournament Championship
16 Game; and

17 WHEREAS, the 2023 team that Brookhaven Academy Coach Ron
18 Kessler assembled is one that has grown in confidence throughout



19 the season as the starting lineup of two seniors, one junior, one
20 sophomore and an eighth-grader kept improving; and

21 WHEREAS, with Pillow Academy's recently refurbished Stribling
22 Gymnasium packed with fans from both Championship-rich programs,
23 nerves were high in the early going of the Championship Game. The
24 "Lady Cougars" had a size advantage, but Leake is a team that
25 rebounds the ball well offensively as the guards on the team chase
26 down long misses before the opposing post players could respond.
27 Not letting Leake get hot from deep and not allowing the pace of
28 the game to slip from its control was one of the main goals for
29 Coach Kessler and his team; and

30 WHEREAS, with just under 60 seconds left until halftime,
31 Fortenberry got open on the wing when her defender got caught up
32 by Lillie Gates posting up in the paint. With 41 seconds left,
33 the "Lady Cougars" had the game won. Leake got two looks from the
34 three-point line to try and tie, but both shots missed, and
35 Brookhaven Academy made 3-of-4 free throws late to ice the win.
36 For the game, Leake finished 9-of-38 from the three-point line.
37 Brookhaven Academy went 4-of-17 from the three-point line and
38 12-of-18 from the free-throw line; and

39 WHEREAS, in the Semifinal Game, Coach Ron Kessler knew the
40 assignment was difficult. He and his "Lady Cougars" had to come
41 into Pillow Academy's newly renovated gym, home of one of the
42 winningest girls basketball programs in Mississippi history, and
43 face a talented and physical team coached by the third-winningest



44 active girls basketball coach in the country. Brookhaven passed
45 the test with a 59-49 victory over Pillow on February 17, 2023, in
46 the MAIS Class 5A State Semifinals in Greenwood; and

47 WHEREAS, the 2023 Brookhaven Academy "Lady Cougars"
48 Championship Roster is: Reagan Fortenberry, Mallory Martin, Ella
49 Brown, Anne Rylea Thurman, Izzy Nelson, Braelynn Byrd, Ainsley
50 Orr, Ella Smith, Matti Clair Smith, Lillie Gates, Chloe Nelson,
51 Kyla Armistad, Ava Calcote and Emma Gates; Head Coach Ron Kessler
52 and Assistant Coach Hugh Webb; and

53 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize this group
54 of student athletes who have brought honor to their school, their
55 community and to the State of Mississippi:

56 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
57 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and congratulate the
58 Brookhaven Academy "Lady Cougars" Girls Basketball Team and Coach
59 Ron Kessler for winning the 2023 MAIS 5A Girls Basketball
60 Championship, and extend to the team, coaches, parents and
61 sponsors our best wishes for future success.

62 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
63 Coach Ron Kessler and Brookhaven Academy Headmaster Jason Case,
64 forwarded to the Brookhaven Academy Board of Trustees, and made
65 available to the Capitol Press Corps.

