

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

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 94

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE MARSHALL
2 ACADEMY "PATRIOTS" BOYS BASEBALL TEAM AND HEAD COACH BRUCE BRANCH
3 FOR WINNING THEIR FIRST MAIS 4A VARSITY BASEBALL CHAMPIONSHIP IN
4 50 YEARS IN A VICTORY DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF COACH BRANCH'S
5 BABY GIRL, JANIE, WHO WAS THE TEAM'S INSPIRATION ("JANIE STRONG").

6 WHEREAS, on May 19, 2022, the Marshall Academy "Patriots"
7 Boys Baseball Team defeated Wayne Academy in the best of three
8 MAIS 4A Varsity Baseball Championship, which was the school's
9 first Baseball Championship in over 50 years; and

10 WHEREAS, during the 2021 season, Coach Bruce Branch's baby
11 daughter, Janie, was a team and crowd favorite unofficial mascot
12 on the sidelines during games and had become the inspiration for
13 the 2022 season when she was tragically lost in a car accident.
14 The team and community declared they would live their lives "Janie
15 Strong," and when the season started, the slogan was painted on
16 the sidelines to fight and play as hard as Janie did during her
17 life; and

18 WHEREAS, during game three of the Championship playoff, the
19 tide turned for the "Patriots." They pulled out every pitcher



20 they had and let them all have a turn. It was a magical thing to
21 see. Jamie and Jackson Graves, twin seniors, got to play together
22 one last time as pitcher and catcher. They were poetry in motion,
23 as always. Colton Neal, the never-still third baseman, was all
24 over that field. Colton Atherton was stealing bases like they
25 were made of gold, Jordan Bonds didn't let another pitch get past
26 first base, and Rusty Bolden was running like the wind. Finally,
27 Landon Houston took the mound to pitch. The crowd was electric.
28 He struck out two batters. Up came the third. One strike, then
29 two, then the crack of a bat and a ball sailing up and then into
30 Landon's glove. The team stormed the field. These boys wanted
31 this win. They wanted it for themselves and for the school; and

32 WHEREAS, the 2022 Marshall Academy "Patriots" Boys Baseball
33 Team Championship Roster: Colton Atherton, Colton Neal, Jamie
34 Graves, Jackson Graves, Gage Gardner, Landon Houston, Colton
35 Foster, Matt Bourdon, Jordan Bonds, Rusty Bolden, Walker Sanders,
36 Jack Whaley Smith, Jace Reason, Kevin Sykes, Tucker Chumney,
37 Hayden Lundine, Kaleb Leist, Konner Morgan, Cade Sanders, Devin
38 Snow, Brennan Smith, Kyler Todd, Zach Bogard, Eli Gurley and John
39 Taylor; Head Coach Bruce Branch; and Assistant Coaches Jason
40 Taylor, Tobe West and Dustin Skelton; and

41 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize these
42 student athletes whose inspirational championship has brought
43 honor to their school, their community and to the State of
44 Mississippi:



45 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
46 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and congratulate the
47 Marshall Academy "Patriots" Baseball Team and Head Coach Bruce
48 Branch for winning their first MAIS 4A Varsity Baseball
49 Championship in 50 years in a victory dedicated to the memory of
50 Coach Branch's baby girl, Janie, who was the team's inspiration
51 ("Janie Strong"), and extend to the team, coaches, parents and
52 sponsors our best wishes for future success.

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
54 Coach Branch and his family, forwarded to Headmaster Jason Taylor
55 and the Marshall Academy Board of Trustees, and made available to
56 the Capitol Press Corps.

