

By: Senator(s) Hewes, King, Morgan, Gollott, Robertson, Moffatt, Lee (47th), Albritton, Nunnelee, Cuevas, Dawkins, Walley To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 577

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE
2 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI "GOLDEN EAGLES" FOOTBALL TEAM
3 AND HEAD COACH JEFF BOWER FOR WINNING THE 2007 GMAC BOWL IN
4 MOBILE, ALABAMA, FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING 2006 REGULAR SEASON AND FOR
5 THEIR CONSISTENT POST-SEASON RECORD.

6 WHEREAS, the USM Golden Eagles Football Team gave a good
7 tutorial on how to make a halftime lead hold up in a 28-7 victory
8 over the Ohio University Bobcats on Sunday, January 7, 2007, in
9 the GMAC Bowl in Mobile, Alabama; and

10 WHEREAS, with big plays, a marathon drive and a smothering
11 defense, Southern Miss gave Ohio a tough lesson on a post-season
12 play. After a scoreless first quarter, Southern Miss (9-5) scored
13 21 second quarter points then surged out of halftime with a
14 season-long 17-play touchdown drive that effectively ended any
15 come back threat; and

16 WHEREAS, Southern Miss is accustomed to post-season play,
17 making its fifth consecutive bowl appearance and ninth in 10
18 years; and

19 WHEREAS, post game notes on the Golden Eagles GMAC victory
20 are as follows:

21 • With the GMAC victory, the Golden Eagles finished the 2006
22 season with a 9-5 record. It was the first nine-win season for
23 the Golden Eagles since the 2003 campaign when they went to the
24 Liberty Bowl, and fourth of Coach Jeff Bower's 16-year tenure;

25 • Defeating Ohio University, Southern Miss is the only
26 Conference USA to finish the season with a bowl victory;

27 • This is the second time the Golden Eagles have played in
28 the GMAC Bowl, defeating No. 13 Texas Christian University, 28-21

29 on December 20, 2000. Southern Miss is the only C-USA team to
30 garner a victory in this bowl;

31 • James Denley's score marked the 7th nonoffensive touchdown
32 of the season and the 4th interception for a touchdown this
33 season. The seven nonoffensive touchdowns this season is the most
34 recorded under Coach Jeff Bower. The previous high was six, which
35 was recorded in 2000 and 2003;

36 • The Southern Miss Captains were No. 70 George Batiste, No.
37 35 Conrad Chanove, No. 55 Travis Cooley, No. 21 Jasper Faulk, No.
38 48 Jonathan Palmer and No. 6 Brandon Sumrall;

39 • The Golden Eagles recorded their longest drive of the
40 season (9:55) and the most plays in a drive (17 plays) throughout
41 the season with their final touchdown, a 9-yard Damion Fletcher
42 rush, with 5:05 left in the third quarter;

43 • Senior Offensive Lineman George Batiste made his 49th
44 consecutive career start and the offensive line was combined for
45 145 collective starting assignments;

46 • The GMAC contest marked Coach Jeff Bower's 10th bowl game
47 in his career at Southern Miss, including six bowl wins;

48 • The game was the Golden Eagles' 17th bowl appearance in
49 school history, including eight bowl victories;

50 • Southern Miss has made five straight bowl appearances,
51 making them one of 20 schools to accomplish that feat;

52 • The Golden Eagles are one of 15 schools who have played in
53 bowl games in nine of the last ten years;

54 • With the GMAC game against Ohio University, the Golden
55 Eagles recorded their first 14-game season in school history;

56 • The contest also marked the first time Southern Miss has
57 played in January since 1958. The Golden Eagles have played in
58 January four times -- the 1953 Sun Bowl, the 1954 Sun Bowl, the
59 1957 Tangerine Bowl and the 1958 Tangerine Bowl;

60 • Since 1958, the latest in the season the Golden Eagles
61 have played is December 31 when they played in the Liberty Bowl in
62 1997, 1999 and 2003; and

63 WHEREAS, Southern Miss true Freshman Running Back Damion
64 Fletcher and redshirt Freshman Linebacker Gerald McRath were named
65 to the Scripps Freshman All-American Team as selected by the
66 Football Writers of America. This marks the sixth year that
67 Scripps and FWAA has named a Freshman All-American Team. McRath,
68 a third-team All-Conference USA selection and All-Freshman team
69 member as well as a first-team *The Sporting News* Freshman
70 All-American, led the Golden Eagles in tackles with 104 tackles,
71 including 59 solo stops, two sacks, 11 tackles for loss, one pass
72 breakup and two forced fumbles. Fletcher, named a second-team
73 Freshman All-American by *The Sporting News*, *reivals.com* and
74 *scout.com*, was named to the All-Conference USA first team, the
75 All-Conference USA Freshman team and was a finalist for the
76 Conerly Trophy, signifying the best player in the State of
77 Mississippi. He was named the GMAC Bowl Most Valuable Player
78 after finishing with 20 carries for 58 yards and scored two
79 touchdowns. He also had three catches for 28 yards; and

80 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize this group
81 of student athletes whose consistent postseason play has brought
82 honor to their university, their community and to the State of
83 Mississippi:

84 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
85 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
86 we do hereby commend and congratulate the University of Southern
87 Mississippi "Golden Eagles" Football Team and Head Coach Jeff
88 Bower for winning the 2007 GMAC Bowl in Mobile, Alabama, for their
89 outstanding 2006 Regular Season and for their consistent
90 post-season record.

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
92 Coach Bower and USM President Shelby Thames and be forwarded to

93 the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and
94 be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.