

By: Senator(s) Harden, Burton, Chaney,
Dawkins, Dearing, Gordon, Jackson (11th),
Jackson (32nd), Jordan, Little, Nunnelee

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 6

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND THANKING MANDY AND PAUL ROGERS OF
2 GLUCKSTADT, MISSISSIPPI, FOR BEING NAMED THE 2006 "MOST CARING
3 COACHES" BY *USA WEEKEND MAGAZINE*.

4 WHEREAS, a Gluckstadt, Mississippi, couple was named "Most
5 Caring Coaches" award winners in the September 29-October 1, 2006,
6 issue of *USA Weekend*. Mandy and Paul Rogers were selected from
7 750 entries from across the nation for their work in founding the
8 Ridgeland Challenger Softball League; and

9 WHEREAS, the team was created 16 years ago to provide
10 recreational opportunities for special-needs children, such as
11 their sons Nate, 22, and Ben, 18. The first season, they had two
12 teams of nine kids each. Now, there are almost 100 players in
13 separate youth and adult leagues; and

14 WHEREAS, Ridgeland resident, Laura Sue McClure, nominated the
15 pair for the contest sponsored by *The Clarion-Ledger*, *USA Weekend*
16 and ESPN; and

17 WHEREAS, this *USA Weekend* program honors outstanding youth
18 coaches nominated by readers, who lead their players both on and
19 off the field. Each receives \$1,000.00 awards for their teams.
20 After reading more than 700 nominations, this distinguished panel
21 of professional and college coaches made the final selection: the
22 judges included WNBA Coach Anne Donovan of *The Seattle Storm*; U.S.
23 Women's Fed Cup tennis Coach Zina Garrison; Auburn University's
24 women's swim Coach Dorsey Tierney-Walker; the Minnesota Wild's
25 Jacques Lemaiare; Chicago Bears Coach Lovie Smith; and Rob Dibble
26 of *Best Damn Sports Show Period*. From a field of 10, they picked
27 three, which included Mandy and Paul Rogers; and

28 WHEREAS, the Ridgeland Challenger League started as an idea
29 in 1991 when Ridgeland resident David Hill saw a young girl in a
30 wheelchair watching a baseball game and wondered what was needed
31 for her to be able to play baseball. The inaugural season was
32 such a wonderful experience for everyone involved, a decision was
33 made to expand the league and play the following season. The
34 "expanded" season consisted of 4 teams playing 4 games over 2
35 weekends in August. The league continued growing and a few years
36 later, the Challenger League was put into the regular Ridgeland
37 baseball season and now plays 12-14 games during the months of
38 April, May and June. There are now approximately 100 players on 6
39 adult teams and 4 youth teams, assisted by a multitude of buddies
40 and coaches. All games are played at Hite Wolcott Park. During
41 the entire existence of the Challenger League, there has never
42 been any cost to parents or players, all costs being paid through
43 sponsor donations and the City of Ridgeland; and

44 WHEREAS, the key to the success of the Challenger League has
45 been the on-going support of the City of Ridgeland and its Parks
46 and Recreation Department. When the Challenger League was
47 started, Gene McGee had recently been elected Mayor of Ridgeland
48 and he was personally involved in many Challenger League events.
49 As an outgrowth of the Challenger League, Ridgeland Parks and
50 Recreation has established and now sponsors 2 additional
51 recreational programs for children with disabilities, TOP Soccer
52 and HOOPS Basketball; and

53 WHEREAS, through the generosity of sponsors, each child and
54 coach receives a trophy at the end of the season. Trophy day is
55 the day anxiously awaited by the players. Each year there are a
56 number of special awards in memory of players and a coach who had
57 played/coached in the Challenger League. These awards include the
58 Mark F. Smith Spirit Award, the Christopher Rives Spirit Award,
59 the Jon Richardson MVP Award, the Clay Converse MVP Award, the
60 Heather Occhipinti MVP Award and the Dustin Parks MVP Award. Each

61 year the coaches select the recipients of these special awards
62 which honor and perpetuate the memory of those persons for whom
63 the awards are named; and

64 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the
65 selfless contributions of these Mississippi citizens who have
66 created opportunities on and off the sports field for children
67 with special needs, and has brought honor to their community and
68 to the State of Mississippi:

69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
70 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and congratulate Mandy and
71 Paul Rogers of Gluckstadt, Mississippi, for receiving the 2006
72 "Most Caring Coaches" Award by *USA Weekend Magazine*, and thank
73 them for their contributions to the special needs children of
74 their community and state.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution shall be
76 presented to Mandy and Paul Rogers, forwarded to Mayor Gene McGee
77 of Ridgeland, Mississippi, and be made available to the Capitol
78 Press Corps.