

By: Representative Miles

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 44

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE 1970 FOREST HIGH SCHOOL BEARCATS
2 FOOTBALL TEAM ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF WINNING THE LITTLE DIXIE
3 CONFERENCE TITLE AND FOR AN OUTSTANDING 1970 SEASON.

4 WHEREAS, the Forest High School Bearcats Football Team in
5 Forest, Mississippi, began its 1970 season as the defending Little
6 Dixie Conference champions; and

7 WHEREAS, in the previous season, the 1969 Bearcats captured
8 the conference title with a 10-0-1 record and were led by Head
9 Coach Ken Bramlett, who later continued his coaching success on
10 the junior college level; and

11 WHEREAS, the 1969 Forest squad continues to be recognized as
12 one of the best teams in Bearcat history, as several players
13 received scholarships to Southeastern Conference squads and other
14 four-year colleges and junior colleges; and

15 WHEREAS, the 1970 Bearcats were not predicted to be as
16 successful as the previous year's team, as they began their season
17 with a new head coach, Gary Risher, new assistants, James C. "Bo"

18 Clark and Billy Ray Dill, and a new athletic director, Ken Gordon;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the 1970 season also marked the first year of full
21 integration for Forest High School and the majority of schools in
22 Mississippi, as the team included players of both races and an
23 African-American coach, "Bo" Clark, for the first time in school
24 history; and

25 WHEREAS, the Bearcats started season action with a decisive
26 victory over Neshoba Central, which was followed by successive
27 wins over Raleigh, Brandon, Clinton, Pearl-McLaurin, Newton,
28 Forest Hill, Carthage, Florence, and ending the regular season by
29 rallying to defeat then-undefeated Morton to capture the North
30 Little Dixie Conference title; and

31 WHEREAS, the Bearcats, whose superior season was driven by
32 more than just the yearning to succeed, intensely amplified all of
33 their hard work, motivation and audacity, which were so apparent
34 all through the season, for the final game that ultimately
35 separated the men from the boys to take down Monticello by a score
36 of 22-10, and take home the Little Dixie Conference Championship
37 for the second consecutive year; and

38 WHEREAS, unfortunately, Head Coach Gary Risher was unable to
39 be with his team during the championship battle due to the serious
40 illness of his son, Robin, at a Jackson, Mississippi, hospital;
41 and

42 WHEREAS, not to be deterred, the school administration, led
43 by then Superintendent L.O. Atkins, Principals McClain Hatch and
44 Milton Walker and others helped to provide a special telephone
45 hookup for Coach Risher to be able to communicate with the
46 assistant coaches during the Monticello game; and

47 WHEREAS, with an outstanding record of 11-0, the Bearcats
48 achieved ultimate victory despite the many obstacles along the
49 road to the championship, and they proved that success can be
50 obtained by both races working together as a team for the same
51 goal, despite numerous challenges; and

52 WHEREAS, the 1970 Bearcats team was comprised of the
53 following talented student athletes: seniors, Mike Massey, Dave
54 Gibson, Joe Buddy Madden, Billy Thompson, Ken Gordon, Johnny
55 Payton, Bobby Latham, Bob Smiley, Bubby Johnston, Elbon
56 Johnston, J.W. Clark, Rodney Russell, Lee Dukes, Gerald Harper and
57 Henry Thomas; juniors, Walter Hatch, Randy Dilley, Ricky Dilley,
58 Howard Chambers, Tye Gaddis, Raymond Robinson, Larry Risher,
59 Phillip Broadhead, Terry Austin, Mike Vaughn, Jimmy Bradford,
60 Willie Bradford, Charles Lyle, Lambert Lane, Robert Trotter, Tug
61 Ledford, Jackie Calhoun, Jesse Lancaster, Lee Evans, Willie Bowie
62 and Edmond Harvey; sophomores, Steve Gibson, Steve Tullos, Arthur
63 Murrell, Eugene Braggs, Edward Patrick, Ken Melichar, Wally
64 Rushing, Wardell Reed and David Lee; and managers, Grady Austin,
65 Freddy Ledford and Sonny Gibbs; and



66 WHEREAS, the Bearcats received tremendous support throughout
67 the season from the All-Superior Forest High School Band, directed
68 by Doug Harvel and Drum Major Ginny Lee; cheerleaders, Gayle
69 Walsh, Stacey Stegall, Wanda "Tutti" Calhoun, Belinda Wheeler,
70 Martha Marler and Dea McCrory; and school administration, faculty,
71 staff and student body; and

72 WHEREAS, members of the Forest community showed their support
73 and appreciation of the team's success by providing funds to send
74 the 1970 Bearcats to the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans, Louisiana, for
75 the second straight year; and

76 WHEREAS, a special recognition ceremony is scheduled Friday,
77 August 21, 2020, to honor the 1970 championship squad,
78 cheerleaders and band members, during halftime of the Lake High
79 game at L.O. Atkins Field; and

80 WHEREAS, the 1970 Forest High School Bearcats Football Team
81 will always be known as the first integrated and undefeated
82 championship squad in school history:

83 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
84 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby
85 commend the 1970 Forest High School Bearcats Football Team on the
86 50th anniversary of winning the Little Dixie Conference title and
87 for an outstanding 1970 season.

88 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
89 furnished to team coaches and members, Forest High School, Forest
90 City Hall and to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

