



## MISSISSIPPI SPORTS HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

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### The Smithsonian Institute Is Coming to Mississippi

For Immediate release

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The Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, in partnership with the Mississippi Humanities Council, will showcase "Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America." The Smithsonian traveling exhibit will begin a six-week run at the Jackson museum on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

"Hometown Teams" captures the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, and the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats. For more than 100 years, sports have reflected the trials and triumphs of the American experience and helped shape not only hometown life, but the national character. Whether it is professional sports or those played on the collegiate or scholastic level, amateur sports or sports played by kids on the local playground, sports are everywhere in America.

"Nowhere in America are sports more a part of the social fabric than in Mississippi," said Bill Blackwell, Executive Director of the MSHOF. "That's why we are so excited that the exhibit is coming to the place where Mississippi sports history is housed and extolled."

Said Stuart Rockoff, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council: "For the past 15 years, the Mississippi Humanities Council has worked with the Smithsonian Institution and the Museum on Main Street program to bring six quality traveling exhibits to nearly 40 small towns across the state, and we are thrilled to bring our seventh exhibit, "Hometown Teams", to six more sites throughout the state this year. Mississippians love sports, both as players and fans. This exhibit helps us understand why, while exploring how sports shape our society and culture."

The MSHOF and the Humanities Council have combined for a series of programs to accompany the Smithsonian exhibit. Speakers will include:

- Wright Thompson (April 4, 5pm), senior writer for *ESPN The Magazine* and *ESPN.com*, a Clarksdale native and one of the nation's most highly regarded sports writers.
- Dr. Chuck Ross (April 20, noon), an Ole Miss professor, whose presentation will deal with integration of sports teams in Mississippi and the ultimate effect on Mississippi society.
- Janet Marie Smith (April 21, noon), world renowned sports architect and Jackson native, whose design of Camden Yards in Baltimore changed the way America designs its sports stadiums.
- Mississippi Governors William Winter, Ronnie Musgrove and Haley Barbour (April 25, 5pm), will hold a panel discussion of how sports have shaped small-town Mississippi.

The exhibit will kickoff March 18<sup>th</sup> with a grand opening pep rally and ribbon cutting (5-7pm) when visitors are encouraged to wear their team colors and celebrate the Smithsonian coming to the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum.

A complete listing of scheduled events is attached.



## Schedule of Events

**Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup> – Pep Rally Grand Opening 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Help us kick off the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit *Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America* with a pep rally to celebrate our very own Hometown Teams. Wear your team's colors and come ready to cheer as we open this exciting exhibition.

**Tuesday, March 29<sup>th</sup> – Business After Hours with the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

This exclusive event is open to all members of the Greater Jackson Chamber of Commerce to visit the Smithsonian exhibit first hand. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres from the Hilton Jackson and a cash bar will be available.

**Thursday, March 31<sup>st</sup> – Farm Bureau Salutes the 1996 Final Four Bulldogs Reception 5:30 p.m. Banquet 7:00 p.m.**

**Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> – Hometown Teams Speaker Series Part I with Wright Thompson 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> – Hometown Teams Speaker Series Part III with Dr. Chuck Ross from the University of Mississippi 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> – Hometown Teams Speaker Series Part II with Janet Marie Smith 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> – 200 Club Reception with special guest Janet Marie Smith 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Lifetime Members of the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum are invited to a reception in their honor with special guest and Jackson-native, Janet Marie Smith.

**Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> – Hometown Teams Speaker Series Part IV with Mississippi's Former Governors Winter, Musgrove and Barber 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

