

Black History Month 2014: The Native Sons and Daughters of Alabama

Honoring A.H. Parker High School as Alabama's Class 5A State Basketball Champions 2014

March 6, 2014

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, continuing in the tradition of the "District of Champions," I rise today to honor the A.H. Parker High School Thundering Herd on winning the 2014 State of Alabama title in the 5A State Basketball Championship--the first state title since 1975. On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, I pay tribute to the Thundering Herd for their exemplary athleticism and teamwork as well as the outstanding leadership of Head Coach Reggie McGary and his coaching staff. We are extremely proud of these young men!

Parker's championship victory capped off an extraordinary season of 23 wins and 6 losses. Coach McGary credited his team's success to the leadership of his assistant coach, Randal Smith. According to McGary, Smith's persistence in stressing the importance of defense was the team's key to victory. Throughout the championship game, Smith demanded that his defensive players bring their best to the court.

To earn their spot in the championship game, Parker High School dominated their opponents during the Steele City Invitational Tournament last December. The Thundering Herd faced its rival Ramsay High School to clinch the state title on March 1, 2014. During the championship game, the thundering herd played with the same skill and intensity that sustained them throughout the season. The team was celebrated for their consistent ability to defensively shutdown their opponents. Their strategy was no different when they competed for the state title as the Thundering Herd held Ramsey to just six points during the third quarter.

Although the team trailed 23-20 with 2:17 left in the first half, they would not allow their opponent to score again until the end of the third quarter. Senior Marquell Olivier led Parker with 15 points and nine rebounds while Omani Williams served as a defensive force for the team. Alontae Johnson also contributed nine points to the Thundering Herd's 56-46 victory. The win occurred on the 50th anniversary of the Thundering Herd's 1964 National Black High School Championship won at Tennessee State University.

As the daughter of a high school basketball coach, I know this decisive victory is the result of the tremendous efforts of both the players and coaching staff of A.H. Parker High School. The exemplary leadership and dedicated support from the coaching staff was a major factor in the success of the Thundering Herd. I commend Head Coach Reggie McGary and assistant coach Randal Smith and I am so proud of all they have accomplished.

On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, the State of Alabama and this nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the accomplishments of the A.H. Parker High School Boys Basketball Team for their victory in the Class 5A Alabama State Championship.

Congratulations! Go Bisons!