

SPORTS



Coach Yo attains milestone for Bahamas Sports Brand

There she sat, showcased, this past Friday, shortly before 1 p.m. at the media sector of the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) Pavilion in Oxford, the centerpiece of a historic press conference.

Yolett McPhee-McCuin, known fondly and respectfully as Coach Yo, was calm, collected, confident, and aware of the special moment in time and every bit suited for the occasion.

The scene was far removed from a day, September 1, in 1962 when a young Black man, James Meredith, had to be escorted to his classroom during the highly volatile and controversial enrollment process. He was the first black student at the university. Mississippi was a much different place. A racial segregation culture was very much a part of the make-up of the United States.

Blacks, largely, were considered inferior to Whites and were treated accordingly. It was unthinkable for many Americans that a Black student could sit in the same classroom with their White children. Racial prejudice, especially based on incidents that continue to unfold, has not been done away with in the United States, but the country certainly is different from what it was in 1962.

Fast-forward 52 years and seven months, and a black on-the-rise collegiate coach, is hailed as the person expected to take the Ole Miss Women's Basketball Program to a position of respectability. Also, that individual of history, is from The Bahamas. Coach Yo is from Freeport, Grand Bahama. She is the daughter of parents with strong education/youth mentoring backgrounds.

Reference is to former noted educator Daisy McPhee and the iconic Coach Gladstone "Moon" McPhee.

So while the Ole Miss program bringing in a new coach was the main storyline, the Bahamian connection was significant. Coach Yo has the position of Bahamian Women's National Basketball Coach on her résumé and being elevated to head coach status at one of the fabled insti-

Ole Miss today, far-removed from strong racial prejudice culture



MILESTONE FOR COACH YO – On Friday past, Coach Yolett McPhee-McCuin, center, signed on as the Head Coach of the Ole Miss Women's Basketball Program. At left, is, her mother Daisy and her father Coach Gladstone "Moon" McPhee is at right.

tutions in the United States, is a special dimension for the Bahamas Sports Brand.

Bahamians who watched the conference had to feel proud that one of their very own could be holding court so eloquently and knowledgeably, on a sports platform being presented to world viewers. In introducing Coach Yo, Ole Miss Director of Athletics Ross Bjork was unrestrained as he expressed delight and satisfaction on behalf of the institution that was able to entice Coach Yo away from Jacksonville University.

"She has passion. We wanted someone who could grasp the potential. We have the resources

"We will have a fun style of play. When you see us on the floor, it will be hard and gritty and blue-collar like but we will have a lot of fun. I intend to bring in the staff who understand my vision to work tirelessly,"

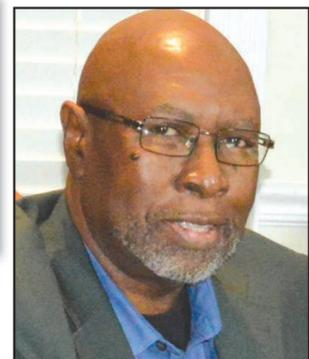
~ Coach Yo.
(Yolett McPhee-McCuin)

and wanted someone who could come in and capitalize on the resources. We have history. We have to rejuvenate women's basketball and Coach Yo is the one

to be here," said Bjork. For her part, Coach Yo was fundamental but left room for operating on occasions, out of the box. She was firm on her in-

terest in assessing the completed roster following the recruitment phase, but promised "hard work" always.

"My story is one of consistent-



SPORTS SCOPE

By Fred Sturrup

ly outworking my opponents and trying to outwork myself. I will give you everything I have and no coach in the country will outwork me. I truly believe this is a great chance and I hope you can join me for the ride.

"We will have a fun style of play. When you see us on the floor, it will be hard and gritty and blue-collar like but we will have a lot of fun. I intend to bring in the staff who understand my vision to work tirelessly," said Coach Yo.

As pointed out in this space previously, there is the huge challenge facing Coach Yo of transforming a 1-15 Southeastern Conference (SEC), and 12-19 total-won-loss record team, into one that competes every time out, efficiently.

"Being better tomorrow than we were before" is the motto of Coach Yo and an appropriate one to take the Ole Miss women's Basketball from the bottom of the SEC to national prominence.

All along, the underlying factor will be an enhancement of the Bahamas Sports Brand.

Go Coach Yo!

• To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturrup at sturrup1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363.