

THE CLARKSDALE
Press Register



143rd YEAR, NUMBER 241, December 3, 2008

WEDNESDAY

16 PAGES IN TWO SECTIONS CLARKSDALE, MISS. 75 CENTS

www.pressregister.com

Joseph: This is unbelievable

Millsaps' Juan Joseph wins Conerly trophy

By Daryl Bell
 Sports Editor

It had been a decade since the Cellular South Conerly Trophy presentation was in Clarksdale. A lot has changed since then but one thing apparently hasn't - The Delta's love for collegiate football.

Before a packed audience at the Clarksdale Country Club, Millsaps quarterback Juan Joseph was named the 2008 winner of the award presented by the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum and given to the top college football player in Mississippi.

The award is named after former Clarksdale High School, University of Mississippi All-America and National Football League All-Pro Charlie Conerly.

Joseph became the first Division III player to win the award, beating out a pair of future NFL players from Ole Miss in defensive tackle Peria Jerry and offensive tackle Michael Oher.

"This is unbelievable," said Joseph. A native of Edgard, La., Joseph is the first quarterback to win the award since Ole Miss' Eli Manning won it in 2003.

"Just being in the same room with Peria and Michael is an honor but to win this, it's something I really didn't see happening," Joseph said. "I'm really honored by this."

Clarksdale residents jammed the Country Club to meet the state's best collegiate players. Some without tickets peered through windows, ignoring a biting cold wind that swirled outside, for a glimpse at the festivities.

A panel of voters from print, television and radio outlets selected the nominees and winner. The 2007 winner, Southern Miss tailback Damion Fletcher, was nominated but wasn't a finalist.

The site for next year's ceremony hasn't been named but in all likelihood, it will not be Clarksdale.

"We are the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum," said Michael Rubenstein, Executive Director of the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum. "We want all of

Mississippi to know about us and about this great award. Moving the ceremony around the state will get more people to know about the award. It represents all of Mississippi, not one particular area."

Conerly was an eleventh round draft choice of the Washington Redskins in 1945 but he spent his entire NFL career with the New York Giants. Named NFL Rookie of the Year in 1948, Conerly was a Pro Bowl selection in 1950 and 1956. In 1959, he was named the NFL's Most Valuable Player.

A leader, Conerly guided the Giants to three NFL Championship games in four seasons (1956,1958-59). In 1956, he led the Giants to a 47-7 win over the Chicago Bears for the NFL Championship.

Conerly, who also portrayed the famed Marlboro Man in cigarette commercials while playing for the Giants, never forgot his roots. He was a Mississippian and proud of it. He kept a home in Clarksdale and his widow, Perian Conerly, still resides in the city.

Prior to his days in the NFL, Conerly starred for Clarksdale High and later at Ole Miss where he was an All-America selection.

He entered college in 1942, but left to serve as a Marine during World War II. After returning to Ole Miss in 1946, he guided the Rebels to their first Southeastern Conference championship in 1947. He led the nation in pass completions that season with 133, including 18 touchdown passes. He also rushed for nine scores.

Many consider Conerly as one of the greatest players in Ole Miss history. He played tailback but handled all of the passing chores while setting numerous school records.

Inducted into the Ole Miss Athletic Hall of Fame in 1987 and the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 1966 Conerly is also a member of the Ole Miss Team of the Century (1893-1992).

"Clarksdale really came out for this one," said Perian Conerly.



Joseph

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Senators take on Delta's lack of affordable housing

By ANDY ROSS
 Staff Writer

Attempting to raise awareness and receive input on housing problems facing the Delta, members of the Mississippi Senate Housing Committee stopped off in Clarksdale Monday for a brief meeting with local officials and others involved in the housing sector.

Joining Sen. Robert Jackson (D-Marks), was chairman of the newly formed Housing Committee, Sen. Hillman Terome Frazier (D-Jackson)

Both legislators addressed the long existing problem of dilapidated homes, and also spoke on Mississippi's historical habit of leaving the Delta region behind in terms of funding.

"The fact is when it comes to trying to allocate funds across the state of Mississippi, the Delta comes up short," Jackson said following the meeting. "We knew that was the case already, but it's good to hear others qualify that."

Some of those "others" present whom Jackson was referring to included Coahoma Mayor W.J. Jones, District 4 Supervisor Johnny Newson, and Vivian Johnson with Southland Management Corporation.

Johnson said she believes the large numbers of families who rent property, as opposed to buying homes is a large problem.

"We need to look at housing in terms of longevity as opposed to just providing affordable places to live," Johnson said. "Experience has taught me people who own homes are much more concerned with their upkeep than those who rent."

The Clarksdale visit was just one detour stop made by the legislators on their way to Greenville Monday night for the main Delta field hearing on housing issues. Between now and the beginning of the legislative session in January, two more primary hearings will be held in other regions of the state.

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Andy Ross/The Clarksdale Press Register
 State Sen. Robert Jackson (D-Marks) speaks to those gathered Monday at Chapel Hill Heights Apartments Community Center for a meeting on housing issues facing the Delta. Serving on the Senate Housing Committee, Jackson and committee chairman Sen. Hillman Frazier (D-Jackson) spent the day travelling through the Delta en route to a main public hearing in Greenville.

Parade ushers in holidays

By PATRICIA HYMEL
 Associate Editor

The holiday season has arrived in Coahoma County this week with Christmas parades in Jonestown Monday evening, Clarksdale, Tuesday evening, and Coahoma tonight.

The Clarksdale parade is the largest with ten floats, five bands, many walkers and vehicles, and ending with a large fireworks display over the Sunflower River.

First place winner of the float competition was "A Sleigh Ride thru Winter Wonderland" sponsored by Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center. Featuring a horse drawn sleigh, Michael Smith Jr. from the medical center, serenaded the crowd with Christmas carols from the float.

Second place went to "A Sesame Street Christmas" sponsored by Creative Children Childcare Center. Clarksdale Baptist Church sponsored the third place entry, "Away in the Manager."

Back by popular demand and through the sponsorship of area businesses, the fireworks

ended the evening with cries of oohs and ahs from the crowd.

Sponsoring the fireworks were the Chamber of Commerce, the city of Clarksdale, Delta Cardiovascular Center (Dr. Roger

Weiner), MAP of Easton, Sonic, CableOne, Hunt Ross & Allen, Phelps Brothers Furniture, Phelps Security Systems, Hugh Jack Stubbs, Tri-State Termite & Pest Control, True Value Hard-

ware, Wade, Inc. The Woman's Clinic, Dalton's Furniture Inc., Luckett Tyner Law Firm, Memorial Gardens Cemetery, Temperature Control, Marvin Carraway, and the Rancho.



PATRICIA HYMEL/The Clarksdale Press Register
 Complete with horses, the Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center float - "A Sleigh Ride thru Winter Wonderland" wins the competition for best float at the Holiday Festival Parade in downtown Clarksdale Tuesday. Employees of the medical center were on the float and serenaded by their own Michael Smith Jr.



Forecast

Tonight: Rain before midnight. Low around 37. Chance of precipitation is 90%. New rainfall

between a half and three quarters of an inch possible. Thursday: Mostly sunny.



Inside Today

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Shop Downtown Clarksdale During the
 Holly Days