

*Look Away, Dixie

(Continued from page 1.)
A commission will design a new flag that cannot include the Confederate symbol and that must have the words "In God We Trust." Voters will be asked to approve the new design in the Nov. 3 election. If they reject it, the commission will set a different design using the same guidelines, and that would be sent to voters later.

Republican House Speaker Philip Gunn, who is white, has pushed for five years to change the flag, saying the Confederate symbol is offensive. The House passed the bill 91-23 Sunday afternoon. Within hours, the Senate followed suit, 37-14.

"How sweet it is to celebrate this on the Lord's day," Gunn said. "Many prayed to Him to bring us to this day.

He has answered." An increasing number of cities and all Mississippi's public universities have taken down the state flag in recent years. But until now, efforts to redesign the flag sputtered in the Republican-dominated Legislature.

That dynamic shifted as an extraordinary and diverse coalition of political, business, religious groups and sports leaders pushed for change.

At a Black Lives Matter protest outside the Mississippi Governor's Mansion in early June, thousands cheered as an organizer said the state needs to divorce itself from all Confederate symbols.

Religious groups — including the large and influential Mississippi Baptist Convention — said erasing

the rebel emblem from the state flag is a moral imperative.

Business groups said the banner hinders economic development in one of the poorest states in the nation.

In a sports-crazy culture, the biggest blow might have happened when college sports leagues said Mississippi could lose postseason events if it continued flying the Confederate-themed flag. Nearly four dozen of Mississippi's university athletic directors and coaches came to the Capitol to lobby for change.

Many people who wanted to keep the emblem on the Mississippi flag said they see it as a symbol of heritage.

Legislators put the Confederate emblem on the upper left corner of Mississippi flag in 1894, as whites were squelching political power that African Americans had gained after the Civil War.

The battle emblem is a red field topped by a blue X with 13 white stars. The Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups have waved the rebel flag for decades. Georgia put the battle emblem prominently on its state flag in 1956, during a backlash to the civil rights movement. That state removed the symbol from its banner in 2001.

The Mississippi Supreme Court found in 2000 that when the state updated its laws in 1906, portions dealing with the flag were not included. That meant the banner lacked official status. The Democratic governor in 2000, Ronnie Musgrove, ap-

pointed a commission to decide the flag's future. It held hearings across the state that grew ugly as people shouted at each other about the flag.

Legislators then opted not to set a flag design themselves. They put the issue on a 2001 statewide ballot, and people voted to keep the flag.

Former Mississippi Gov. William Winter, who is now 97, served on then-President Bill Clinton's national advisory board on race in the 1990s and was chairman of the Mississippi flag commission in 2000. Winter said Sunday that removing the Confederate symbol from the banner is "long overdue."

"The battle for a better Mississippi does not end with the removal of the flag, and we should work in concert to make other positive changes in the interest of all of our people," said Winter, a Democrat who was governor from 1980 until 1984.

Democratic state Sen. Derrick Simmons of Greenville, who is African American, said the state deserves a flag to make all people proud.

"Today is a history-making day in the state of Mississippi," Simmons told colleagues. "Let's vote today for the Mississippi of tomorrow."

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July 3 - Alston Gilbert, Shannon Lewis, Maggie Carter, Brent Richardson, Kelsey Watts, Faye Engle

July 4 - Phil Cohen, Debbie Byrd, Jerry McCrory, Liz Mansoor, Jordan Taylor, Morgan Taylor, Bro. Steve Jordan, Kristen Stevens

July 5 - Vera Marshall, Emily Thomas Holland, Ryleigh Scott, Ben Hudson, Donnie Doshier, Markus Horton, Susie Lane Pritchard, Tim Greer, Dea Hammett Bowling, Tami Burt

July 6 - Kirsten Gatson, Koby Padgett, Jerry G. Johnson, Toryanna Miller, Emma Burns, Timmy Angell, Lamar Ferrell, Hallie Austin, Barbara May

July 7 - Jessica C. Hood, Raymond Smith, Joann Banks, Whitney Matthews, Bryan Ware, Cagnie Johnson, Jessica E. Gilmer, Sally Cohen, Raquan Moore, Gail Hester, Patrick Boyd

July 8 - Carley Williamson, Naquisha Powell, John Grover, Virginia S. Melton, Pauline H. Tomlinson, Joseph Stewart, Jeff Jackson, James Engle



July 3 - Todd and Mitzi Wilson, William and Brenda Powell

July 4 - Jeff and Dana Holmes, Cleveland and Diane Whiteside

July 5 - Harold and Jackie Hammett, Edward and Causey Johnson

July 6 - Johnny and Cindy Lunsford, Christopher and Kimberly Forrest, Brenden and Elizabeth Brunner

July 7 - Danny and Ginny Hill

Pickens student named to MS College honors list

Press Release

Hallie Westbrook of Pickens was named to the Spring 2020 President's List at Mississippi College.

The Mississippi College Office of Academic Affairs releases the president's list after the close of fall and spring semesters each academic year. To be eligible for the President's List, a student must maintain a 4.0 grade point average, based on a 4.0 system. The student must take a full course load of at least 12 semester hours of undergraduate credit with all academic courses impacting their grade point average.



Sen. Briggs Hopson, R-Vicksburg, is hugged by Sen. Albert Butler, back to camera, D-Port Gibson, after the Senate voted to change the state flag Sunday, June 28, 2020, at the Capitol in Jackson, Miss. Hopson presented the bill to the body. Mississippi lawmakers voted to surrender the Confederate battle emblem from their state flag. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves has said he will sign the bill, and the state flag would lose its official status as soon as he signs the measure. (AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis)

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