

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Governor



EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1569

WHEREAS, on the night of Monday, December 12, 2022, America lost a college football icon who skillfully commanded the swashbuckling and influential “Air Raid” offense with the passing of Michael Charles “Mike” Leach at age 61; and

WHEREAS, Mike Leach was born on March 9, 1961, in Susanville, California, the son of Frank and Sandra (Rich) Leach, and grew up in Cody, Wyoming, where he played on his high school football team; and

WHEREAS, Mike Leach attended Brigham Young University, where he played rugby, graduating in 1983. He went on to earn a masters degree from the United States Sports Academy in Alabama and studied law at Pepperdine University, graduating in the top one-third of his class and earning his Juris Doctor in 1986; and

WHEREAS, following graduation from law school, the pirate-loving Leach realized that he did not want to be a lawyer, but instead wanted to use his talent for making legal arguments to devise innovative offensive plays; and

WHEREAS, in 1987, Coach Leach began his coaching career as an assistant at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, and followed that with assistant coaching stints at the College of the Desert, Iowa Wesleyan, Valdosta State, Kentucky and Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Coach Leach was hired by Texas Tech University to rebuild its football program. Over the course of ten winning seasons, the Red Raiders compiled a record of 84-43, and Coach Leach was named Big 12 Conference Coach of the Year in 2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Coach Leach was hired to reinvigorate the dormant football program at Washington State. In 2018, Coach Leach led the Cougars to a 11-2 record and a victory in the Alamo Bowl, compiling an overall record at Washington State of 55-47 in eight seasons; and

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2020, Coach Leach was named the 34th head football coach at Mississippi State University. Over the course of the past three seasons, Coach Leach led the Bulldogs to a 19-17 record, including a thrilling 24-22 victory over Ole Miss in the 2022 Egg Bowl, which would prove to be his final game on the sidelines; and

WHEREAS, in the words of Mississippi State President Mark E. Keenum: “[Coach Leach’s] innovative ‘Air Raid’ offense changed the game. Mike’s keen intellect and unvarnished candor made him one of the nation’s true coaching legends. His passing brings great sadness to our university, to the Southeastern Conference, and to all who love college football. [We] will miss Mike’s profound curiosity, his honesty, and his wide-open approach to pursuing excellence in all things.”; and

WHEREAS, the prayers of this state are with Coach Leach’s beloved wife, Sharon (Smith) Leach; his daughters, Janeen Clark, Kimberly Betty and Kiersten Leach; his son, Cody; his father, Frank; his sisters, Lindsey Andrus, Mary Quackenbush and Cara Williams; his brother, Tim; his six grandchildren; and his other family members, many friends and Bulldog Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Tate Reeves, by the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, do hereby order all flags of the State of Mississippi be flown at half-staff on all buildings and grounds of the State of Mississippi and all areas under its jurisdiction from sunrise to sunset on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, in remembrance of Coach Michael Charles “Mike” Leach, who leaves behind an incredible legacy as a husband, father, friend and leader of young men.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE at the Capitol in the City of Jackson, the 19th day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-seventh.


TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR



BY THE GOVERNOR:


MICHAEL WATSON