

*Remarks to the  
Jackson State University Press Conference  
August 24, 2001*

Dr. Mason, thank you for the invitation to join you here tonight. I'm pleased to be here to add my support to this evening's event, as you work toward your goal of \$15 million to build the Walter Payton Athletic Student Complex.

There's not a Mississippian out there who doesn't know about Walter Payton; I don't think there are all that many Americans who don't know about him.

From his start on the football field in Columbia, through his days at Jackson State in the mid-1970's, to his last game at Soldier Field in Chicago – Walter Payton set the standard for the game of football.

First round draft pick from Jackson State in 1975; seven times All-Pro; nine Pro Bowls; 77 games with over 100 yards rushing; enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1993.

No one's ever done it better, and I'm not sure anyone ever will.

Perhaps more importantly, though, he set the standard for all professional athletes through his strong character, his devotion to his family, and his true love of the game he played.

That's why it's so important for us to keep his spirit and his legacy alive through the Walter Payton Athletic Student Complex at Jackson State – so generations of young men and women will always know the type of athlete, and the type of man, that Walter Payton was.

Thank you.