

JAY HIGH SCHOOL

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Superintendent Barber, Assistant Superintendent Harrell, and School Board Members:

This letter comes as a request to members of the Santa Rosa County School Board that the Facilities Naming Committee convene.

As the principal of Jay High School, I am requesting that the Facilities Naming Committee consider renaming the gymnasium at Jay High School (JHS) after one of its longtime coaches. Coach John Clarence Smith worked in Santa Rosa County Schools for 40 years. During 36 of those years Coach Smith was the head basketball coach at Jay High School. This renaming recommendation was brought to us by community members: C. David Smith, M.D., Terry Diamond, and Bruce Godwin.

As a player, he helped lead his Jay High School basketball teams to the FHSAA Finals during his sophomore and senior seasons in 1942 and 1944. Also, in 1943 during his senior year, the Royals finished undefeated in football.

Coach Smith is a 1944 graduate of Jay High School. 4 or 5 days after his graduation in June of 1944 he reported to boot camp to serve his country in the Army. On December 9, 1944 he landed in France with the 42nd Rainbow Division of the Army to begin defending America in World War II. During the War his division crossed the Danube River on 3 different occasions. At the conclusion of WWII, he enrolled at the University of Florida as an education major. He graduated with his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in 1948. During the 1950's he began taking classes during the summers working towards his master's degree in Education. He graduated with his master's from George Peabody in 1954.

During his illustrious coaching career, he amassed 613 wins. Upon his retirement from coaching, he was the winningest Boys Basketball coach in the State of Florida. In 1985 he was a National High School Basketball Coach of the Year nominee. He was inducted into the FHSAA Hall of Fame as a charter member in 1991. His 1963 team played in the Final Four FHSAA Semifinal game. His teams made the playoffs in 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1975.

Coach Smith left an enduring mark on Jay High School touching countless lives while serving his community and Santa Rosa County. We feel that it is only appropriate to recognize his longstanding service by naming the gym "Coach John Clarence Smith Gymnasium". Therefore, I am requesting the Facilities Naming Committee convene to consider naming the gym on the campus of Jay High School after Coach Smith.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Benjamin H. West II

JHS Mission: "Provide all students an educational and social foundation to become productive citizens"
SRCSD Mission: "Preparing students for success by providing a superior, relevant education"