



**MOST REVEREND JOSEPH R. KOPACZ, D.D., PH.D.**  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE *of* JACKSON

October 17, 2023

Mr. William Blackwell  
Executive Director  
Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame and Museum  
1152 Lakeland Drive  
Jackson, MS 39216-4701

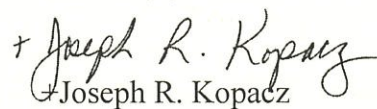
Dear Mr. Blackwell,

The Catholic Diocese and I support the induction of Coach William (Bill) Raphael into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame. Coach Raphael died in 2013 the year before I became the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Jackson, and so I did not have the privilege of knowing him personally. However, I have bumped into and conversed with many who had him as a teacher and a coach over his 41-year tenure, and they are grateful. Likewise, each time I attend a St. Joe's football home game at Raphael Field I can truly appreciate his legacy that continues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Coach Raphael's contribution at St. Joseph High School for more than 40 years had a major impact on the lives of his students and student athletes, their families, and the St. Joe community. He was successful in the classroom, on the field, and in the hearts and minds of many because he knew how to inspire excellence.

Thank you for considering this request and for your outstanding dedication to the women and men of Mississippi who have excelled in their athletic accomplishments.

Sincerely yours,

  
+ Joseph R. Kopacz

Bishop of Jackson