

For many athletes their varsity letter jackets are filled with personal accomplishments – a wearable trophy of sorts.

Salem senior Morgan Hasty's jacket has all those things, from all-conference selections and varsity letters, but it's a 12 words inscribed from the book of Matthew 19:26 that keeps her focus where it needs to be – “With man nothing is possible, but with God all things are possible.”

“I am excited about my achievements, but I am blessed the Lord has giving me the strength, energy and courage to follow my dreams,” Hasty said.

She took one step closer to realizing the biggest of dreams last week when she signed her National Letter of Intent to play Division II college softball at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C.

Hasty, who earned what essentially is a full ride scholarship to play softball at the school.

Johnson C. Smith is a historically black college in the urban city that prides itself in being a very diverse school with a rich history.

Hasty said she was attracted to the school by its diverse history, location in the urban city, coaches, players and inviting atmosphere.

Hasty's first step toward the dream began when she was 4, playing in the Lassie League in North Vernon. She then brought her talents to Salem to play in the Parks and Rec. Youth League.

She played baseball for a number of years and was reluctant to move to softball, because of her love for the sport and her coach Roger Pennington.

At the age of 10, she crossed over into softball, but said everything was in slow motion. She continued to do both that summer.

The excitement in softball picked up when she started playing with older girls thanks to her sister Chelsey and her teammates.

“I remember playing with my sister's team against Eastern and Deshanna Pittman was playing second base, I hit a line drive to her and broke her finger,” Hasty recalled. “I credit a lot of my success to my dad and sister. They were always there to push me and dad stills goes to the field with me whenever I want. I will probably miss that most of all in college, and dad never made it easy on us.”

Hasty's sophomore year she decided she wanted to see where her softball career could take her so she started playing for the Indiana Stingers out of North Vernon with Coach Barry Hovious and loved it.

In addition to the high level of play, travel ball gives players more exposure to college coaches.

Hasty said she made some great friends, learned more about the game and loved the coaches. As a sophomore she had college coaches interested in her.

When Hasty turned 18 last August, she had to find an older travel team and that is where her recruitment went to another level. She tried out for the Bluegrass Blaze 18U team out of Louisville, KY with Greg Meiner and made the team. The Blaze was very successful in all the tournaments they played in last summer and in fall ball and Hasty received even more interest on her recruiting sight NCSA. Besides her coaches, sister and dad, Morgan also contributes a

lot of her success to her hitting coach, Andy Jolissaint.

She remembers Andy saying, "You are a good hitter, but if you will listen to me, you could be a great hitter. I cannot change your hitting but I can show you the correct way to hit. If you practice it will come."

Hasty also credits her current coaches, Jenniger Morris, JD Wade-Swift and Greg Campbell.

Something Hasty never backed down from was hard work on or off the field and that's a message she shares with the younger players she talks to.

"(I tell them) hard work and dedication is the key...but your school work should come first," she said.

Before the book closes on Hasty's career and she begins her dream, there are still a few more awards she needs for her letter jacket. She also has the Lady Lions in the hunt for a Mid Southern Conference championship and has them primed for a shot at the first sectional title in more than a decade.

But like her own playing career, she knows if she and her teammates rely on their own strength goals can be hard to obtain. But with God, all things are possible!