

*Remarks for the
African-American History Month Banquet & Awards Program
February 22, 2002*

Good evening. I am proud to be here with you tonight, and I'm proud to help celebrate the tremendous contributions the African-American community has made to our state and our nation.

And, I'm especially proud to be here with Dr. Sargent, Dr. McLemore, Justice Graves, the members of 100 Black Men and 100 Black Women, and, of course, Bobby Rush.

Tonight we honor the achievements of the African-American community. We honor the belief that saying “I must do something” always solves more problems than saying “something must be done.”

The achievements are many; the commitment is impressive; the names and images are part of our history.

African-Americans play a great role in the work of our state. I'm proud of the work of Gary Anderson, Rica Lewis-Payton, Robert Johnson, Janice Broome Brooks and Colonel L. M Claiborne.

I'm energized by their ideas, their commitment and their dedication.

Justice Graves, I also want to say how pleased I am that you are serving on the Mississippi Supreme Court.

The progress of our state depends in part on these people I've just mentioned, but it really depends on a concerted effort from us all.

There are 2.8 million people in Mississippi who look to me and other elected officials to help provide leadership, direction and guidance for them.

I pray every day for the strength and the wisdom to do this job, a job that I love. I would ask for your prayers as well – not just for myself, but for all in public service – that we might do work that serves all the people of Mississippi.

Thank you.