

Alpha Zeta Omega Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa
Wednesday, March 15, 2000
10:00 a.m.
Hinds Community College

*Phi Theta Kappa is an honor society, which recognizes the academic and civic achievements of community college students. Phi Theta Kappa has selected the America Reads Challenge as the Society's International Service Program for 1998-2000. This initiative calls on every American to volunteer to help more children read well and independently by the end of third grade. You have approximately ten minutes.

Good Morning.

I am pleased to be here with you this morning.

As many of you know, I am a graduate of Northwest Mississippi Community College. The community college experience was great for me. It allowed me a smooth transition from high school and gave me the education and confidence that I needed to continue and complete my education from the University of Mississippi.

I am very familiar with the Phi Theta Kappa organization and was proud to learn that you have selected the America Reads Challenge as the Society's International Service program for 1998 – 2000. This initiative that you have taken on, calls on every American to volunteer to help more children read well and independently by the end of third grade.

I think that is an exciting challenge. I also believe that you have taken on an important issue that is pivotal to the future of our nation's children. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and if we don't arm them with all of the tools they will need for

the future, then we have fallen short of our responsibilities.

Many people have asked me if moving from the classroom to the Governor's Mansion would lessen my interest in teaching? My answer to them is: that couldn't be any farther from the truth.

I taught 5th and 6th grade reading for ___years at Pope Elementary School in Batesville. I was very attuned to the fact that for many of these students these could be the lost years. These grades are a time for transition in many of these students' lives. In the 1st through 3rd grade, students are taught reading fundamentals and have more one-on-one time with

their teachers. In junior high and high school, students should be making great strides in their area of reading are beginning preparations for college level work and testing.

It is in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades that students sometimes get lost because they are transitioning from one teacher in an individual classroom setting, to several teachers in a departmentalized setting. For some students this transition happens too quickly.

For some students less one-on-one teacher time is available to them, they are not being monitored as closely, and they often lose interest in their studies.

That is why I believe that your efforts, to call upon

volunteers to work with students, is so noble. You realize the importance of reading to, and with, students and the impact that effort can make on the lives of our future leaders.

I thank you for your efforts and congratulate you on being a part of such a prestigious honor society.