

Executive Women International
Thursday, June 8, 2000
5:30 p.m.
Crowne Plaza

Good Evening, it is a pleasure for me to be able to join you this evening. Many of you know that I was a teacher for _ years, where I taught reading to 4th through 6th grade students. I resigned from my position as a teacher on _____ and immediately came to Jackson to try to get our family settled here in the Governor's Mansion and to assume the duties of First Lady of this great state.

Many people have asked me if I thought that moving to the Mansion would lessen my love for teaching, and I can honestly say that it has only changed and

broadened my role of teaching. Now I have the opportunity to talk with not only 4th through 6th graders, but I talk with parents, teachers, professionals, retirees, and the list goes on and on.

My real difficulty these days is trying to work my speaking schedule around my children's and my husband's busy schedules. It is a true miracle that Carmen Rae did not have a softball game tonight, or I would be there cheering her on with the dozens of other overly excited parents.

I am sure that many of you can relate to what I mean by juggling schedules. As business women in this

fast-paced world, it is often times difficult to know if you are coming and going. Women have come a long way in just a few years. Many women say that we still have a long way to go, but I choose to focus on our victories.

(insert a story about a family member who didn't have the same opportunities women of today do)

It is amazing to see where we, as women, have been, where we are today, and the path that we have taken to get there.

Our daughter, Carmen Rae is a perfect example of a “Woman of today”. She truly believes that there is nothing she cannot do. We have raised her to believe in herself and her abilities.

All children are not that sure of themselves, though.

I remember a young student I had who was shy and insecure. (insert story about a student that had no self confidence because he/she was never taught to believe in him/herself due to little attention and little ability to read.)

I spent extra time with this student, and as we struggled through words and then through sentences

and then through paragraphs and books I could see a transformation. This student went from being a shy and unsure person to one who would raise his/her hand in class to read aloud or to answer questions.

It was then that I could see what spending a little extra time with a student and giving extra attention to this student did for him/her. Learning to read was a part of the success, yes. And that skill came through the time and effort that we spent together.

I am working now to develop a reading program that will be introduced with the upcoming school year.

This program will focus on students in 4th through 6th grade, and will be fun, yet goal oriented.

I know that one of Executive Women International's focus is on reading, and so I hope that I can count on your assistance for promoting my reading program.

We have challenges to face in the area of literacy, but together, I know we can make a difference. I thank you for your commitment to Mississippi's children, and I thank you for the opportunity to be here tonight.