

*Remarks for the  
Opening Ceremony of the USA International Ballet Competition  
June 15, 2002*

Thank you, Mayor Johnson. This is a grand night for Jackson and the State of Mississippi. It is a grand night for the entire dance world. As Governor, I am proud to welcome our guests from around the country and around world to the International Ballet Competition.

Every four years, we are proud to host the world here in Mississippi. We are proud to share with you our vision of the world as seen through the words of William Faulkner, the music of William Grant Still – and the dance of Thalia Mara.

And, for the next two weeks, dancers from around our globe will share their own visions with us.

I believe we will end our time together with new visions of the world around us, visions that remind us of the good in our world and the common beliefs that bind us together.

To bring us closer to the dance we've been waiting four years to see on this stage, it is my pleasure to introduce a great friend of the arts in Mississippi, Senator Thad Cochran.