

December 12, 2001

Mr. Jim Barksdale
c/o Sharon Lucius
800 Woodland Parkway, Suite 118
Ridgeland, MS 39157

Dear Mr. Barksdale:

I am very pleased to invite you to the **Leadership Summit on Higher Education** being held on Monday, January 7, 2002, in Jackson at the Hilton Hotel. The summit will begin at 10:30 a.m., continue through lunch, and conclude at 2:00 p.m.

Since May, a broad-based 45-member steering committee of fellow Mississippians, co-chaired by Aubrey Patterson of BancorpSouth and myself, has guided and overseen a process to develop a forward-looking and goal-oriented agenda for all of our colleges and universities -- public and private, as well as two-year and four-year. The Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges has facilitated our process.

The results of the steering committee's work, *Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education*, will be formally released at the leadership summit. We believe that it will help advance Mississippi's competitiveness and improve the quality of life of our citizens. *Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education* is focused on six major priorities recommending what higher education can do to advance our state. An executive summary is enclosed for your review and we look forward to receiving your comments at the leadership summit.

Partners and advocates from all corners of Mississippi will be necessary if this agenda is to have its desired positive effects and advance Mississippi. The leadership summit brings together Mississippi leaders of state government, the business community, and higher education, as well as other civic leaders of our state. Please join me at the Leadership Summit on January 7. To RSVP, please contact Kelly Riley of my staff at either 601-359-2528 or kriley@governor.state.ms.us. I look forward to seeing you on January 7.

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE