

*Remarks for the  
Phi Theta Kappa All-State Academic Team  
March 18, 2003*

- Thank you Senator Burton
  
- Recognize Community College leaders in audience and parents and families of students.
  
- We are here today to honor the most outstanding students in our two-year colleges. These students exemplify the reasons that we are fighting so hard for all educational opportunities in this state. These students are demonstrating their ability in the classroom every day and I am proud to be here with you to celebrate their achievements.

- But first, I want to talk to the honorees a little bit about what's going on right now in our world.
  
- Every state impacted by national recession.
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than two million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
  
- Have to protect people in short term / prepare for long term
  
- Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Education must be first priority for MS
  - Making great progress
    - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
    - Test scores up / accountability standards stronger than “No Child Left Behind”
    - Princeton Review: MS has 6<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
    - MS 6<sup>th</sup> in nation in National Board Certified Teachers
    - Computers in Classroom

- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
  - MS first state in nation to fully fund education and fund it first
  - Other states cutting to the bone
  
- We're proving to the people of MS that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
  
- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs

- Mississippi's image changing in the business community
  - Site Selection magazine / top 10 for doing business
  - Top 10 state for small business survival
  
- Four Mississippi cities ranked in America's 50 hottest cities for manufacturing expansions and relocations out of more than 300 metropolitan areas
  - Gulfport / Biloxi / Pascagoula tied for 35<sup>th</sup>
  - Jackson ranked 39<sup>th</sup>

- Two days ago, I went down to Gulfport to see new Carnival cruise ship, the Conquest
  - Sailing out of Gulfport now
  - Working to make it a permanent arrangement
  - Confident that will happen / folks in New Orleans scared it will happen

■ Vice President of Public Relations for New Orleans Chamber had this to say:

- “Mississippi has been aggressively developing its port. The fact that they were able to step in and fill that gap, it does show that Mississippi continues to pursue a sound growth program.”

■ Owner of the Court of Two Sisters restaurant in the French Quarter:

- “I think it’s a fiasco. It’s a black eye for the city, it’s a serious amount of dollars to the city.”

■ General manager of the Chateau Sonesta

Hotel:

- “It’s publicity you can’t buy. Now, it’s sailing from Gulfport, and obviously that’s not good for us.”

■ Recent article in the Detroit News about the auto industry

- Mississippi’s landing of Nissan cited as success story
- “Mississippi got...the chance to be the beachhead for Nissan’s latest assault on the rich U.S. market. The plant makes Mississippi a magnet for investment by hungry auto suppliers.”

- One other sentence in the Detroit News article
  - “Governor Ronnie Musgrove has made it clear that among the things he might cut to manage his state’s nagging deficit, economic development won’t be one of them.”
  
- Job creation from January 2000 to February 2003 (source: MDA)
  - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
  - 50,253 new jobs
  - Total investment of \$14.1 billion (\$14,129,936,686, to be exact)

- MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
  - \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
  - Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges
  
- MS's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
  - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
  - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian
  
- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- They're right / I won't cut our efforts to grow Mississippi
  - I can give you 2.8 million reasons why that's the case
  - And, a number of those reasons are sitting right here in the room with us today.